

# RUSSIAN MONARCHY

Representation and Rule

RICHARD WORTMAN



Imperial Encounters  
in Russian History

RUSSIAN MONARCHY:  
REPRESENTATION AND RULE



COLLECTED ARTICLES

# Imperial Encounters in Russian History

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*Richard Wortman*

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*In memory of Marlene Stein Wortman,  
who made everything possible.*



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## Abbreviations

GARF—Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Rossiiskoi Federatsii

*Scenarios of Power*—Richard Wortman, Volume 1, *Scenarios of Power: From Peter the Great to the Death of Nicholas I* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995). Volume 2, *Scenarios of Power: From Alexander II to the Abdication of Nicholas II* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000)

PSZ—*Polnoe Sobranie Zakonov Rossiiskoi Imperii*



# Introduction

## Russian Monarchy and the Symbolic Sphere



Since 1967, my scholarly work has been devoted to the institutions and culture of the imperial Russian state. In that year, along with several of my American colleagues, I had the good fortune to conduct my research under the guidance of the eminent Soviet historian, Petr Andreevich Zaionchkovskii. Professor Zaionchkovskii was more than generous in sharing in his learning and assisting us in gaining access to archival sources.<sup>1</sup> Under the ideological and methodological constraints of the Soviet historical profession, he brought about a veritable recrudescence of Russian institutional history. His works on the Great Reforms and later the personnel of the administration, his publication of memoirs of high governmental officials, and his compilation of vital reference works revealed the significance of what he called “the subjective factor” in Russian history, dismissed by the Marxist-Leninist orthodoxy that relegated the state to the “superstructure” of historical development. *My Development of a Russian Legal Consciousness* was one of a number of his students’ works that, following his example, were devoted to the Great Reforms of the first part of the reign of Alexander II. In it, I examined the roots and realization of the Court Reform of 1864, focusing on the education, ideas, and mentality of a group of reformers that emerged during the reign of Nicholas I and emphasized their role in the drafting of a reform that brought a modern liberal judiciary and legal profession to Russia. In the last sections,

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<sup>1</sup> On the Zaionchkovskii American “school” see O. V. Bol’shakova, “P. A. Zaionchkovskii i Amerikanskaia russistika, 1960-1980-kh gg,” in *Petr Andreevich Zaionchkovskii: Sbornik statei i vospominanii k stoletiiu istorika* ed. L.G. Zakharova, S.V. Mironenko, T. Emmons (Moscow: Rosspen, 2008).

## INTRODUCTION

I described the obstacles that arose to the functioning of the new system within the structure of an autocratic state that constrained the development of the independent judiciary over the following half-century.

First among these obstacles were the high officials of the state, those close to the tsar and court, determined to prevent further extension of the principle of legality into the space of the tsar's authority. This was a realm unknown to me, except by what appeared to be their seemingly unreasoned resistance to institutional change. I thus happened on a new object of study, the symbolic sphere of Russian monarchy, comprising image, myth, and symbols, which had left only faint marks in the historical literature. I perceived a sense of this sphere from the numerous memoirs published under aegis of Zaionchkovskii that revealed an official culture where officials felt a sense of belonging to the emotional and mental universe of the imperial family, a universe that encompassed even officials sympathetic to cause of legality in the Russian state. The symbolic sphere was a dominating, one might say hegemonic presence in Russian government until the early twentieth century; its absence from the historical narrative bespoke the prevalence of a teleological faith in its imminent demise among both liberal and revolutionary leaders and historians. I turned for guidance to works of cultural anthropology and literary criticism, particularly those of Clifford Geertz, Marshall Sahlins, and members of the Moscow-Tartu school of semiotics.<sup>2</sup> I began to approach Russian monarchy as an ongoing institution and political culture rather than a succession of individual rulers with idiosyncratic personalities and political views that lacked a sense of the universe they inherited and inhabited. I endeavored to focus on how Russian monarchy functioned, its visual and literary manifestations, and to reveal its presence in Russian life.

\* \* \*

In the historical literature it is common parlance to conflate the Russian monarchy with the Russian state when referring to imperial Russian government. But in many respects they refer to different entities with different mentalities, goals, and life styles. The relationship between the two was never clearly defined, and the changes and often vexed interaction between the monarchy and the state administration was an ongoing process in the

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<sup>2</sup> On these influences see my article, "Thought, Culture, and Power: Reflections of a Russianist," *Modern Intellectual History* 5, No. 1 (April 2008): 130-35.

exercise of power in Russia. The monarchy as I conceive it signifies the ruler and those personally close to him—members of the imperial family, of his suite, and those officials in his chancellery and the court whom he invested with special confidence and powers. The state, on the other hand, comprised the administrative-military apparatus and officials who administered the empire and the system of estates that ordered the different groups of the monarchy's subjects. Peter the Great introduced the concept of the state as an abstract, independent entity with an existence separate from the ruler operating according to regulation, and defined its purview. But at the same time, he identified himself with the imperial state. The sense of Russian autocracy (*samoderzhavie*) as a fusion of absolute monarch and imperial state persisted and received its explicit formulation in the reign of Nicholas I, who was regarded as the “embodiment of Russia.” Reforms during the reign of Alexander I and Nicholas I made court rank dependent on service and brought increasing numbers of high officials into court ceremonies. Officials with court ranks appeared in proximity to members of the imperial family for the major celebrations on the court calendar. By the middle of the nineteenth century, the imperial court had come to represent the epitome of the Russian monarchical state.<sup>3</sup>

The Russian emperor identified with the state as its “first servant,” but he and his charismatic inner circle—family, favorites, prominent courtiers—also appeared as above and apart from the state in ceremonies, receptions, and balls and in the representation of the monarch in verse, ceremonial accounts, and visual imagery. The common formula often cited in the nineteenth century was that the emperor was bound by laws until he himself changed them. In fact, the charisma of autocracy emanated in part from the emperor's superiority to law as well as from his personal sway over servitors who owed him deference. This ambiguity pervaded the tsarist system, which on the one hand relied on elaborate state laws and regulations guiding the administration of state, and on the other required that authority at any level be wielded with a presumption of the personal favor of those above the law that permitted disregard of those constraints.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Richard Wortman, *Scenarios of Power, 1; Myth and Ceremony in Russian Monarchy, Vol. 1, From Peter the Great to the Death of Nicholas I* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), 322-32. Henceforth, *Scenarios of Power*, 1.

<sup>4</sup> This ambiguity is the subject of Anatolii Remnev's *Samoderzhavnoe Pravitel'stvo: Komitet Ministrov v sisteme vyshego upravleniia Rossiiskoi imperii (vtoraia polovina XIX—nachalo XX veka)* discussed in chapter 3 of this volume.



In the provinces, the monarch's ethical supremacy dominated governmental and social institutions, the religious services of the various confessions, and eventually the expressions of Russian nationality. As in the center, it operated as a powerful deterrent to alternative forms of representation and activity, ensuring that primary loyalties were owed to the sovereign and his servitors, and precluding dialogue and innovation. The noble estate established by Catherine remained under the domination of the bureaucracy and posed no pluralistic influence to counter the domination of the throne.<sup>5</sup> The sway of the ruler's person discouraged the development of local institutions and bonds between social groups. Elise Kimerling Wirtschafter has observed, "the ruler's personal authority (and that of his or her appointed officials) kept the system of governance malleable and dynamic, but once a reigning sovereign, due to individual failings, was no longer free from responsibility, all formally constituted power was threatened." This left local institutions without official guidance, and "a chronic discrepancy between resources and intentions perpetuated personalized authority, even as explicit rules of administration promoted uniformity and delimited arbitrariness." As a result "the state's limited administrative capabilities and atomized institutional structures ... made it difficult to secure linkages between society and government."<sup>6</sup>

I approach the monarchy as an institution set above the state, dominating and engulfing the organs of the state in the figure of the ruling emperor. Institutional and symbolic change took place within the parameters set by a political culture of personal rule. In the eighteenth century, such a culture was reinforced by an ideology and myth of enlightened absolutism, which

<sup>5</sup> Marc Raeff, "Russian Autocracy and Paradoxes of Modernization," in Marc Raeff, *Political Ideas and Institutions in Imperial Russia* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1994), 122-23.

<sup>6</sup> Elise Kimerling Wirtschafter, *Social Identity in Imperial Russia* (De Kalb, IL: Northern Illinois University Press, 1997), 6-7. See also, 37-42, 169-73. Victor Zhivov has described the ecclesiastical counterpart to the prevalence of personal, charismatic feeling over institutional requirements in the confessional ministering of the Orthodox Church in medieval Russia. He concludes that his examples "clearly demonstrate that Russians did not rely on institutionalized penitential practices (regular confession, penance, contrition) in their hope for salvation. They rather believed in the mercifulness of God, in the intercession of the saints, in the succor of wonder-working icons, in the beneficial action of sacred wells, holy burial places and the like." Victor Zhivov, "Institutionalized Soteriology in the Western and Eastern Churches," in *Slavic Ambrosiana*, No. 10 (2010): 51-76.

made possible the adoption of western ideas, forms of literary and artistic expression, as well as philosophical and scientific inquiry. Once ideas of liberalism and popular sovereignty gained a hold in European monarchies, the ideas and culture of the monarchy sustained an ethos of exclusivism—that Russian monarchy, autocracy, *samoderzhavie*, was presented as the highest form of western absolutism and therefore immune to political challenge—and later that the monarchy represented a unique institution drawn from native sources that could justify absolute rule over both ethnically Russian provinces and the empire.

Within this universe absolute power was the condition of legitimate rule. The prospect of confining the monarch to symbolic preeminence as in English or Japanese monarchy, or sharing responsibilities of rule with a Prime Minister, as in Prussian and Austrian monarchy—prospects contemplated by reformers in the last century of tsarist rule—remained anathema. There could be no Bismarck in the Russian state, directing the course of government in the name of the monarch. Many Russian officials aspired to that role, but it was another fantasy of Russian life leading to inflated hopes and pretensions, as suggested in Prince Vladimir Meshcherskii's satirical novel, *One of our Bismarcks*.<sup>7</sup>

Recent scholarship has documented that the emergence of a nascent civil society came in early twentieth century Russia.<sup>8</sup> However, the elements of a civil society did not necessarily portend the emergence of a pluralistic institutional system. Rather, the nascent civic pluralism only increased the conflict and disconnect between Russia's social system and institutions of the existing state still dominated by a monarchy not about to bow to concession. As I have argued in the last chapters of Volume Two of *Scenarios*, the last decades of the monarchy witness a bitter attack on the reformed state not only by insurgent liberals and socialists, but by the monarch himself, which after the downfall of the monarchy left a society in tumult and conflict without the institutions and traditions that could take on the future tasks of governing Russia.

<sup>7</sup> Vladimir Meshcherskii, *Odin iz nashikh Bismarkov: fantasticheskii roman v trekh chastiakh* (St. Petersburg: K. V. M., 1874).

<sup>8</sup> Most convincingly in Joseph Bradley, *Voluntary Associations in Tsarist Russia: Science, Patriotism, and Civil Society* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009). For other works on the subject, see Martina Winkler, "Rulers and Ruled, 1700-1910," *Kritika* 12, No. 4 (Fall, 2011): 801-05.

I characterize the monarchy as an active agent in Russia's political experience, rather than an institution merely reactive to pressures, economic, political, and military, whose dominant role was resisting change until the inevitable collapse facing all absolute monarchies. The central constitutive element of official representation from the reign of Peter the Great was a myth of conquest. The rule of the monarch found its principal grounds for sovereign power not in divine mandate or dynastic inheritance, though these principles were also invoked, but in his symbolic transcendence, the adoption of the persona of superordinate ruler figure from another realm, a pagan god descendant, a Christ transfigured, whether in ceremony, visual imagery or the printed word.

In this framework, the separation between the person of the tsar and the Russian state, *Rossiiia*, did not correspond to western patterns.<sup>9</sup> Peter the Great tried to distinguish the state and its institutions from his personal authority, but failed to do so.<sup>10</sup> Peter's legitimacy as tsar was based on his performance of heroic acts of state, proving his transcendence by advancing the welfare of the realm. His successors too justified their authority not by inherited rights to the throne but by performance—prodigies, whether real or evoked in representation, effected by the agency of the state for the benefit of the state and nation.

The model for representation from the late seventeenth century was the “culture of power” of Baroque Europe, exemplified in the figure of Louis XIV as portrayed in the works of Jürgen Habermas and T. C. W. Blanning. The culture of power was an early stage of public representation addressed to the elite that set its members above and apart from the subjects of the monarch.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>9</sup> On the separation between the body natural and the body politic of the king, see the classic work, Ernst H. Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies: A Study in Medieval Political Theology* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957), 314–450.

<sup>10</sup> Michael Cherniavsky, *Tsar and People: Studies in Russian Myths* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1961), 86. See also, Claudio Sergio Nun Ingerflom, “Loyalty to the State’ under Peter the Great? Return to the Sources and the Historicity of Concepts,” in *Loyalties and Solidarities in Russian Culture, Society and History*, Forthcoming, Oxford University Press.

<sup>11</sup> Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a category of Bourgeois Society* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1989); T. C. W. Blanning, *The Culture of Power and the Power of Culture: Old Regime Europe 1660–1789* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

Festivities, Habermas writes, “served not so much the pleasure of the participants as the demonstration of grandeur, that is the grandeur of the host and guests.” Aristocratic society “served as a vehicle for the representation of the monarch.”<sup>12</sup> Blanning evokes the “representational culture” of seventeenth-century courts comprising the use of art, architecture, music, and elaborate ceremonial as dynamics of power. Thus “the representational display expressed in palaces, academies, opera houses, hunting establishments, and the like was not pure self-indulgence, nor was it deception; it was a constitutive element of power itself.”<sup>13</sup>

Representation in the Baroque enhanced and transformed the image of monarch: the very act of artistic rendering elevated him to a different lofty realm of the super-ordinate. It presented him as an “embodiment of a higher power” or “the represented presence of the divine itself.”<sup>14</sup> Michel Foucault focused on a modality of representation that superseded resemblance in seventeenth century Europe. The mirror reflecting the image of Philip IV in Velázquez’s masterpiece, “Las Meninas,” epitomized for him the device of representation, replacing the king himself as the artist’s principal subject.<sup>15</sup> Louis Marin, in *Le portrait du roi*, identified a “doubling” effect that intensified the presence of the subject of monarch. “The device of representation transforms force into might (*puissance*), force into power (*pouvoir*.)” “The king is only truly king, that is the monarch, in images.”<sup>16</sup>

For Habermas and his followers, representational culture served as a prelude to the emergence of a public sphere, the participation of bourgeois society in public discourse, which accompanied the differentiation and specialization of state institutions, the appearance of public organizations, and the emergence of pluralistic centers of influence and power. In Russia, monarchical representation as introduced by Peter the Great persisted and remained a principal function of the monarchy. With Peter, the act of borrowing and displaying forms of western imagery became an attribute of power. It produced the “doubling effect” of representation, removing the

<sup>12</sup> Habermas, *Structural Transformation of Public Sphere*, 9-10.

<sup>13</sup> Blanning, *Culture of Power*, 59.

<sup>14</sup> Habermas, *Structural Transformation of Public Sphere*, 7, 252, note 10 where he cites H. G. Gadamer.

<sup>15</sup> Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (New York: Vintage, 1970), 3-16.

<sup>16</sup> Louis Marin, *Le portrait du roi* (Paris: Les éditions de minuit, 1981), 9-13.

monarch from his local confines and situating him in a universe of irresistible and efficacious enlightened rule. The representation of the monarch became paramount, transcending considerations of law, prudence, or rational argument, and shaping the practices and attitudes of governmental officials to accommodate a culture of power. As a result, rather than giving way to an embryonic public sphere, representational culture in Russia strove to dominate it and to deter its further development. While the representation of Russian monarchy elevated the ruler as the embodiment of the state, the representation of British monarchy separated the state from the monarch, divesting him of power, and making him an abiding symbol of the nation.

It has been pointed out that most early modern monarchies borrowed symbols and imagery. That certainly was the case. But in Russia such borrowings perpetuated the “doubling” effect mentioned by Marin, enhancing the rulers’ stature by ongoing emulations of heroic foreign models. The requirement of demonstrative acts of borrowing as a precondition to absolute rule, I argue, distinguishes Russian monarchs from their European prototypes. To maintain the superordinate image demanded by the myth of conquest, Russian rulers enacted scenarios that identified them with biblical, historical, or foreign figures; Peter the Great as Roman conqueror, or Christ and his disciples, or Pygmalion shaping Russia, Catherine II as Astraea and Minerva. Alexander I was elevated as an angelic presence later, as an evangelical Vicar of Christ. They assumed the dress and features of exemplary European monarchs: Peter III, and Paul I took on the semblance of Frederick the Great, Nicholas I, King Frederick William III of Prussia as family man, Alexander I, of Napoleon, Alexander II, Louis Napoleon as beloved popular monarch. For them the act of representation served as an elevating force, the image revealing a higher reality than that of a flesh and blood human being.

The principal audience for these representations was not the Russian people, but the entourage of the ruler and the elite of the Russian state, who shared the tsars’ scenarios and reflexively gave the aura and sway of truth to his prerogatives and pretensions. As Max Weber observed, elites performed their ceremonies and elaborated myths primarily to justify their domination *to themselves*, confirming their own destiny as wielders of power. Weber understood myth in this context as a way for rulers to make their rule acceptable by various forms of legitimation, i.e., to justify their domination. “He who is most favored feels the never ceasing need to look on his position as in some way ‘legitimate,’ upon his advantage as ‘deserved,’ and the

other's disadvantage as being brought about by the latter's 'fault.' That the purely accidental causes of the difference may be ever so obvious makes no difference." Myth then is created to define and explain this difference. "Every highly privileged group develops this myth of its natural, especially blood superiority. Under conditions of stable distribution of power and, consequently, of a statist order, that myth is accepted by the negatively privileged orders."<sup>17</sup>

The spread of the concepts of national distinctiveness and popular sovereignty in nineteenth-century Europe introduced new forms of representation. Transcendence then was demonstrated by the appropriation of signs of nationality, elaborated in state ideology and then disclosed in images of Russianness. The narratives shifted to reflect different conceptions of the relationship between the tsar and people. For Nicholas I and Alexander II, they emphasized mutual bonds of feelings, evinced by the people in the form of absolute devotion and gratitude, which under Nicholas I indicated absolute obedience, and under Alexander II, mutual acts of sacrifice and gratitude that dramatized the Great Reforms. The scenarios of Alexander III and Nicholas II exalted the ethnic bonds that historically linked the monarchy with the people, endowing the regime with stature and power emanating from early Russia.

The signs of transcendence were transmitted in a variety of texts of representation that framed the narratives and pretensions of each ruler for the monarchy itself and the elite. The laws of the realm opened with preambles that set the provisions in the context of the myth, justifying the decree, statute, or rules in terms of the designs of the current reign. Ceremonial texts—program books, later accounts in newspapers and illustrated journals, presented the events in accounts that may or may not have corresponded to their actual performance and defined their meanings. Painting and architecture were called upon to evoke an imagined political landscape. For the historian, this complex of sources gives a sense of the universe the monarchy constructed around itself, how its rulers envisioned the potentiality of the Russian state. These artistic sources will be the subject of articles in the next volume of my articles: *Ceremonial Texts, Visual Texts, Texts of Exploration*.

<sup>17</sup> Max Rheinstein, ed., *Max Weber on Law in Economy and Society* (New York: Simon and Shuster, 1967), 335-36; Max Weber, *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft: Die Wirtschaft und die gesellschaftlichen Ordnungen und Mächte: Nachlass, Teilband 4: Herrschaft* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 2005), MWG, 1/22-4, p. 147f.

The essays in this volume address aspects of the representation of Russian monarchy that I have examined at length in the two volumes of *Scenarios of Power*. *Scenarios of Power* dealt with the narratives of Russian monarchy as they evolved from Peter the Great to the 1917 revolution. Its organization was chronological and imagery and symbols figured as aspects of the stages of the evolution of tsarist imagery and government. Specific interpretations about the meaning and consequences of the forms of representation were set forth in the context of a particular reign. The articles in this volume rather focus on the effects over time of these representations on specific areas of state life, such as law, administrative practice, concepts of national and imperial identities. Except for chapter 9, “Nicholas II and the Revolution of 1905,” to which I added materials on the Beilis case, and chapter 10, “The Russian Empire and Russian Monarchy: The Problem of Russian Nationalism,”<sup>18</sup> I have introduced mainly editorial changes to the originals. Parts of several articles overlap or repeat sections but I have included them, nonetheless, when they address specific historical issues such as the invention of tradition, the problem of political center, the metamorphoses of myth, and relate them to the governing culture of representation. These articles bring to bear materials discussed elsewhere on key issues.

Essays in Section I deal with the interrelationship of two central themes of my research on Russian monarchy: the demonstration of transcendence and absolute power and the aspiration to legality. I see the tension between these two in principle incompatible strivings as a central characteristic of Russian government in the imperial period, conditioning the mentality and the practices of both the emperors and the officials who served them. Chapter 1, “Russian Monarchy and the Rule of Law: New Considerations of the Court Reform of 1864,” a revised version of the introduction to the Russian translation of *The Development of a Russian Legal Consciousness*, discusses the literature and interpretations on court reform in the nineteenth century that appeared after its publication in 1976. Chapter 2, “The Representation of Dynasty and “Fundamental Laws” in the Evolution of Russian Monarchy” focuses on the law of succession in the light of the representations of Russian monarchy. It argues that the borrowing of a European conception of a fundamental law, realized first in a law of hereditary succession, proved

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<sup>18</sup> The latter is a revised version of “Natsionalizm, narodnost’ i rossiiskoe gosudarstvo,” *Neprikosnovennyi zapas* 17, No. 3 (2001): 100-105.

incompatible with the performative mode of Petrine representation, which dominated future efforts to regularize the succession by establishing hereditary right to the throne. Chapter 3 is a review of Anatolii Remnev, *Samoderzhavnoe pravitel'stvo: Komitet ministrov v sisteme vysshego upravleniia Rossiiskoi imperii, vtoraiia polovina XIX—nachalo XX veka*, a monograph that shows the pervasive presence of the tsar's personal influence in the practices of the state administration as exemplified in its highest institution—the Committee of Ministers. Drawing on recent studies and memoir publications about the Russian state, as well as extensive archival sources, Remnev's book describes the practices and psychology of Russian officials as they find ways to cope with a system of government presumably based on rules and laws but acquiescent to the tsar's influence.

The upbringing of heirs to the throne in eighteenth and nineteenth century Russia imbued them with the narrative, imagery, and aspirations of the governing myth. Part II deals with two aspects of this. Chapter 4, "The Russian Empress as Mother," which was published in 1978, before I had embarked on my study of monarchical representation, focuses on the changing roles of the mothers in raising heirs to the throne. It describes the tensions between the demands to train a sovereign who rose above the emotional bonds of family to devote himself entirely to the welfare of the state and feelings of filial attachment and dependence. Chapter 5, "The Russian Family as Symbol," examines the idealization of the imperial family in the context of the early nineteenth-century cult of family and dynasty. Nicholas I introduced the imagery and ceremony that exalted the imperial family as the exemplification of domestic virtues, elevating the monarchy and the elite as paragons of western dynastic ideals.

The essays in Part III examine the incorporation of the ideas of nation and people into a myth of conquest that evoked symbolic distance between the ruler and the ruled. Chapter 6, "The Invention of Tradition and the Representation of Russian Monarchy," discusses invented traditions in nineteenth century Russia as devices to accentuate heroic departures and breaks from previous reigns. Despite gestures of fidelity to tradition, the representation of Russian monarchy from Peter the Great reveals a pattern of symbolic discontinuity, a cadence of demonstrative signs of change rather than the persistence of traditional bonds, a dynamic process, but one that produced jolting reorientations that could discourage the progressive development of existing governmental institutions. New ceremonies and imagery showed



the bonds of the monarch with the nation in terms that fit the ascendant monarch's scenario, and established ones such as the imperial coronation were modified to reflect current circumstances and goals. Chapter 7, "National Narratives in the Representation of Nineteenth Century Russian Monarchy," shows how this process led to the emergence of differing concepts of a national monarchy, the two distinct national narratives advanced in the nineteenth century: Nicholas I's "Official Nationality," which maintained the basic themes and images of the European myth, by claiming the devotion of the Russian people to their westernized monarchs, and Alexander III's, "national myth," which introduced ethnicity to the representation of the tsar's person.

The succeeding chapters describe the opening of a gulf between the monarchy and the state as the tsar sought to return to an imagined Muscovite autocracy that sacralized the personal patriarchal police power of the tsar and delegitimized the laws and institutions that had developed since Peter the Great. Chapter 8, "Moscow and Petersburg: The Problem of Political Center, 1881-1914," my earliest publication on imperial representation, explores the symbolic implications for Alexander III in rejecting the narrative that had consecrated Petersburg as the symbol of westernized monarchy, which had been desecrated by the assassination of Alexander II, and establishing Moscow as the sacred center of a reborn national monarchy. Chapter 9, "Nicholas II and the Revolution" takes the evolution of the national myth into the twentieth century, focusing on Nicholas II's sense of a personal bond with the Russian people that persisted and grew even more intense after the 1905 Revolution, inspiring him with a vision of a resurrection of a seventeenth-century national autocracy devoid of Jews. At this point, the conflict between the monarch, with his belief in absolute prerogatives derived from God, and the political leaders of the emerging nation came into the open. The monarchy itself then became an active force in the subversion of the status quo, establishing the political setting for the violent confrontations of early twentieth century Russia.

Part IV examines the complex relationship between nation and empire in the representation of the ruler, who assumed the roles of both tsar of Russia and emperor of a multinational empire, greater Russia—*Rossia*—served by a multinational elite. The dominant view stated most trenchantly by Geoffrey Hosking holds that the imperial state discouraged the developed of a civic or ethnic Russian nationalism that could provide the core of a nation state: Russian autocracy "was generated by the needs of empire, and had to be reinforced as that empire came increasingly into conflict with nation-building."

His thesis is that “in Russia state-building obstructed nation-building,” and that autocracy and backwardness “were symptoms and not causes: both were generated by the way the building of the empire obstructed the formation of a nation.”<sup>19</sup>

But though this interpretation makes clear the clash between aspirations to empire and nation, I argue that it omits the exercise of agency, leaving the process peculiarly abstract and incorporeal. Chapter 10, “Nationalism, Nationality and the Russian State,” explores the dynamic that produced this outcome, shifting the focus to the monarchy and the rulers’ determination to rule without public participation: to incorporate both the nation and the empire in the institution of autocracy. The article discusses the troublesome dilemma of Russians seeking to form a political nation, but deterred by a monarchy claiming to assume the mantle of nationhood—a monarchical nation—that incorporated the Russian people. In this respect, the empire and the nation become indistinguishable entities according implicit assent to the absolute power of the monarch. The expectation of Russian liberals to claim leadership of the nation was repeatedly thwarted by an emperor presuming to embody or represent the nation himself. The Russian pattern again was the antithesis to the British, where the emerging popular nationalism found expression in empire, which then came to be personified in the figure of the monarch.<sup>20</sup>

The Russian ruler’s absolute power was closely entwined with the maintenance of the unity and the integrity of the Russian empire, the subject of chapter 11, “The ‘integrity’ (*tselost’*) of the State in Imperial Russian

<sup>19</sup> Geoffrey Hosking, *Russia: People and Empire, 1552-1917* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997), xxiv, xxvi, xvii.

<sup>20</sup> Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation 1707-1837* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992). She writes, “For most Victorians, the massive overseas empire which was the fruit of so much successful warfare represented final and conclusive proof of Great Britain’s providential destiny. God had entrusted Britons with empire, they believed, so as to further the worldwide spread of the Gospel and as a testimony to their status as the Protestant Israel. And this complacency proved persistent. Well into the twentieth century, contact with and dominion over manifestly alien peoples nourished Britons’ sense of superior difference. They could contrast their law, their treatment of women, their wealth, power, political stability and religion with societies they only imperfectly understood, but usually perceived as inferior. Empire corroborated Britain’s blessings, as well as what the Scottish socialist Keir Hardie called ‘the indomitable pluck and energy of the British people,’” 368-69.

## INTRODUCTION

Representation.” Absolute power not only made possible the unity of empire, as Alexander II’s remark that a constitution would result in “the disintegration of the Empire into pieces” suggested, but the empire with its concomitant advantages—international standing, the grandeur and accoutrements of imperial representations—sustained the claims to absolute power. From the reign of Peter the Great, the extent and the variety of empire prompted statements alluding to its vulnerability that justified forceful and unlimited exercise of monarchical authority. Apprehensions about the integrity of the state surfaced with especial poignancy in the early twentieth century when Nicholas II, his ministers, and later the Cadet party made the empire’s integrity a primary concern and again with the government of Vladimir Putin, who proclaims the goal of maintaining the integrity (*tselostnost’*) of Russia to enhance the historical grounds of his own authoritarian rule. The article is followed by an exchange with editors of *Ab Imperio*, who raise questions challenging my assumptions and conclusions. Chapter 12, “The Tsar and Empire: Representation of the Monarchy and Symbolic Integration in Imperial Russia,” examines the efforts to assimilate nation and nationalities into the hierarchical structure of the monarchy, particularly in the reign of Alexander II, when the state began, within the context of Alexander II’s scenario of love, to strive to create a sense of citizenship. The article summarizes the diminishing success of these efforts and the resort to force and the imagery of national conquest in order to reaffirm the unity of the empire. The establishment of the Duma in 1906 only abetted the centrifugal tendencies awakening in a multinational empire.

I owe a great debt of gratitude to my student Ernest A. Zitser, whose comprehensive bibliography of my works concludes this volume.



Part I

Russian Monarchy  
and Law





# 1. Russian Monarchy and the Rule of Law: New Considerations of the Court Reform of 1864\*



The relationship of the legal system—the courts, the legal administration, the discipline of Russian law—to the Russian state has been an ongoing and unresolved problem in modern Russian history and remains a contested issue in contemporary political life. The monarchy, the Soviet regime, and the current Russian government all affirmed and reaffirmed the importance of law and legal institutions, but without abandoning their fear and antagonism toward judicial institutions and judicial expertise. The Court Reform of 1864 stands out as an exceptional event, when the government adopted a judicial system that embodied the very principles that the rulers and officials of the Russian state had long repudiated as alien and pernicious. When I embarked on my research for *The Development of a Russian Legal Consciousness* in the mid-1960s, I was principally interested in explaining this extraordinary break from tradition, which, I concluded, could not in the long run overcome the autocracy's jealousy of its prerogatives. Here, I will revisit this subject, taking into consideration both my own studies of tsarist myth and symbols and later scholarship, some of which contests my pessimistic conclusions about the post-reform era. I will examine the question raised, directly or indirectly in all these works: was a rule of law possible under Russian monarchy?

I sought the origins of the court reform by studying the evolving institutions and personnel of the Russian state in the first half of the nineteenth century—a subject which, despite its obvious importance, had

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\* This essay is a somewhat modified version of the introduction to the Russian translation of *The Development of a Russian Legal Consciousness* published by NLO press in Moscow.

long been neglected by historians. The Russian state remained a great and powerful eminence responding at times as an evil force of oppression, at others as a demiurge of progress and enlightenment, whose acts were known, but whose motivations and inner workings remained mysterious. Pre-revolutionary historians had published initial studies of Russian state institutions, but their treatments had been constrained by limited access to the archives and ideological biases that prompted either uncritical praise or a determination to seek out the flaws and hypocrisy of governmental policies. Until the 1960s, Soviet historians had paid little attention to the state, which, according to party doctrine, represented an epiphenomenon, historically determined and ultimately doomed by the Marxist dialectic. Western historians of Russia, including myself, had focused their attention on intellectual history, the history of the revolutionary movement, and later on social history.

It was Petr Andreevich Zaionchkovskii who opened the study of the imperial Russian state to serious scholarship in the 1960s. His numerous monographs, his editions of memoirs made clear that the state represented an entire culture, with its own values, goals, politics, and ideology. Zaionchkovskii recognized and came to propound the role of “the subjective factor” in history, though of course he could not do so in print. He viewed the Great Reforms of the 1860s not as a defensive response to an ostensible “revolutionary situation” among the peasantry (even if he gave the obligatory statement of such views in his publications), but as a process taking place in the bureaucracy, where officials, responding to the Crimean War, devised plans to change Russia in order to enter the new era. He courageously defended this view in public. In the winter of 1966-67, I attended a lecture he gave at Leningrad State University on the role of the subjective factor in history. The large audience, which overflowed the hall, responded with amazement and curiosity.

An understanding of the subjective factor, Zaionchkovskii believed, involved the study of the attitudes and ideas of governmental officials. This aspect of institutional history was of particular interest to me as a student of intellectual history. It demanded the close examination of archival sources, and Petr Andreevich did everything he could to overcome the obstacles that we faced in acquiring the necessary documents in the archive. (Perhaps the most serious of these was the prohibition of providing foreigners with *opisi*, which made it impossible for us to know the extent of the sources on a given subject.) I had met Petr Andreevich in 1962, and in the fall of 1966 I traveled to Russia to work under his direction on the reform of the courts.

As my work progressed, I began to narrow my focus to a study of the officials who were involved in the administration and the reform of the Russian judiciary. In this respect, my approach was influenced by the work of Marc Raeff and Hans-Joachim Torke on the ethos of Russian officials, and of Walter Pintner on the changes in the composition of administrative personnel in the first half of the nineteenth century. Raeff raised the question of administrative professionalization, arguing that the Russian officialdom of the first half of the nineteenth century did not fit the Weberian model of an educated, specialized officialdom, applying rational norms to their administrative tasks. This point of view was supported by Torke's comprehensive and definitive study of the early nineteenth-century Russian administration. Walter Pintner's pioneering quantitative analysis of service lists, *formuliarnye spiski*, on the other hand, revealed the beginning of processes of change in the direction of increased education and professionalization.<sup>1</sup>

My own research, first on personal sources, later on service lists (*formuliarnye spiski*) revealed similar changes in the legal administration. It became clear to me that the Russian legal profession was not born with the Court Reform of 1864, but in the decades before the reform when a group of officials dedicated to the law and trained in the educational institutions founded under Nicholas I began to staff important offices in the Ministry of Justice. These officials had both attained a considerable knowledge of law and developed a respect for and even a devotion to the law as a higher ethical cause. In this way, they fit not only the Weberian but the Durkheimian model of a profession as a group dedicated to their sphere of expertise as an ethical absolute, as a higher calling. They began to see themselves principally as servants of the law, rather than as servitors of the tsar or the state, and sought to lift the prestige and authority of the judiciary. It is this pattern of thought that I refer to as a "legal consciousness."

<sup>1</sup> Marc Raeff, "The Bureaucratic Phenomena of Imperial Russia, 1700-1905," *American Historical Review* 84, no. 2 (April 1979): 399-411; Marc Raeff, "The Russian Autocracy and Its Officials," in Raeff, *Political Ideas and Institutions in Imperial Russia*, 76-87; Hans-Joachim Torke, *Das russische Beamtentum in der ersten Hälfte des 19. Jahrhunderts* in *Forschungen zur osteuropaischen Geschichte* 13 (Berlin: Otto Harrassowitz, 1967); Walter Pintner and Donald Roney, *Russian Officialdom: The Bureaucratization of Russian Society from the Seventeenth to the Twentieth Century* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1980), 190-249.



The term “legal consciousness” needs several words of explanation, first in regard to the indefinite article “a,” which does not translate into Russian. I describe it as *a* legal consciousness in order to make clear that it is not necessarily the only legal consciousness in Russian history, or one that was generally shared. Indeed, although the development of a consciousness of the transcendent importance of the law was of great significance for its own time and subsequent decades, it encountered formidable and eventually insuperable obstacles, and its rise appears more as a glorious but tragic episode than a central trend of Russian history. Secondly, I define this mode of thinking as a “consciousness” rather than a “mentality,” because of its intellectual, ideological character, drawing on legal and philosophical ideas. In this respect, these legal officials, along with many of the reformers, shared a way of thinking with members of the intelligentsia: they too conceived their role as transforming Russian institutions on the basis of western ideas and western institutional models.

Their moment of triumph came in the summer of 1862, when the emperor allowed the transfer of responsibility for legal reform from the Second Section, the codification section of the emperor’s chancellery, to the State Chancellery, the chancellery of the State Council. The State Council, the highest legislative body in the government, deliberated on and modified the projects for reform, drafted by the reform-minded officials in the State Chancellery. They were now charged with drafting projects for reform based on European science and experience. Their success was made possible by the particular circumstances of the 1850s and 1860s: the humiliations of the Crimean War, and the nobility’s demands for courts that could protect property rights after the emancipation of the serfs had deprived them of patrimonial authority. The reformers fashioned a system of independent civil and criminal courts, with judges enjoying life tenure, and open adversarial trials.

By emphasizing the ideological roots of the court reform, I questioned a standard interpretation of its origins—that the reform was a necessary concomitant to emancipation. The conventional argument went that the freeing of the serfs required new courts to replace the corrupt and inept justice of the pre-reform era, and provide a basis for civic rights in the new era. Mikhail Grigor’evich Korotkikh has argued this point in his valuable study of the drafting of the judicial reform. The goal, according to Korotkikh, was to create a “mass social group of property owners from the emancipated peasants and nobility” by guaranteeing “the inviolability of property.” It is true that the emancipation necessitated a judicial reform, but there is

no evidence that it determined the type of judicial reform that would be introduced. The emancipation settlement certainly did not define the liberal terms of the court reform of 1864, which did not comprise institutions of justice for the peasantry. The statutes of 1861 provided the peasants with their own *volost'* courts, which were under the jurisdiction of the Minister of the Interior and thus hardly independent. The judges of *volost'* courts were peasants elected from the communal leadership and were supposed to take peasant customary law into account.

Korotkikh also reiterated the orthodox Soviet interpretation that the reform was a response to the revolutionary situation among the peasants.<sup>2</sup> But it is clear from correspondence between the tsar and high officials that, in their eyes, it was the disgruntlement of the nobility and their demands for protection of property and personal rights that constituted the principal threat to stability. It was Petr Valuev's report on the mood of the gentry in September 1861 that persuaded Alexander II to accept the views pressed upon him by the reformers and to approve of the western principles of justice enshrined in the court reform of 1864.

The court reform, as I suggested above, contradicted an abiding distrust of the judicial function in Russian autocracy. But at the same time, it was the culmination of the determination of Russian monarchs to introduce western ideas of law into the operation of the Russian state, to pursue the goal of legality (*zakonnost'*). From the reign of Peter the Great, Russian monarchs issued countless decrees on the necessity of reforming the administration of justice. Their notions of legality followed the model of German states; that is, they viewed laws as means to induce officials to implement the legislative enactments of the supreme power. In the late nineteenth century, it became associated with the idea of the German *Rechtsstaat*, which Harold Berman has described as a state governed by laws issued by the legislative authority.<sup>3</sup>

In fact, Hiroshi Oda has shown, the idea of *Rechtsstaat* in Germany went through several stages. In the early nineteenth century, it expressed the vision of

<sup>2</sup> Mikhail Grigor'evich Korotkikh, *Sudebnaia reforma 1864 goda v Rossii: sushchnost' i sotsial'no-pravovoi mekhanizm formirovaniia* (Voronezh: Izdatel'stvo Voronezhskogo universiteta, 1994), 177-78.

<sup>3</sup> Harold J. Berman, "The Rule of Law and the Law-Based State (*Rechtsstaat*) (With special reference to the Soviet Union)," *The Harriman Institute Forum* 4, No. 5 (May 1991): 449-58.

German liberal jurists of a parliamentary state reflecting the will of the people and an independent judiciary supervising the dispensation of justice. After the failure of the revolution of 1848 to attain these goals, *Rechtsstaat* assumed the meaning of the effective enforcement of the laws, “the formal *Rechtsstaat*”, which “focused on the ‘legality of administration’, i.e., the problem of whether the administration is effected in accordance with statutory laws.” It was based on the presumption that it was possible to achieve effective enforcement of the laws in a monarchical system.<sup>4</sup>

Those who aspired to legality in the tsarist state strove for the latter ideal, but it proved difficult to attain. First of all, it required the application of written laws to guide the institutions of justice, and codification remained an elusive objective in eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century Russia. It was undertaken ten times in the eighteenth and early nineteenth century without success, and complaints about the corruption, ineffectiveness, and general inadequacy of the court system echo through the literature and government memoranda of that time.

The question of the role of law in Russian history has been both a vexing and peripheral one. Russia adopts western forms of legality, but without the legal institutions of western monarchy, so that the law often appeared as an alien imposition on the informal and personal relationships native to Russia. Western anti-legalism found a ready reception among the ruling groups in Russia, even when they pronounced the significance of legality, for it expressed the impatience of officials with legal constraints and the monarch’s fears of an incipient legal profession—an unwelcome element of pluralism. The Soviet regime mobilizing the population for struggle against class enemies and then the building of industry gave new force to western anti-legalist attitudes. In the eighteenth and early nineteenth century, reform of the courts was always on the agenda for rulers, officials, and intellectuals, but the issue was quickly overshadowed at the beginning of the reigns of Alexander I and Nicholas I by efforts for or against political reform. The same pattern has recurred since the beginning of *perestroika*. The attempts to reform the courts and to promote legal guarantees necessary to a market economy have once more been overshadowed by the exigencies of establishing a new political order.

<sup>4</sup> Hiroshi Oda, “The Emergence of *Pravovoe Gosudarstvo* (*Rechtsstaat*) in Russia,” *Review of Central and East European Law* 25, No. 3 (1999): 378-79.

The role of law in Russian monarchy, I realized, could be understood only by understanding its place in the broader framework of values embodied in the political culture of Russian monarchy. And it was this realization that led me to embark on my study of Russian monarchy as a culture with its own symbolic system.<sup>5</sup> The primacy of the executive, it became clear, reflected a larger ethos of domination expressed and enacted in a myth of conquest. Mythical narratives and imagery identified the monarch with foreign models of sovereignty and presented him as a figure superordinate in his virtue and heroic dedication. Each monarch, ascending the throne, devised his own scenario of the myth, which in a contemporary cultural idiom dramatized his distance from, and consequently his superiority to, the subject population. The emperor, in addition to representing the anointed of God, appeared as a demiurge of progress dedicated to the general welfare. In this context, there could be no question about legal limitations of his, or even his servitors' authority. The Fundamental Laws of the empire made it clear that it remained in the power of the monarch to revoke general laws of the empire, and while he was supposed to observe these laws until that time, "every act of his will obtains mandatory force without the consent of another institution."<sup>6</sup>

Law represented an attribute of power that identified the ruler with exalted foreign images of sovereignty just as it served as a means to control and civilize the Russian administration. In the seventeenth century, it associated the ruler with the law of the Justinian Code. In the eighteenth century, legality connoted western theories of cameralism and natural law. But these ideas ill accorded with Russian institutional reality. The Russian state lacked the traditions of feudal and Roman law, and what Montesquieu termed "intermediate" institutions, such as the French *parlements* and estate institutions that were capable of ruling on legal issues and dispensing justice. As the example of Japan suggests, legal reform on a western model could proceed even in the absence of such institutions and traditions. But the Japanese monarchical myths did not present the emperor as conqueror, as ruthless head of a powerful executive apparatus. Law remained an ideal and ornament in Russian political culture, what Victor Zhivov has described as a "cultural fiction," enhancing the mythical image of the Russian monarch. The enforcement of law was not a primary concern of the emperors and their high officials, despite their

<sup>5</sup> *Scenarios of Power*, 1 and 2.

<sup>6</sup> Oda, "Emergence," 385.

exasperation with the failure of the administration to dispense justice effectively. Zhivov writes of the “inefficacy” (*nedeistvennost’*) of the law for it was not meant to be effected, but rather fulfilled an “ideological function.”<sup>7</sup>

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The centrality of the myth of the conquest in the symbolic system of Russian monarchy ensured the continued subordination of the judicial function. The myth framed a group of options and values that was completely different from those that governed most European monarchies. In Western Europe, monarchs did not easily yield power to judicial institutions, but they did so when expedience dictated forbearance and the acceptance of assertive and autonomous judicial institutions. The Nobel prize-winning economist Douglass C. North, in his studies of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century England, formulated a model for understanding the appearance of a respect for law in a monarchy. He argued that “a credible threat of removal” was one factor that had convinced kings ruling after the English revolution to accept the autonomy of the common law courts and secure property rights—changes that he concluded helped stimulate the rapid development of the English economy in the eighteenth century. The king’s respect for the law became a “self-enforcing” incentive in that he saw it as in his interest not to meddle in this sphere, an interest that was rewarded by rapid economic growth.<sup>8</sup> In nineteenth-century Germany and France, monarchs, faced with the threat of removal, found it expedient to make compromises, both by allowing autonomy to the courts and finally accepting some type of constitutional limitation.

The conquest myth imposed a quite different understanding of expedience. In its context, the threat of removal appeared as a challenge to struggle to defend realm and dynasty against the invasion of foreign doctrines. The myth was reformulated in the scenarios of Nicholas I and Alexander II with a national grounding that banished the threat of removal by affirming the distinctive character of Russian state institutions. As expressed in the

<sup>7</sup> V. M. Zhivov, *Razyskaniia v oblasti istorii i predystorii russkoi kul'tury* (Moscow: Iazyki slavianskoi kul'tury, 2002), 256-70.

<sup>8</sup> Douglass C. North and Barry W. Weingast, “Constitutions and Commitment: The Evolution of Institutions Governing Public Choice in Seventeenth Century England,” *The Journal of Economic History* 49, no. 4 (December 1989): 803, 817, 819; Douglass C. North, *Structure and Change in Economic History* (New York: Norton, 1981), 21-22.

notions of “official nationality,” the Russian people obeyed and worshipped their monarchs and remained immune to alien doctrines of liberalism and revolution. Expedience was understood in terms of struggle against all political change, an ethos different not only from Western monarchies, but also from the Japanese, which adopted European legal and constitutional forms as means to strengthen and modernize the monarchical state.<sup>9</sup>

Russian emperors saw their interest as embodied in the ruthless defense of its right to determine the general good from above. This dictated a stubborn refusal to part with any element of imperial power. The assignment of responsibilities to a loyal prime minister, or chancellor, common in European monarchies, occurred only under the most dire of emergencies. The co-opting of conservative groups into the process of decision-making was resisted bitterly. When the revolution of 1905 forced a cabinet system on Nicholas II, Petr Stolypin—the one Prime Minister who introduced reforms that might have preserved the monarchy—prompted the tsar’s fear and distrust, as well as steps by the monarch to undermine his authority.<sup>10</sup> Nicholas’s obstinacy and isolation were only another expression of a form of mythical thinking that took into account only domination and grateful obedience.

It was his belief in the national character of Russian monarchy that emboldened Nicholas I, in the wake of the Decembrist uprising of 1825, to prove that the Russian monarchy with its distinctive history of efficacy and triumph could make law something more than a legal fiction. The publication of the laws issued since the *Ulozhenie* of 1649, the digest of the laws, the beginning of serious legal education in the universities, and the establishment of the School of Law (*Uchilishche Pravovedeniia*) were measures that resulted from the emperor’s resolve. But those officials who attempted to make the system work soon despaired of the possibility of improving the system without significant reform. They had studied legal ideas and systems of the west, and they began to envision an independent and respected judiciary that enjoyed its own sphere of expertise and authority.

<sup>9</sup> On the development of the emperor myth as a means to modernize Japan see Carol Gluck, *Japan’s Modern Myths: Ideology in the Late Meiji Period* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985).

<sup>10</sup> On Nicholas’s domination of Stolypin, much of which went on behind the scenes, see Abraham Ascher, *P. A. Stolypin: The Search for Stability in Late Imperial Russia* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001).

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Opening the tsarist state to reform, Alexander II saw himself acting in consonance with the spirit of national distinctiveness: that absolute monarchy would bring the benefits of liberal institutions to Russia and thus further enhance its image of authority and support in educated society. Instead, the Great Reforms stirred broader expectations of public participation in government, the very changes that the reforms were meant to forestall. Alexander rebuffed all such proposals, even for limited participation in government. Political activity remained proscribed and police persecution drove opposition underground, where it responded to violence in kind. In this battlefield, the courts occupied a middle ground between a regime ruthlessly opposed to political change, and an opposition whose only weapon was revolution. In this setting, the reformed courts appeared as a hindrance to the autocracy and an expedient for the revolutionaries.

The introduction of an independent court system raises the question of the possibility of establishing a law-based government under the Russian autocracy. The court reform was the most thoroughgoing of all the great reforms. The new courts retained considerable independence until the end of the empire and dispensed civil and criminal justice far more effectively than the pre-reform courts. But they also were limited by the continued predominance of administrative authorities and the growing suspicion of judges and lawyers of the newly established Russian bar. Recent works have provided fresh approaches and materials on the post-reform legal system. While they all recognize the great advances made possible by the court reform, they also make clear the limits of legal jurisdiction under the autocracy. These limits appeared at the points of interface of the monarchical state with legal institutions: administrative law, political crimes, the requirement to base decisions on written statute law without leeway for judicial interpretation, and the development of a legal profession. Such spheres, as these works make clear, turned into scenes of struggle between an administration insisting on the supremacy of the executive authority governed by the imperial will and a corps of professional jurists who, impelled by their legal consciousness, sought to assert the primacy of law.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> For a brief analysis of the struggle between professionalism and monarchical principles in Russian political culture in the subsequent decades, see Teodor Taranovski, "Sudebnaia reforma i razvitie politicheskoi kul'tury tsarskoi Rossii," in

Ekaterina Pravilova's groundbreaking history of administrative justice in Russia revealed the monarchy's unstinting resistance to legal controls over the governmental officials. The court reform of 1864 introduced the idea of administrative justice in Russia—giving individuals certain rights to defend themselves against administrative wrongdoing—but without providing sufficient procedural mechanisms to make these rights defensible. The Statute of Civil Procedure established the right to sue officials for material losses. The new provincial commissions established to hear such cases, however, consisted only of administrative officials from the provincial bureau and the defendant's chief (*nachal'nik*). The state bore no liability in cases of this type, so even if the plaintiff succeeded in his suit, he faced the impossible task of collecting from the official himself. Parties contracting with the government had the right to sue for breach of contract, but the Ministers had the right to protest the decision of the Judicial Chambers to the highest appellate court—the Cassation Departments of Senate—and such cases could drag on for years without remedy of the plaintiff's grievances. Most important, despite many efforts at change, there existed no legal procedure to charge officials with crimes violating individual rights. Cases about administrative conduct were governed by “the administrative guarantee”—that no official could be tried without the agreement of his superior.<sup>12</sup>

The model for the establishment of administrative justice in Russia, Pravilova makes clear, was not the Anglo-Saxon system of assigning independent courts jurisdiction over the administration, but continental systems of tribunals with judicial functions established within the administration, with the institutions operating according to what Oda refers to as the “formal *Rechtsstaat*.” In Prussia, joint courts of officials and judges heard cases involving administrative personnel at the local level, while a supreme administrative court, also with mixed administrative and judicial personnel exercised supervision over such cases. In France, the State Council,

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*Velikie Reformy v Rossii 1856-1874*, ed. Larissa Zakharova, B. Eklov [Eklof], Dzh. Bushnell (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Moskovskogo universiteta, 1992), 301-15.

<sup>12</sup> Ekaterina Anatol'evna Pravilova, *Zakonnost' i prava lichnosti: administrativnaia iustitsiia v Rossii, vtoraiia polovina XIX v.-okt. 1917* (St. Petersburg: Izd-vo SZAGS, 2000), 55-58. A flagrant example of the implications of this arrangement was the failure to prosecute a single local official for their actions during the pogroms of 1903 and 1906. See Benjamin Nathans, *Beyond the Pale: the Jewish Encounter with Late Imperial Russia* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 329.



the supreme administrative tribunal, began to judge administrative cases according to legal norms after the establishment of the Third Republic in 1871. But Russia could not approximate even the “formal *Rechtsstaat*.” After the court reform of 1864, administrative cases in Russia remained under administrative jurisdiction. They were heard in the First Department of the Senate, a department not affected by the new statutes on court procedure. The First Department continued to deliberate in secret, like the old courts. Its members did not enjoy life tenure. The legal relations of administrative institutions, Privilova concluded, continued to be governed by the culture of autocracy, in which every official regarded himself as a personal representative of the monarch. The symbiosis of administrative and judicial organs and personnel—the ideal of the European *Rechtstaat*—was, by its very nature, alien to the political culture of Russian monarchy.<sup>13</sup>

In 1865, the Minister of Justice, Dmitrii Zamiatnin, submitted a project to reform the First Department and make it an organ of judicial review of administrative instances. This initiative met opposition from all of the other ministers and was terminated by his successor, Konstantin Pahlen.<sup>14</sup> Many officials saw legal overview as alien to the Russian tradition. Constantine Pobedonostsev, then a professor of Civil Law and a reformer of the judicial system, defended the supremacy of executive power in Russia. Privilova cites a memorandum he wrote in the early 1860s, in which he insisted that a court could not judge the activity of the administration because it “did not have the capacity to take on the process of *discretion* (*usmotrenie*) that in some cases defines the activity of [administrative] organs.” Such courts, Pobedonostsev argued, would increase conflicts within the administration and bring only harm. Western institutions, he believed, were not applicable in Russia, where the economy and education had not reached western levels. Russia’s vast territory and sparse population dictated executive supremacy. “In such a situation of disconnection and dispersal, the centralization of power represents a necessity.” Society, in his view, was at a primitive level and

<sup>13</sup> Privilova, *Zakonnost’ i prava lichnosti*, 81, 84-86.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 64-80, 117-18; E. A. Privilova, “Administrativnaia iustitsiia v Rossii: proekty reformy Senata 1862-1867gg,” in *Problemy sotsial’no-ekonomicheskoi i politicheskoi istorii Rossii XIX-XX vekov*, ed. Boris Vasil’evich Ananich et al. (St. Petersburg: Aleteiia, 1999), 222-35; Aleksandr Aleksandrovich Polovtsov, *Dnevnik gosudarstvennogo sekretaria A. A. Polovtsova, 1883-1886*, 2 vols. (Moscow: Nauka, 1966), 1: 86.

conceptions of law were weak. The lowest level of the administration did not understand the limits of their authority and continually had to turn to higher authorities even on minor matters.<sup>15</sup>

Nonetheless, though the members of the First Department of the Senate did not have judicial standing, Privilova shows, they acted as if they were members of a judicial rather than an administrative instance. They did not enjoy the life tenure guaranteed to judges in the court system, but in fact, with only one exception, they remained in office at their own discretion. The first cohort of the Department consisted of liberal jurists and strove to keep government within the bounds of law. Public organizations, including the *zemstvo* and town institutions, had the right by law to appeal to the First Department decisions of the governor that they considered infringements of their rights.<sup>16</sup> But such activity affronted many high officials, who charged that the Senate's actions were "anti-governmental." Endeavoring to reassert the personal role of the tsar, the Minister of Justice, Nikolai Valerianovich Murav'ev, introduced a project into the State Council in 1897 stipulating that in cases touching the responsibility and criminal actions of governors, Senate decisions would have to receive the emperor's approval, requested through the Committee of Ministers. The majority of the State Council voted against the project, but Nicholas II approved the minority recommendation, significantly narrowing the Senate's powers of supervision over provincial government. Increasingly, appointments to the First Department of the Senate went to reliable highly placed officials rather than jurists. But the First Department continued to take the side of *zemstva* against governors until after the turn of the century.<sup>17</sup>

After the Revolution of 1905, the reform of administrative justice figured in the programs of all the moderate parties, the Octobrists, the Progressists, and the Constitutional Democrats. Privilova gives thorough analyses of the various governmental and Duma projects in these years. Little progress was made, because the Ministers of Interior and Justice refused to

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 58-61.

<sup>16</sup> On the Senate's decisions on appeals for the *zemstva* see, P. Lisse, *Verwaltungsgerichtbarkeit im späten Zarrenreich: Der Dirigierende Senat und seine Entscheidungen zur russischen Selbstverwaltung (1864-1917)* (Frankfurt am Main: n.p., 1996).

<sup>17</sup> Privilova, *Zakonnost' i prava lichnosti*, 89-95.

accept measures that would have empowered judicial institutions to pass on administrative cases. The very notion of legal norms governing the state ran counter to Nicholas II's general mistrust of institutions. The Fundamental Law of April 1906, issued by the tsar, maintained the tsar's right of legislative initiative and the sole right to change the Fundamental Law itself.<sup>18</sup> Nicholas's conception of the law was expressed by the Minister of Justice, Ivan Grigor'evich Shcheglovitov, in a speech he delivered to the Duma in early 1914. Unlike Western countries, he declared, "the principle of legality in the Russian state is ... a free manifestation of the supreme will of Russian autocrats."<sup>19</sup>

The trials of political crimes—revolutionary conspiracies—was another source of conflict between administrative authorities and the judiciary. Most judges endeavored to try political crimes impartially, on the basis of the law, rather than retaliating against alleged violations. During the 1870s, high officials in government continued to have faith in the new legal system, and Konstantin Pahlen, the Minister of Justice, felt confident that the courts would brand those accused of revolutionary activity as criminals, destroying their prestige in the eyes of educated society. The trial of the Nechaev group in 1871, ending with the acquittal of fifty-four of the defendants for lack of evidence and relatively mild sentences for most of the others, led the government to remove political crimes from the jurisdiction of juries to a special session of the Senate. With the rise of terrorist attacks on officials in the late 1870s, even the Senators, who enjoyed the status of judges, were deemed unreliable, and, at the end of the 1870s, the government began assigning political crimes to military courts.<sup>20</sup>

Military courts, consisting of panels of military judges appointed by the Military Procurator without life tenure, dispatched a swifter and harsher justice. They fell out of usage for political crimes in the 1890s, but the revolution of 1905 brought increasing resorts to military justice. William C. Fuller Jr. showed that the military courts strove to adhere to judicial process,

<sup>18</sup> Oda, "Emergence," 395-97.

<sup>19</sup> Pravilova, *Zakonnost' i prava lichnosti*, 181-82.

<sup>20</sup> Of seventy-four major trials of revolutionaries from 1879 to 1882, only three were heard in the Special Session of the Senate. The remaining seventy-one cases were assigned to military courts. Nikolai Alekseevich Troitskii, *Bezumstvo khrabrykh: russkie revolutionery i karatel'naia politika tsarizma 1886-1882gg* (Moscow: Mysl', 1978), 185-202.

but the growing pressure from above for dispatch led to the abandonment of such procedures as preliminary investigations. This tendency culminated with the establishment of field court-martials in the summer of 1906. It was Nicholas II who prevailed on Stolypin to introduce these tribunals, which meted out summary justice, often within twenty-four hours, and ordered the execution of more than 950 individuals.<sup>21</sup>

In the last years of Alexander II's reign, the government also issued a series of measures that increased the discretion of the police to detain suspects and sentence revolutionaries without resort to the courts. These measures were formalized in the Security Law of 1881, which established provisions for "Reinforced" and "Extraordinary" states of security, once governors petitioned for them in their provinces. In both states of security, the police could detain suspects for up to two weeks and propose exile to administrative authorities for up to five years. The governors could banish these individuals from the cities under their authority or propose to the Minister of Interior to exile them to specific areas of the empire. Moscow, St. Petersburg, Kiev, and several cities in Ukraine remained under Reinforced Security until 1917.

Jonathan Daly has argued that the Security Law represented an effort, albeit an unsuccessful one, to create a legal structure to govern cases that were not allowed within the purview of the courts. Indeed, he shows that the Security Law of 1881 was meant to prevent arbitrariness in this extra-legal sphere, though it also increased opportunities for police and administrative authorities to act outside the sphere of the law. In many instances, governors took the emergency provisions as an excuse to act arbitrarily and to order arrests and intervene in matters not covered by the Security Law. In the 1890s, administrative exile became the usual way to deal with political crimes. Sergei Zubatov, the chief of the Security Division of the Moscow Police, answered the criticism that he was dealing with political crimes almost exclusively by means of administrative exile, rather than judicial investigations, with the blunt statement that administrative exile was "a security agency 'tradition.'" Other European states—Germany, France, and Austria—imposed similar security laws at times of emergency. But these regimes lasted only for a period of a few years, while Russia's remained in force for four decades. These states, Daly observes, imposed security laws for longer periods and over larger

<sup>21</sup> William C. Fuller, *Civil Military Conflict in Imperial Russia 1881-1914* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), 119-23, 170-76; Ascher, *Stolypin*, 141-42.

areas in their colonial possessions.<sup>22</sup> Russia's response to revolutionary threats resembled that of a colonial power, an example of the persistence of the ethos of conqueror that dealt with native Russian areas as if they were hostile alien lands.

The third source of conflict was the resistance of the administrative system of written law to the efforts of judges in the Cassational Departments of the Senate to evolve legal norms to meet the demands of the new era. There was no provision for such changes in the Russian institutional system, in which all law came from the legislative processes of the imperial state, compiled in the Complete Collection of Laws [*Polnoe Sobranie Zakonov*], and systematized in the Digest of Laws [*Svod Zakonov*]. William G. Wagner has shown that the Civil Cassational Department exercised some interpretive leeway in regard to particular cases of family and inheritance law and prepared the way for the Duma to enact new laws on legal separation and freedom of disposition. The Department took steps to permit legal separation of wives from husbands and receive support from husbands, a modification of the strict proscription of separation in imperial law. But this new ruling, Wagner concluded, was applied inconsistently, and legal separation remained a rare phenomenon. In every case, it was resisted by the Holy Synod, which sought to maintain its own jurisdiction over marital law. The revision of the law itself did not take place until 1914, despite numerous commissions and projects.<sup>23</sup>

The revision of the antiquated Russian inheritance law met with the same rigid opposition. Most noble landholding was defined as "patrimonial property" (*rodovoe imushchestvo*), which had to remain within the family and be divided equally among sons at death; daughters received a one-eighth share of the landed estates. With the growing economic pressures exerted on gentry estates in the last decades of the nineteenth century, many noblemen and jurists sought ways to prevent the fragmentation of holdings required by law.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>22</sup> Jonathan W. Daly, "Emergency Legislation in Late Imperial Russia," *Slavic Review* 54, no. 3 (Fall 1995): 602-29; Jonathan W. Daly, *Autocracy under Siege: Security Police and Opposition in Russia 1866-1905* (De Kalb, IL: Northern Illinois University Press, 1998), 333-40; Petr Andreevich Zaionchkovskii, *Rossiiskoe Samoderzhavie v kontse XIX stoletiiia* (Moscow: Mysl', 1970), 104, 153-58, 172-79.

<sup>23</sup> William Wagner, *Marriage, Property and Law in Late Imperial Russia* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), 206-23. For a recent vivid description and analysis of the legal problems of marital separation at the time, see Barbara Alpern Engel, *Breaking the Ties that Bind: The Politics of Marital Strife in Late Imperial Russia* (Ithaca, NY, Cornell University Press, 2011).

<sup>24</sup> Wagner, *Marriage, Property and Law*, 227-54.

Jurists endeavored to introduce a measure of freedom of disposition. In the last decades of the nineteenth century, the Civil Cassational Department applied a looser interpretation to the bequeathing of patrimonial property in particular cases. It refused to extend the testamentary limits to movable property, such as stocks. It restricted the traditional right of enforced redemption of patrimonial property that had been sold to non-kin, and at the same time, developed precedents for complete testamentary freedom for property not defined as patrimonial. The new law on inheritance passed by the Duma and State Council in 1912 went further in assigning testamentary powers to the owner: he could choose whether to follow the patrimonial rules or to bequeath his property to whomever he chose.<sup>25</sup>

Over time, the inability to participate directly in the shaping of the law—the resort to painstaking evasions in occasional cases—had the same effect as the ban on political participation and expression: it drove the issues of law into the sphere of ideology. The arguments for reform, both conservative and liberal, emerged from their ideological predispositions. Wagner argues, “For jurists, ideology became the medium through which change was understood and a new identity expressed.” The result of all these efforts was to heighten conservative suspicion of the courts and judges, both in the administration, church, and society. Conservatives believed that the courts challenged “the principles of arbitrary and personalized authority and unequal ascriptive status on which the autocratic order rested.”<sup>26</sup> In this respect, the courts acted as “a destabilizing and even revolutionary force in the last years of autocracy.” The court system remained self-contained, at odds with the administration and not integrated into Russian institutions. At the end of the old regime, Wagner concludes, “the different legal orders represented by the courts and by the state administration thus remained in conflict, with the boundary between them constantly being contested.”<sup>27</sup>

The court reform introduced the institutional bases for a legal profession in Russia. Educational requirements for judges, procurators, and other judicial officials, life tenure for judges, and a bar of educated attorneys vested with the power of maintaining ethical norms of its members were

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 334, 351-64.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 290; Oda described the resurgence of the early nineteenth century liberal theories of *Rechtsstaat* in the writings of jurists in this period. Oda, “Emergence,” 401-03.

<sup>27</sup> Wagner, *Marriage, Property and Law*, 379.

innovations that made possible the rise of a corps of legal professionals in Russia. In some respects, this aspect of the reform proved a great success—legal professionals appeared with an unprecedented ethical commitment to the law and a knowledge of law and legal practice and gained an autonomy greater than that of other professions in Russia.<sup>28</sup> However, the resistance of the autocracy to all independent formations also placed limits on the independence of legal officials and the growth and autonomy of the bar, and recent research has indicated the very equivocal nature of legal professionalization in Russia.

Sergei Mikhailovich Kazantsev has shown how the procurators, who took on the role of prosecutors in the reformed courts, became increasingly allied with the police in the government's struggle against the revolutionary movement. Procurators were inclined to collaborate in police investigations and received career advancement by their willingness to work with the police in securing convictions. In so doing, Kazantsev writes, they "not only sanctioned unlawful searches and arrests and the prosecution of persons, but also played the leading part in extra-judicial reprisals against political suspects and dissidents, including exile without trial." In the provisions for Reinforced Safeguard under the security law, provincial procurators were made dependent on the governors.<sup>29</sup> In the 1890s, the highest levels of the Ministry of Justice kept close contact with their counterparts heading police agencies in the Ministry of Interior. Five Ministers of Interior, including Ivan Logginovich Goremykin and Viacheslav Konstantinovich Plehve, came out of the procuracy, as did numerous Assistant-Ministers of Interior and Directors of Police, including Petr Nikolaevich Durnovo and Ivan Grigor'evich Shcheglovitov, who, in 1914, as Minister of Justice, identified the law as a manifestation of the emperor's will.

The collaboration between the Ministries of Justice and Interior was well known to educated society. Daniel Orlovsky concluded that the tension between the personal authority of the emperor and legal institutions and professions grew in the last years of Nicholas II's reign. During his tenure, 1906-1914, Shcheglovitov advanced many careerists who showed great hostility

<sup>28</sup> On the professions in Russia, see Harley D. Balzer, ed., *Russia's Missing Middle Class: The Professions in Russian History* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1996).

<sup>29</sup> Sergei Mikhailovich Kazantsev, *Istoriia tsarskoi prokuratory* (St. Petersburg: Izdatel'stvo Sankt-Peterburgskogo Universiteta, 1993), 173-88.

to attorneys.<sup>30</sup> The procurators' close association with the administration had its roots in the reform itself. Girish N. Bhat has shown that the statutes of 1864 actually preserved some of the practices of inquisitorial procedure. Procurators continued to be in charge of the pre-trial investigations in criminal cases. They enjoyed a great advantage over defense lawyers and in jury trials, the procurator, presiding judge, and defense lawyer usually seeking to reach a consensus rather than engage in the open debate of an adversarial system.<sup>31</sup>

The literature on the bar also raises questions regarding the influence and autonomy of Russians lawyers after the reform. Brian Levin-Stankevich supports the view that a legal education and considerable degree of professional consciousness united judges, procurators, and lawyers, who agreed on the need for a rule of law. On the other hand, he makes clear the high degree of state intervention in the organization of the bar and the limits the government imposed on those who could gain admission.<sup>32</sup> Councils of the bar were instituted only in Moscow, Petersburg, and Khar'kov by 1875, when the government placed a moratorium on establishing further Councils. Large areas of the empire remained without sufficient numbers of attorneys. To remedy this problem, in 1874 the government created the category of private lawyers (*chastnye poverennye*) who had no educational requirement and remained outside the jurisdiction of the bars. The dire shortage of lawyers throughout the empire, William Pomeranz has shown, resulted in the persistence and prevalence of an "underground bar"—pre-reform *striapchie* (scriveners or fixers)—most of whom were ignorant and corrupt. The restriction of the admission of Jews in 1889 to both the bar and the category of private lawyers further reduced the number of attorneys available to the people and ensured the continued significance of the underground bar. The elimination of the

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 188-92; Sergei M. Kazantsev, "The Judicial Reform of 1864 and the Procuracy in Russia," in *Reforming Justice in Russia, 1864-1996: Power, Culture, and the Limits of Legal Order*, ed. Peter H. Solomon, Jr. (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 1997), 44-59; Pravilova, *Zakonnost' i prava lichnosti*, 182; Daniel Orlovsky, "Professionalism in the Ministerial Bureaucracy on the Eve of the February Revolution of 1917," in Balzer, *The Professions*, 270, 278-79.

<sup>31</sup> Girish N. Bhat, "The Consensual Dimension of Late Imperial Criminal Procedure: The Example of Trial by Jury," in Solomon, *Reforming Justice*, 61-81.

<sup>32</sup> Brian L. Levin-Stankevich, "The Transfer of Legal Technology and Culture: Law Professionals in Tsarist Russia," in Balzer, *The Professions*, 223-49.



members of the underground bar was an issue recognized by the government and widely discussed in the press, but the absence of other sources of counsel in the rural reaches of the empire made them virtually indispensable to most of Russia's population.<sup>33</sup>

Pomeranz also questions the ethical rigor of the bar councils, which were criticized at the time for inconsistency and arbitrariness of their discipline of members.<sup>34</sup> On the other hand, Jane Burbank interprets the inconsistencies of disciplinary approaches—the survival of a moralistic paternalist tutelage in a rational professional setting—as part of the construction of lawyerhood in a hybrid society.<sup>35</sup> Benjamin Nathans's study of Jewish lawyers shows that many members of the bar shared the government's suspicion of Jews. Fearing that Jews would flood the legal profession and lower its moral standards, they sought to limit the number of Jewish lawyers. Some Russian lawyers took this stand in the face of government determination to introduce such limits, hoping to forestall state encroachment on the bar councils' authority. The result, in any case, was a compromise of their dedication to the autonomy of legal knowledge and commitment, without deterring the government from its goal. A decree of 1889 required the agreement of the Minister of Justice to admit a non-Christian to the bar, thus restricting the autonomy of the bar in admitting members of its profession.<sup>36</sup> The Russian bar produced many distinguished and idealistic defenders of the law, and certainly attained standards of council and a degree of autonomy unknown before the reform. But it did not possess a monopoly of the practice of the law and its need to function within an autocratic system limited its potential to extend its influence and to sustain its commitment to legal ideals.

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The new legal institutions and profession, of course, faced problems that would confront any newly established organs, and which might have been overcome with time. But the fact that these problems remained the same, or

<sup>33</sup> William E. Pomeranz, "Justice from Underground: The History of the Underground Advokatura," *The Russian Review* 52, No. 3 (July 1993): 321-40.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 327.

<sup>35</sup> Jane Burbank, "Discipline and Punish in the Moscow Bar Association," *The Russian Review* 54, No. 1 (January 1995): 44-64.

<sup>36</sup> Nathans, *Beyond the Pale*, 311-18, 340-55.

increased in the last decade of the empire, suggests that they reflected structural continuities more than growing pains. The new courts and the Russian bar arose within an autocratic system that would not tolerate rival interpretations of the law. Old traditions of administrative domination and contempt for law persisted alongside courts dedicated to the law as a calling. Legal institutions, in this respect, reflected the disparate and often incompatible character of Russian institutions in general. Russian society before World War I comprised many conflicting institutional traditions, often working toward contradictory goals. The Petrine administration and service ethos, the Catherinian order of estates and provincial governance, the bureaucratic centralism of Alexander I and Nicholas I, coexisted with the overlay of the great reforms with movement toward greater openness, citizenship, and legality. These changes produced a society that, though personally subordinate to the monarch, was fragmented, inchoate, and without firm institutional ties to the governmental structure. Elise Kimerling Wirtschafter has observed the Russian state's "limited administrative capabilities and atomized institutional structures" that "made it difficult to secure linkages between society and government."<sup>37</sup> In the midst of this institutional, social, and conceptual mosaic, there lurked a memory of an original unity attained in Muscovy that was founded on the authority of a national tsar who could engage in free discourse with the masses of population without resorting to the tangle of institutions and western blueprints for change.

The variegated and fragmented character of Russian society was a product of its historical development, a result of the sharp discontinuities of rule prescribed by the myth of conquest. The imperative of change intrinsic to the myth appeared in the scenarios that dramatized feats of transformation that elevated the heroic image of each ruler acceding to the throne. As a result, new institutions were established without relation to, or in conflict with, existing institutions. Alfred Rieber has described this patchwork as "a sedimentary society," a characterization that makes clear the indeterminate direction of pre-World War I social and institutional development in Russia. It describes a situation in which "what appears to be a transition ceases in fact to become an intermediate stage between two

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<sup>37</sup> On the institutional weakness and the blurring of social definitions see Elise Kimerling Wirtschafter, *Social Identity in Imperial Russia*, especially 5-9, 37-42, 169-73.

well-defined types of society, asserts its own stubborn character, and takes on a life of its own.”<sup>38</sup>

The very messiness and uncertainty of this situation has tempted historians to discover tendencies that, if developed, would fit one or another teleological model and dispel the cloud of indeterminacy. Two landmark studies, Jörg Baberowski’s *Autocratie und Justiz* and Boris Mironov’s *Sotsial’naia istoriia Rossii* do just that. They simplify the institutional and particularly the legal development of Russia by factoring the monarchy out of the historical process. Instead, they seize upon the great impersonal forces propounded by Hegelian historicism and models of modernization. The failure to arrive at or approach the final goal is explained by inimical groups, particularly those opting for radical democratic change, who disrupt the immanent and orderly movement of progress.

Jörg Baberowski’s *Autocratie und Justiz* was the first comprehensive study of the post-reform courts in Russia.<sup>39</sup> It is refreshingly free from the idealization of the new courts that influenced the liberal historiography of the Great Reforms. Of particular interest and insight are his treatments of the post-reform bar, the shortcomings of the jury system, and the motivation and results of the counter-reforms of the 1880s and 1890s.<sup>40</sup> Baberowski wants to correct “accepted prejudices about the possibilities and limits of liberal, constitutional, and legal reforms in the backward context of the multi-ethnic empire and to

<sup>38</sup> Alfred Rieber, “The Sedimentary Society,” in *Between Tsar and People: Educated Society and the Quest for Public Identity in Late Imperial Russia*, ed. Edith Clowes, Samuel D. Kassow, and James L. West (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), 361-62. Jane Burbank also emphasizes the indeterminacy of Russian development in the disciplinary patterns of the Moscow bar. “This transmission of existing forms of social organization in a tutelary, conciliar and paternalistic mode into the new realm of professional culture should not be regarded as necessarily transitional to something else, or as retarding to a postulated European path for Russian law.” Burbank, “Discipline and Punish,” 64.

<sup>39</sup> Jörg Baberowski, *Autocratie und Justiz: Zum Verhältnis von Rechtsstaatlichkeit und Rückständigkeit im ausgehenden Zarenreich 1864-1914* (Frankfurt am Main: V. Klostermann, 1996).

<sup>40</sup> Other useful works on the bar are Pomerantz, “Justice from Underground”; Jane Burbank, “Discipline and Punish”; Nadezhda Vasil’evna Cherkasova, *Formirovanie i razvitie advokatury v Rossii; 60-80 gody XIX v.* (Moscow: Nauka, 1987). On the jury system see A. K. Afanas’ev, “Prisiazhnye zasedateli v Rossii, 1866-1885,” in Zakharova, Eklov, Bushnell, *Velikie Reformy v Rossii, 184-202*.

reveal the necessary presuppositions for political reform.” He views Russia as a backward country just starting out on the path of modernization. The judicial reform from this perspective appears an inopportune intrusion on the road to progress. He shares my evaluation of the important role of the cohort of educated officials who took part in the formulation of the court reform of 1864, but characterizes them as misguided idealists drafting a reform that in many respects was premature and misbegotten. They appear in his interpretation as radical men of the sixties who wanted not only to Europeanize the court system but to use it as an instrument to force democratic institutions on a country not ready for them.<sup>41</sup>

In Baberowski’s view, the radical goals of the legal profession deflected Russia from the gradual process of modernization. The reformed courts were too advanced for nineteenth-century Russia. The jury system and the Justices of the Peace were inefficient, inept at dispensing justice, and very much in need of state oversight. Baberowski marshals a great number of sweeping critiques from officials and conservatives of the incompetence of juries and justices of the peace, their disregard of the law, and the lack of accountability for their judgements. The conservative “reforms” of the 1880s, including the replacement of the Justices of the Peace by Land Captains, under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Interior, did little to help.<sup>42</sup> They merely increased the disunity of the system, leading to increasing fragmentation and inhibiting progress.

Based implicitly on the model of imperial Germany, Baberowski’s model of modernization construes progressive change as the work of a rational state bureaucracy incorporating principles of law and working toward progress. But if such a rational bureaucracy had taken these principles seriously, the leaders of the legal profession would hardly have been so refractory and oppositional. Baberowski attributes the fragmentation and conflict of institutions to the actions of independent institutions. But this explanation ignores the ethos

<sup>41</sup> Baberowski, *Autocratie und Justiz*, ix, 788-89.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 188-338. A critical treatment of the Justices of the Peace is also presented by Thomas S. Pearson in *Russian Officialdom in Crisis: Autocracy and Local Self-Government, 1861-1900* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1989). The view of the Land Captain as a conservative attempt to control peasant local institutions and preserve noble domination of the countryside is argued in Francis William Wcislo, *Reforming Rural Russia: State, Local Society, and National Politics, 1855-1914* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990).

of Russian monarchy and particularly the mentalities of tsarist officials, whose critiques of the courts reflected traditional fears for the extent of their own executive authority. Such officials preserved the absolutist faith that bureaucratic oversight could correct legal failings, the mechanism that failed so patently to cope with the dispensation of justice before 1864.

The conservative Minister of Justice, Nikolai Murav'ev, usually presented as a reactionary seeking to undo the basic principles of the court reform, emerges here as the misunderstood hero, struggling to strengthen bureaucratic oversight. Appointed in 1894, Murav'ev submitted proposals, never introduced, to rationalize and bring unity to judicial institutions, and Baberowski provides a valuable summary and defense of his ideas.<sup>43</sup> His initiative of 1897 to curtail the jurisdiction of the Senate over governors would have enhanced the personal influence of the tsar and widened the rift between the executive and legal institutions of Russia, rather than following the Prussian example of collaboration between legal and administrative personnel. In Russia, the disposition to allow judges to curb administrative arbitrariness clashed with a striving to reassert executive and personal supremacy.<sup>44</sup> As Theodore Taranovskii wrote, the great reforms "led to the Revolution of 1905, not only because they undermined the existing order, but also because they did not undermine it enough."<sup>45</sup>

With the establishment of the State Duma in 1906, Baberowski sees the judiciary withdrawing from partisan, anti-state activity and a new group of apolitical jurists arising to staff the administration. But those he mentions were known as anti-Semites and anti-liberals and hardly stood apart from the political fray.<sup>46</sup> The advocates of increasing judicial control over the bureaucracy were hardly firebrand radicals: they were the leaders of the moderate and conservative groups in the Third and Fourth Dumas, Kadets, Octobrists, and Nationalists who had been elected on the basis of the restricted suffrage introduced by Stolypin in 1907. In response to their demands, the Ministers became increasingly militant in defending the tsar's prerogatives, even extending his claims. Shcheglovitov went so far as to declare that the law was the monarch's will. The response of high judicial officials,

<sup>43</sup> Baberowski, *Autocratie und Justiz*, 437-80.

<sup>44</sup> Pravilova, *Zakonnost' i prava lichnosti*, 44-45, 62.

<sup>45</sup> Taranovski, "Sudebnaia reforma," 315.

<sup>46</sup> Baberowski, *Autocratie und Justiz*, 778-79.

such as Shcheglovitov, to the pressures from the tsar in the Beilis case hardly suggests that the new generation of professional jurists were making an advance toward a law-based state, a *pravovoe gosudarstvo*, either of the liberal or the formal type.

Boris Mironov's sweeping and magisterial *Sotsial'naia istoriia Rossii* places the evolution of law and legal institutions in a broad social context and interprets them as central elements in Russian historical development and progress.<sup>47</sup> The subtitle—"the Genesis of Personality, the Democratic Family, Civil Society, and Law-Based State"—announces both his intellectual lineage and central themes. Mironov applies the model of progress propounded by Russian Hegelians in the middle of the nineteenth century. The genesis of the personal dignity and rights of the individual, expressed by the term "personality" (*lichnost'*), was a fundamental proposition of liberal Hegelians such as Konstantin Kavelin, who saw its development as characteristic of all civilized nations. Making his way through his subjects, the formation of the family, *sosloviia*, and institutions, Mironov traces the ineluctable emergence of individuality and the triumph of the law.

Like Baberowski, Mironov works from the assumption of backwardness, from which Russia would emerge or try to emerge through institutional reform and sees the Russian autocracy—*samoderzhavie*—as a benign force driving modernization forward. However, where Baberowski diagnoses a pathological process of premature spasmodic development leading to a failed modernization, Mironov detects a gradual process of increasing legality, rights of the individual, and the development of an embryonic law-based state. "In Russia as in all other European states, legitimate rule was realized at all stages of development." The "popular monarchy" (*narodnaia monarkhiia*) of the seventeenth century was followed by the "paternalistic noble monarchy" (*dvorianskaia paternalisticheskaia monarkhiia*) of the eighteenth. The nineteenth-century monarchy sought to use law as an instrument to limit the administration becoming what Mironov refers to as a monarchy limited by law (*pravomernaia monarkhia*), a term originated by pre-revolutionary legal historians. He describes the reform period as the all-estate monarchy limited

<sup>47</sup> B. N. Mironov, *Sotsial'naia istoriia Rossii perioda imperii (XVIII-nachalo XX v.)* (St. Petersburg: D. Bulanin, 1999); the somewhat revised English translation is Boris N. Mironov with Ben Eklof, *The Social History of Russia, 1700-1917* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2000).

by law (*vsesoslovnaia pravomernaia monarkhiia*). The introduction of the Duma initiated what he calls the “dualistic law-based monarchy” (*dualisticheskaia pravovaia monarkhiia*).<sup>48</sup>

Mironov rejects “the more pessimistic hypotheses about the course of Russia’s development.”<sup>49</sup> In terms of legal development, he strains to minimize discontinuities in order to sustain, like Sergei Soloviev, an evolutionary narrative that presents history as an ongoing linear process without sharp divisions between periods or ideals.<sup>50</sup> He questions the sharp break between the old courts and the new, which most historians associate with the court reform of 1864. He asserts that a majority of cases in the pre-reform courts were tried by adversarial or mixed procedure rather than the inquisitorial system, making it appear that the introduction of adversarial procedure in the Court Reform had roots in the Russian past.<sup>51</sup> But it is difficult to understand how adversarial justice, a juridical debate between plaintiff and defendant, could be practiced in pre-reform Russia without trained lawyers capable of arguing points of law before a court. The procedure was predominantly closed and based on written statement. Indeed, Dmitrii Bludov’s reform project of 1849 proposed the introduction of adversarial procedure to remedy the deficiencies in civil trials in Russia.<sup>52</sup>

Mironov disputes the unrelieved dark picture of the pre-reform courts presented in most accounts, including my own, using statistical data to determine whether the differences were as great as contemporaries and historians have suggested. His statistics indicate a rising incidence of criminality in the decades after the court reform, along with increased caseloads. He adduces interesting data showing an increase both in the number of cases heard in the post reform courts and in the percentage of appeals. But then he offers the dubious conclusion that the increasing frequency of appeals indicates

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 2: 109-95.

<sup>49</sup> “Response to William Wagner’s ‘Law and the State in Boris Mironov’s *Sotsial’naia Istoriiia Rossii*,” *Slavic Review* 60, No. 3 (Fall 2001): 566.

<sup>50</sup> Soloviev followed this principle in his *Istoriiia Rossii*: “v istorii nictio ne okanchivaetsia vdrug i nictio ne nachinaetsia vdrug; novoe nachinaetsia v to vremia kogda staroe prodolzhaetsia.” Sergei Mikhailovich Soloviev, *Sochineniia* (Moscow: Mysl’, 1988), 2: 635.

<sup>51</sup> Mironov, *Sotsial’naia istoriia*, 2: 52.

<sup>52</sup> See Richard Wortman, *The Development of a Russian Legal Consciousness* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976), 160-61.

that “before the reform the population was more satisfied with verdicts of courts, both criminal and civil, than after the reform” and that the pre-reform decisions attained greater fairness. A more likely explanation is that the rise in the number of appeals in the post-reform courts indicated a greater faith in the judicial system and a greater ease in pursuing appeals.<sup>53</sup>

To sustain the argument of the slow but ineluctable spread of legality, Mironov also tends to exaggerate the successes of legal reform in the late nineteenth century. This is particularly evident in his treatment of the attempts to develop administrative law. He finds a “strong continuity in the development of the principles of legality in the administration thanks to the development of administrative justice over the whole imperial period.” He describes the positive steps in the 1860s and 1870s, but omits the fact that individuals were left virtually without recourse in the case of official abuses and oversights.<sup>54</sup> Like Baberowski, Mironov ignores the autocracy, except when it acts as an agent of modernization, and understates the pervasiveness of official mentalities that placed a greater emphasis on attachment to the emperor and hierarchy than to the dispensation of justice. Rather, he imposes the Weberian model of bureaucratic professionalization, which he argues was gradually taking hold in tsarist Russia. But his evidence is limited to objective factors of education, salary, and specialization, and says very little about subjective attitudes and the resulting practices.<sup>55</sup> It is not clear on what grounds—error or cunning—that he dismisses the contention of Vasilii Alekseevich Maklakov and Vladimir Matveevich Gessen that the entire prosecutorial and legal apparatus was helpless when the crime in question was committed by an official. A moderate liberal like Evgenii Nikolaevich Trubetskoi wrote “nowhere are state servants as discredited as they are here in Russia. The word *chinovnik* ... cannot be translated into any foreign language, because the sense of insult that it carries, like a swear word, is not translatable.”<sup>56</sup>

Mironov marks the beginning of the law-based monarchy with the introduction of a “constitution” and a parliament in 1906. The maintenance

<sup>53</sup> Mironov, *Sotsial'naia istoriia*, 2: 56-65. These conclusions are moderated in the English version, but without changing the fundamental question of the difficulties of appeal in the pre-reform system (*A Social History* 2:302-07).

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 2:169-70.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 2: 170-75.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 2: 171; Pravilova, *Zakonnost' i prava lichnosti*, 231.



of executive power in the hands of the emperor was, he concludes, “objectively expedient” because it assured the smoothness of the transition to constitutionalism. Instead, it assured the contrary—the bitter struggle between the first two Dumas and the throne. He construes Stolypin’s change in the election law as a positive step “for the purpose of allowing effective work of the Duma within the framework of existing laws” even though the change in the electoral law violated the Fundamental Laws of the empire.<sup>57</sup> The conservative third and fourth Dumas were engaged in continuous conflict with the throne. The fact that the establishment of a parliament only intensified the struggle between “society” and supreme authority seems “paradoxical” to him.<sup>58</sup>

The villains for Mironov are not ideologically inspired judges, but members of the intelligentsia, who, inspired by radical ideas and moral nihilism, would not allow historical progress to continue along its preordained path.<sup>59</sup> But it was not only revolutionary extremists, but the moderate parties—the Constitutional Democrats, the Progressists, and the Octobrists—who fought for civil liberties and a responsible ministry. Once more, the monarch and the monarchy have been omitted from the historical picture. The law, Mironov contends, was observed in regard to 99% of ordinary people. It was violated only in regard to “disloyal individuals.”<sup>60</sup> Such a conclusion would be hard to sustain regarding a state in which official abuses were rarely prosecuted, and the vast network of the political police operated outside the bounds of the law. In other cases, perhaps, the law was technically observed, but the limited powers of judicial institutions to interpret and create law stymied the development of Russian legal rights and jurisprudence. The emperor may have lost many of his prerogatives in the early twentieth century, but the system of absolute monarchy showed great staying power and resistance to further encroachments on its authority. Although justice in the early twentieth century was perhaps dispensed with greater impartiality and effectiveness than earlier in Russian history, the forces inimical to a law-based state remained dominant.

Another significant body of recent research touches on the operations and influence of the *volost’* courts in regard to the development of a peasant legal consciousness. The conventional views of *volost’* judges as corrupt and ignorant,

<sup>57</sup> Mironov, *Sotsial’naia istoriia*, 2: 158-61.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 2: 158-60.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 2: 233-35.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, 2: 171.

and the peasants as contemptuous of the court, have been questioned by scholars examining peasant legal attitudes and practices. Mironov emphasizes the separateness of the peasants from the dominant legal order and their adherence to primitive peasant law, much of it based on superstition, though he acknowledges that in some respects it was subject to influences of state law and the reform courts.<sup>61</sup> Several scholars have determined that the peasants were turning to the *volost'* courts with increasing frequency. They have uncovered evidence that peasants were displaying a growing trust in the courts, and that the courts themselves were basing their decisions on laws.<sup>62</sup> However, they have also found evidence of the peasants' frustration with courts, especially in criminal matters, and their frequent resort to violence—lynch law, *samosud*, and arson—the weakness of judicial institutions in the countryside, and the persistence of a moral code resistant to the legal and ethical norms vested in the legal system.<sup>63</sup>

In fact, the operation and effects of *volost'* courts reflected the patchwork character of Russian institutional development in general. The state law

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., 2: 76-78.

<sup>62</sup> See for example, Jane Burbank, *Russian Peasants Go to Court: Legal Culture in the Countryside, 1905-1917* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2004); Beatrice Farnsworth, "The Litigious Daughter-in-Law," *Slavic Review* 45, No. 1 (Spring 1986): 49-64; also in Beatrice Farnsworth and Lynne Viola, eds., *Russian Peasant Women* (New York: Oxford University Press 1992), 89-106; Gareth Popkins, "Code Versus Custom: Norms and Tactics in Peasant *Volost'* Court Appeals, 1889-1917," *The Russian Review* 59, no. 3 (July 2000): 408-424, and "Popular Development of Procedure in a Dual Legal System: 'Protective Litigation' in Russia's Peasant Courts," *Journal of Legal Pluralism and Unofficial Law* no. 43 (1999): 57-87. On the favorable response of the urban lower classes to the courts, see Joan Neuberger, "Popular Legal Cultures: The St. Petersburg Mirovoi Sud," in *Russia's Great Reforms, 1855-1881*, ed. Ben Eklof, John Bushnell, and Larissa Zakharova (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994), 231-46.

<sup>63</sup> Stephen P. Frank, *Crime, Cultural Conflict, and Justice in Rural Russia, 1856-1914* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999); Cathy A. Frierson, "Of Red Roosters, Revenge, and the Search for Justice: Rural Arson in European Russia in the Late Imperial Era," in Solomon, *Reforming Justice*, 107-31. Most insightful on the law in rural society: Cathy A. Frierson, "I Must Always Answer to the Law. . . ' Rules and Responses in the Reformed *Volost'* Court," *Slavonic and East European Review* 75, no. 2 (April 1997): 308-334. Also see her *All Russia is Burning!: A Cultural History of Fire and Arson in Late Imperial Russia* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2002), 162-65, 267-74.

imposed by bureaucratic authorities in the Ministry of Justice both influenced and conflicted with the peasants own traditional concerns and attitudes toward justice. At the same time, the reformed courts had to dispense justice in the framework of an absolute state claiming a monopoly of the law. Nicholas II responded to the institutional melange of early twentieth century by declaring his aversion to officials and institutions both of the state and the courts. He envisioned a personal monarchy in which the tsar enjoyed a spiritual bond with the peasants that had persisted since Muscovite Rus' and that had survived the excrescence of European-inspired law institutions.<sup>64</sup> His means were personal rule from above enforced by the instruments of violence—the police and the army. His was the most potent expression of the conquest myth, the tsar declaring war on governmental institutions and educated society in order to restore his autocratic power in the name of the common people. This vision left little room for a law-based state that would protect the rights and interests of Russian citizens.



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<sup>64</sup> See *Scenarios of Power*, 2, chapters 11-14.

## 2. The Representation of Dynasty and “Fundamental Laws” in the Evolution of Russian Monarchy



[Alexander] was never without an ideology, whether real or pretended. This merely reflected his education and the influence of his mentor. [La Harpe] No one would believe, [Alexander] told me, what I had to debate with him. Alexander held that heredity was an abuse of sovereignty, and I had to spend more than an hour and use all of my eloquence and logic to convince him that it was heredity that comprised the tranquility and happiness of peoples. (Napoleon Bonaparte recalling his conversation with Alexander I at Tilsit. Interview at St. Helena, 1816)<sup>1</sup>

In this country, the memory of a deceased emperor is little honored, but in the present instance, inclination accords with a policy that would have the preceding reign forgotten. (The Marquis de Custine, *La Russie en 1839*)<sup>2</sup>

In contrast with the evolution of the absolute monarchies of Europe, the history of Russian monarchy is notable for the weakness of a concept or tradition of legal dynastic succession. The explanations for this situation may take into consideration the weakness of feudal and Roman law as a grounding for the early Russian state, compounded by the traumatic upheavals of the seventeenth century that left Russian monarchy without a generally accepted grounds for succession when Peter the Great adopted the principle of designation in 1722. Peter’s law left succession in doubt, leading to the frequent court coups in the succeeding decades. But even after Emperor Paul I promulgated a law of hereditary succession in 1796, inherited right remained an insufficient justification for a new monarch’s claim to absolute authority.

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<sup>1</sup> Cited in Marie-Pierre Rey, *Alexandre Ier* (Paris: Flammarion, 2009), 237.

<sup>2</sup> The Marquis de Custine, *La russie en 1839*, vol. 2 (Paris: Grimma, 1844), 117.

In the nineteenth century, succession followed the hereditary line without serious challenge, but hereditary right was never deemed sufficient to justify the rulers' claims to the throne.

These claims rather took the form of narratives of conquest and triumph introduced by Peter, a "representational culture" incorporating the imagery and ceremonies of the Baroque and eighteenth century conceptions of the role of the enlightened monarch.<sup>3</sup> The rulers of Russia continued to dramatize their assumption of power, presenting themselves as Peter's successors, mythical heroes, breaking with the previous reign, transcending human limits and bringing enlightenment and order to the Russian state—emphasizing renewal and change rather than dynastic continuity. The public presentation of the mythical image of the monarch and the exercise of absolute power were reciprocal processes: absolute rule sustained an image of transcendent monarch, which in turn warranted the exercise of his unlimited power. This article discusses not the accession of one or another ruler, but the effects of the preponderance of a representative rather than legal tradition of dynastic succession on the mentality and workings of the monarchy, and particularly on the role of law in the Russian state.

The legalization of dynasty proceeded within the framework of the imperial myth, which in the nineteenth century presented the advancement of Russian law as an attribute of the supreme image of ruler. It was embodied in the Fundamental Laws of the Russian Empire decreed by Paul I and Nicholas I, which provided laws of state that could regulate and legitimize the growing Russian administration, but ensured that legal restraints would remain subordinate to the will of the sovereign. In this way, legality issued from the will of a transcendent ruler and evolved at his discretion and mercy.

### DYNASTIC SUCCESSION IN EUROPE AND RUSSIA

The connection between traditions of dynastic succession and the evolution of the law has been a theme in the literature of the past few decades on the consolidation of state power in the West. The early eighteenth century witnessed the culmination of a long development of European dynastic traditions. Enshrined in law, such traditions provided a core of state power and made possible a continuity of rule that sustained the state during periods

<sup>3</sup> On "representational culture" see T. C. W. Blanning, *Culture of Power*, 59 and passim; Jürgen Habermas, *Structural Transformation of Public Sphere*, 7-10.

of crisis or change. In France, the Salic Law, in the principalities of Germany, and in the Hapsburg empire, rules adopted by sovereign families provided initial sources of regularity and stability for monarchical power. The regulations could involve contractual agreements with the estates and often came to be regarded as examples of a "Lex Fundamentalis," understood as permanent and inviolable. Jurists trained in Roman jurisprudence then elaborated state laws, establishing the basis for a professionalized administration centered in the monarchy.<sup>4</sup> These developments culminated in the establishment of permanent, fundamental laws of succession in early eighteenth century statutes such as England's Act of Settlement, 1701, Sweden's "On the Form of Rule" (1719), Philip V's of Spain's testament (1713), and Charles VI's Pragmatic Sanction of 1713 for the Hapsburg Empire.<sup>5</sup> In this way, the legal formulation of dynasty provided a foundation for the absolute state that made possible the persistence of monarchies no longer reliant on the representative culture of the Baroque.

The longest dynastic tradition was the French, the Capetians ruling without major interruptions from 987 to 1791. Elaborate funeral rituals displayed effigies of the deceased king that represented the "body politic," preserving the unbroken continuity of the house during interregna from the thirteenth to the sixteenth centuries.<sup>6</sup> This practice contrasted with the English juridical fiction of "the king's two bodies," which established

<sup>4</sup> There has been extensive development of these ideas in German historical literature. See: Heinz Mohnhaupt, "Die Lehre von der 'Lex Fundamentalis' und die Hausgesetzgebung europäischer Dynastien," in *Der dynastische Fürstenstaat: Zur Bedeutung von Sukzessionsordnungen für die Entstehung des frühmodernen Staates*, ed. Johannes Kunisch and Helmut Neuhaus (Berlin: Duncker and Humblot, 1982), 14-19; Ulrich Muhlack, "Thronfolge und Erbrecht in Frankreich," in *ibid.*, 173-98; Wolfgang E. J. Weber, "Einleitung," in *Der Fürst: Ideen und Wirklichkeit in der europäischen Geschichte*, ed. Wolfgang E. J. Weber (Cologne: Böhlau, 1998), 4-8; Weber, "Dynastiesicherung und Staatsbildung: Die Entfaltung des frühmodernen Fürstenstaates," in *ibid.*, 92-101, 118-24; Wolfgang Reinhard, *Geschichte der Staatsgewalt: Eine vergleichende Verfassungsgeschichte Europas von den Anfängen bis zur Gegenwart* (Munich: C. H. Beck, 1999), 134-38.

<sup>5</sup> Mohnhaupt, "Die Lehre von der 'Lex Fundamentalis,'" 6; Oleg Omel'chenko, "Stanovlenie zakonodatel'nogo regulirovaniia prestolonaslediiia v Rosiiskoi imperii," *Femis: Ezhegodnik istorii prava i pravovedeniia*, Vyp. 7, 2007, 26.

<sup>6</sup> Ralph E. Giesey, "Inaugural Aspects of French Royal Ceremonies," in *Coronations: Medieval and Early Modern Monarchic Ritual*, ed. Janos M. Bak (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 35-36, and "Models of Rulership in French Royal Ceremonial," in *Rites of Rulers: Symbolism Ritual and Politics Since the Middle Ages*, ed. Sean Wilentz (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985), 41-58.

a distinction between the mortal and the immortal persona of the king. Ernst Kantorowicz has shown how the abstractions of the king's "political body" and the crown came to represent the immortal dignity of the monarchy during dynastic struggles and political upheaval (See page 41).<sup>7</sup> By the early eighteenth century, Parliament had determined that the stability and welfare of the realm depended on the acceptance of dynastic monarchy, vested in the house of Hanover.<sup>8</sup>

In Austria, the Hapsburgs' titles to the lands of their empire came principally through strategic marriages. Hapsburg family law remained secret, determined by family councils, and known only to the members of the house.<sup>9</sup> Hapsburg rulers were glorified as the last descendants of Aeneas, giving mythical expression to their pretensions as Holy Roman Emperors, though the titles to their realms derived from principles of hereditary rule as formulated in the family law.<sup>10</sup>

The dynastic laws of the Hohenzollerns and the princes of other German states typified the development of a dynastic monarchy in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Europe. By accepting the principle of primogeniture of succession in the seventeenth century, members of German royal houses sacrificed their individual interests by acceding to the senior male as heir. In this way, primogeniture provided an impetus for an ethic of enlightened absolutism. It was formulated by Frederick the Great, who wrote in his testament: "I command all of my relatives, if need be, to sacrifice their personal interests for the benefit of the welfare of the Fatherland and the advantages of the state."<sup>11</sup>

At the accession of each Prussian king, the estates of the realm, the *Stände*, gathered to perform the ceremonies of the oath, *Huldigungsfeiern*, continuing

<sup>7</sup> Ernst H. Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies*, 314-450. Ralph Giesey wrote, "The English were the masters of legal fiction, the French of ritual symbolism. The body natural and body politic of English jurisprudence equal the corpse and effigy of French ceremonial" ("Models of Rulership," 51).

<sup>8</sup> See Howard Nenner, *The Right to be King: The Succession to the Crown of England, 1603-1714* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1995), 1-12.

<sup>9</sup> Günther Kronenbitter, "Haus ohne Macht? Erzherzog Franz Ferdinand (1863-1914) und die Krise der Habsburgermonarchie," in *Der Fürst*, 179-80.

<sup>10</sup> Marie Tanner, *The Last Descendant of Aeneas: the Hapsburgs and the Mythic Image of Emperor* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993).

<sup>11</sup> Daniel Schönplüg, "Die Heiraten der Hohenzollern. Verwandtschaft, Politik und Ritual im europäischen Kontext 1640-1918," Habilitationsschrift Freie Universität Berlin, 2009, 37.

a medieval tradition that renewed and displayed social bonds between the nobility and the dynasty. Amidst processions and celebrations, members of the estates made obeisance and pronounced oaths of loyalty to their king. These ceremonies carried both juridical and symbolic meaning, attesting to the persistence of principles of mutuality, even during the period of monarchical absolutism.<sup>12</sup> The ceremony of coronation, on the other hand, did not figure as a ritual necessary for accession, and in Prussia coronations took place only in 1701 and 1861.

From the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries, dynastic succession and marriages were formalized in agreements by councils of members of the Prussian ruling house. The Hohenzollerns increasingly gave these rules the character of public state laws, which, some scholars have suggested, provided legal grounds for the establishment of a constitutional monarchy in 1850. Daniel Schönplflug has shown that these laws distinguished between the private and public sphere of Prussian monarchy, yet at the same time identified the dynasty with the state.<sup>13</sup>

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The princes of Moscow created a unified monarchy in Russia (*edinoderzhavie*), without the corps of jurists that helped western rulers to consolidate their power over local and feudal privilege or the contractual relations among members of the ruling houses, and with noble estates that characterized European development. The Grand Prince of Moscow achieved supremacy over competing claims by dint of conquest and coercion and the organization of classes of servitors completely subordinate to him.<sup>14</sup> Succession was principally by testament, according to primogeniture, though there were no formal rules or laws to that effect. The demise of the Rurikovich dynasty in 1598 plunged Russia into a period of chaos and civil war, “the time of troubles,” which ended with the election of Michael Romanov in 1613.

The new Romanov dynasty lacked a hereditary connection with the previous dynasty despite the mythological genealogies fashioned during the

<sup>12</sup> Mathias Schwengelbeck, *Die Politik des Zeremoniells: Huldigungsfeiern im langen 19. Jahrhundert* (Frankfurt: Campus Verlag, 2007).

<sup>13</sup> Schönplflug, “Die Heiraten der Hohenzollern,” 41-57.

<sup>14</sup> On the contrasting roles between conquest and hereditary right in Russia and the Hapsburg and Prussian monarchies, see *Scenarios of Power*, 2:11-12.



seventeenth century. Their claims to authority were based principally on achievements—their restoration of the unity of the realm confirmed by the votes of assemblies. Succession was justified by several principles. Hereditary succession according to primogeniture was favored, but descent proved insufficient grounds for the legitimation of rule, and it had to be confirmed by popular assent. The assembly choosing Michael Romanov swore an oath both to him and his sons. His heir, Alexei, was called “hereditary” but, Vasilii Kliuchevskii observed, *Zemskii Sobors* had already been summoned three times for the election of tsars (Fedor Ivanovich, Boris Godunov, and Michael Fedorovich.) When Alexei came to the throne at age sixteen in 1645, a gathering of all groups of the Moscow population was summoned and his succession was confirmed by formal assent of “all boiars, notables, and the whole people.”<sup>15</sup>

Thus, the customary preference for succession by primogeniture for the Romanovs was reinforced by a demonstration of popular consent. The formal requirement to succeed the throne, however, remained designation by the previous ruler. The princes of Moscow in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries had willed the throne to their heirs, usually following the principle of primogeniture. (Ivan III at first diverged from this practice: he appointed his grandson heir, but later reconsidered and chose his eldest son, a precedent mentioned by Peter in his 1722 decree.) Coronation ceremonies of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries began with allocutions stating that the tsar had been chosen to rule by his father’s designation, and designation by the father was regarded as the principal sign of a legitimate succession and remained the crucial indicator of a rightful succession.<sup>16</sup> In September 1674, one and one half years before his death, Alexei “proclaimed to the people” that his oldest son, Fedor Alekseevich, would inherit the throne.<sup>17</sup> The death of Tsar Fedor in 1682 at the age of twenty, before he had produced an heir or indicated a successor, unleashed the bloody interregnum that brought Peter the Great to the throne.

The crisis that followed Fedor Alekseevich’s death in April 1682 marked the ten-year-old Peter Alekseevich’s initiation into the political life of the

<sup>15</sup> V.O. Kliuchevskii, *Sochineniia v deviaty tomakh* (Moscow: Mysl’, 1988), 3:76-77.

<sup>16</sup> Giuseppe Olshr, “La Chiesa e lo Stato nel ceremoniale degli zar Romanov,” *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 18 (1952): 354; *Drevniaia Rossiiskaia Vivliofika* (Moscow: 1788), 7: 258-59.

<sup>17</sup> Kliuchevskii, *Sochineniia v deviaty tomakh*, 3: 81-82; Samuel H. Baron, ed., *The Travels of Olearius in 17th Century Russia* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1967), 195.

empire. Peter’s half-brother, Ivan Alekseevich, next in line by seniority, was mentally weak and apparently unfit to rule, but was supported by Ivan’s mother’s family, the Miloslavskii. With the backing of Peter’s family, the Naryshkins, the Patriarch Ioakim took matters into his own hands and summoned an assembly to elect Peter tsar. Sergei Soloviev described the dramatic scene:

The Patriarch together with the archbishops and magnates (*vel’mozhi*) came out on to the red porch, ordered people of all ranks to gather on the square before the Savior Church, and asked who of the two heirs should rule. Cries “Peter Alekseevich!” resounded and drowned out the other cries, “Ioann Alekseevich!” People of all ranks thus decided the matter. The patriarch returned to the palace and blessed Peter to rule.<sup>18</sup>

Peter issued his succession law in 1722, when Russia had not passed through the stage of state consolidation that unified dynasty with both the state and the estates and that prefigured the adoption of fundamental laws of succession in early eighteenth-century monarchies. His act was above all one of representation, an assertion of his role as transforming monarch breaking with the past for the benefits of dynasty and state. The disorders of the seventeenth century led him instead to create a law that would allow the exercise of the monarch’s personal will without the intervention of the members of the Muscovite elite. The customary preference for primogeniture had produced a feeble minded half-brother and a recalcitrant son who threatened the welfare of the empire. Election had produced the chaos and bloodshed that Peter had witnessed as a boy.

Peter decreed the right of the reigning monarch to choose his successor, that is, he enshrined in law the principle of designation in effect before his accession. Rather than regulate the succession according to heredity, he openly subordinated the principle of heredity to the goal of the utility, the well-being of the realm, determined by the untrammelled will of the rational legislator. An oldest son could be poisoned by the “malice of Absalom.” He ordained that the ruling tsar always have the freedom [*volia*] to designate “whom he wishes and to remove the one who has been designated.” In so doing, he claimed to act as the defender of “the integrity of our state.”<sup>19</sup> In this way, Peter distanced

<sup>18</sup> S. M. Soloviev, *Istoriia Rossii s drevneishikh vremen* (Moscow: Social-Economic Literature, 1962), 7:263.

<sup>19</sup> PSZ, Sobranie 1, no. 3893, February 5, 1722.

himself from the Germanic tradition of succession by descent by seniority within royal houses. However, he did not renounce the principle of heredity completely: by citing his own power as “paternal,” Peter also asserted private law rights that implied that the choice would be among members of the “imperial family.”<sup>20</sup>

In the name of law, Peter’s edict was a signal demonstration of the supremacy of the unrestrained imperial will, rather than the legislation of a permanent “fundamental law,” which caused consternation and prompted criticism both in Russia and Europe. In response, the Archbishop Feofan Prokopovich wrote his tract “The Law of the Monarch’s Will”, in order “to disabuse foreigners of their false opinion of our people and to give them reason to think better of us,” “thus the whole civilized world is our witness.”<sup>21</sup> The initial publication run, 1200 copies, far exceeded the usual number of the time. The Prussian Academy of Sciences published a German translation in 1724. Catherine I ordered a new edition in 1726, and in total 19,051 copies were printed. New editions appeared in 1728 and 1788.<sup>22</sup>

Feofan Prokopovich cast his defense as a step taken to ensure the welfare of the realm and supported his argument with numerous references to Scripture, historical precedents, and European natural law theorists. He invoked the natural law theory of an original contract that assured the sovereign the consent of his people to rule for their welfare in perpetuity. Authority, he made clear, was not imposed by force, but presumed submission and submission was a sign of the monarch’s legitimacy. He wrote, “It should be understood that the royal house wields the scepter not as something usurped by force, but as conferred on it by the general will of the people: for the people itself by its voluntary submission, shows that such is its will.”<sup>23</sup> Submission was therefore to be understood as an expression of the people’s choice. Nor was the ruler to be bound by his own laws. He wielded “that power which itself is not subject to any laws whatsoever,” Prokopovich wrote, citing Hugo Grotius.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>20</sup> Omel’chenko, “Stanovlenie zakonodatel’nogo regulirovaniia prestolonaslediiia,” 18-22.

<sup>21</sup> Antony Lentin, *Peter the Great: The Law on the Imperial Succession; The Official Commentary* (Oxford: Headstart History, 1996), 27, 127, 33-34.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 65-69.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 204-07.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 187.

Peter dealt with lack of a dynastic tradition by a heroic act of transcendence that equated law with the assertion of the imperial will. It was another demonstration of the “divine gift of grace” that Ernest A. Zitser has shown emerged from his playing the role of Christ in the antics of the sacred “company” of the transfigured kingdom that constituted Peter’s inner circle. Peter displayed the charisma that led panegyrists to hail him as “Russia’s God and Christ.”<sup>25</sup> In this way, both English and Russian monarchs were represented in terms of immortality and likened to Christ, but in different, one might say opposite, ways. For English theologians and jurists, the Christological literature provided a metaphor of the savior to express an image of the deathless sacral body of the king. The metaphor evoked a “halo of perpetuity,” which existed apart from the king’s mortal life and failings.<sup>26</sup> Russian imperial representation drew no such distinction between the monarch as mortal and the monarch as ruler.<sup>27</sup> An image of the incarnation informed the personification of the state in the godlike or Christlike figure of the tsar, whose persona presented him or her in terms of super-ordinate achievements and virtues. These achievements and virtues were revealed in initial acts of performance for general approval and reverence—acts of spiritual conquest, indicating transfiguration rather than continuity with the past.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>25</sup> Ernest Zitser has shown how Peter’s “Fools Synod” represented far more than a desecration of religion and old Russian rituals, but a “sacred parody,” in which Peter exercised the charisma of Christ in exalting his authority and vesting him with godlike power, a charisma taken on and displayed by his successors. Ernest A. Zitser, *The Transfigured Kingdom: Sacred Parody and Charismatic Authority at the Court of Peter the Great* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2004).

<sup>26</sup> “Not only is the body politic more ‘ample and large’ than the body natural, but there dwell in the former certain truly mysterious forces which reduce, or even remove the imperfections of the fragile human nature.” Kantorowicz, *The King’s Two Bodies*, 9, 78-86, 314-17, 383-450.

<sup>27</sup> “The separation between the emperor and the state did not come about.... The emperor carried with him the whole tradition of the rule Christ-like in person and in power, a tradition which, when Christ became irrelevant, made of the emperor a god on earth” (Michael Cherniavsky, *Tsar and People*, 84-85); On the separation of the tsar’s person and the state, see Claudio Sergio Nun Ingerflom, “Loyalty to the State’ under Peter the Great?”

<sup>28</sup> “It is characteristic that at least from the beginning of the eighteenth century the monarch can be called not only ‘the anointed’ but Christ.” V. M. Zhivov and B. A. Uspenskii, “Tsar’ i bog: semioticheskie aspekty sakralizatsii monarkha v Rossii,” B. A. Uspenskii, ed., *Iazyki kul’tury i problemy perevodimosti* (Moscow: Nauka, 1987), 76.

Prokopovich purported to defend the decree as a fundamental law of the monarchy. He named it “the main statute” (*glavnyi ustav*), the German translation rendered as *Hauptverordnung*. Kliuchevskii and other historians referred to it as such.<sup>29</sup> But a Fundamental Law implied permanent inviolable rules, and Peter’s decree established that there could be no such rules, i.e. that the permanent law in Russia was ensuring a condition of impermanence, a lasting uncertainty inviting intervention and glorification of the ascendant monarch.

### REPRESENTATION AND FUNDAMENTAL LAW IN EIGHTEENTH- AND EARLY NINETEENTH-CENTURY RUSSIA

Peter failed to appoint an heir and left the question of succession in doubt. But he did bequeath a narrative of accession that presented the claimant to the throne as a heroic champion of the salvation and welfare of the fatherland. Prokopovich dealt with this eventuality of the deceased tsar’s failure to announce his designation, stating that in the absence of oral or written expression of his wish “the people [*narod*] must try to ascertain, by all manner of correct conjectures [*pravil’nye dogady*], what it was or might have been, and which of his sons he would have named as his successor, if it had come to that.”<sup>30</sup> In this event, the “correct conjectures” were decided by the court elite with the active collusion of the guards’ regiments, which was understood as a rough form of election.

After Peter’s death in 1725, the officials of the Generalitet and Senate chose his spouse, the Empress Catherine, claiming to act on behalf of Peter, whose preference they claimed, had been indicated by her coronation in 1724.<sup>31</sup> At Catherine’s death, the court elite followed the same process, but the principles

<sup>29</sup> Lentin, *Peter the Great*, 16-17, 134; Kliuchevskii wrote that Peter’s succession law was “the first law in the history of Russian legislation of a fundamental character.” Kliuchevskii, *Sochineniia v deviaty tomakh*, 4:193.

<sup>30</sup> Lentin, *Peter the Great*, 216-19; Omel’chenko, “Stanovlenie zakonodatel’nogo regulirovaniia prestolonaslediia,” 222-24.

<sup>31</sup> Evgenii Anisimov suggested that it was not at all clear that Peter favored Catherine as heir at the time of his death. Evgenii Anisimov, *Rossiiia bez Petra* (St. Petersburg: Lenizdat, 1994), 18-19.

of succession and heredity also were honored. The confusion is evident in a letter of Count I. A. Musin-Pushkin cited by Sergei Soloviev.

On May 7, at nine in the morning, there gathered in the Great Hall the entire imperial family, the entire Supreme Privy Council, the Holy Synod, Senators, the Generalitet and other military and civil notables: the *testament* of her imperial majesty has wrought the *election* of the *hereditary* sovereign, Grand Duke Peter Alekseevich, to the Russian throne as new emperor.”<sup>32</sup>

The aspiration to a hereditary monarchy based on law persisted, reflected in the dubious “Testament of Catherine I” which designated Peter Alekseevich, the son of tsarevich Alexei Petrovich, as heir.<sup>33</sup> The testament laid out the course of the succession in the event of his death, based on the Austrian pattern set forth in the Pragmatic Sanction of 1713, thereby contradicting Peter’s law bestowing on the monarch sole right to choose his successor. The testament was largely ignored in subsequent decades, but provided a basis for projects of hereditary succession at the close of the century.

Peter’s succession law proved difficult or impossible to follow in succeeding decades. But his presentation of the succession in terms of heroic acts of salvation became accepted practice, elevating each aspirant to the throne to the fervent acclamation of the court elite expressing the joy of the Russian people. When Anna Ioannovna ascended the throne in 1730 her manifesto declared that she ruled “thanks to the general desire and agreement of the entire Russian people.”<sup>34</sup> Empress Elizabeth, after her 1741 coup, asserted her right to the throne by dint of “close blood relationship,” i.e., that Peter was her father, and during her reign she revived the cult of St. Catherine promoted by her mother, giving religious sanction to her hereditary right.<sup>35</sup> But election remained a principal justification for her rule. Her accession manifesto referred

<sup>32</sup> Soloviev, *Istoriia Rossii s drevneishikh vremen*, 10: 81-83 (italics Soloviev’s).

<sup>33</sup> Omel’chenko argues that the so called “Testament of Catherine I” was a falsification, in hand of Cabinet Secretary A. V. Makarov, with Catherine’s signature by none other than Elizabeth Petrovna. Omel’chenko, “Stanovlenie zakonodatel’nogo regulirovaniia prestolonaslediia,” 25-27; See Anisimov, *Rossia bez Petra*, 138-41.

<sup>34</sup> Omel’chenko, “Stanovlenie zakonodatel’nogo regulirovaniia prestolonaslediia,” 27-28.

<sup>35</sup> On the role of iconography and symbolism in the reigns of Russian empresses, see Gary Marker, *Imperial Saint: The Cult of St. Catherine and the Dawn of Female Rule in Russia* (De Kalb, IL: Northern Illinois University Press, 2007), passim.

to “the disorders and considerable ruin” prompting the coup in response to “the unanimous humble petition of our loyal subjects.”<sup>36</sup> Catherine the Great, who enjoyed no hereditary right to the throne, presented her coup of 1762 as a response to popular feeling, to “the fervent wish of all Our loyal subjects to see us on the Throne, and through us to receive deliverance from those dangers that have occurred and even greater ones that were about to follow.”<sup>37</sup> Paintings depicted the major events of the coup and showed her in Preobrazhenskii Guards’ uniform astride a white horse, the leader of a brilliant act of conquest, ending the reign of despotism and ushering in a new age of justice.

Whereas the Prussian coronation fell into desuetude, the Russian coronation assumed increasing significance as the principal inaugural act of each reign. The ceremonies and celebrations surrounding the crowning presented the scenario that placed the monarch in the mythical narrative of the monarchy presenting him or her as the redeemer of the nation from the misrule of the previous regime. The coronation consecrated the scenario, providing ceremonial acclamation and the legitimation of the monarch’s absolute power. In addition to the self-crowning of the empress, Elizabeth’s coronation introduced lavish secular ceremonies, balls, and receptions that would elevate future occupants of the throne as initiators of prodigies, the age of gold, justice, and plenty.

Catherine II staged her coronation only three months after her accession, undoubtedly avoiding the error of Peter III, who tarried, ignoring warnings by Frederick the Great, and was deposed before he had set a date for his crowning. Her coronation was a resplendent display of the popular adulation that presumably justified her usurpation of the throne, displaying the themes of love and science in the context of the myth of renovation. She appeared as humane empress, whose rule was distinguished by compassion and reason that won the hearts of her subjects. They in turn responded with exultant celebration, which, the text and verse emphasized, was joy animated by a feeling of love. To display her reverence for tradition, she spent lavishly on the production of her regalia, making certain that their magnificence equaled or surpassed western examples.

Catherine also was determined to remedy the inadequacies of the Russian legal system by incorporating the role of legislatrix into her scenario

<sup>36</sup> *PSZ, Sobranie 1*, no. 8473, November 25, 1741; *PSZ, Sobranie 1*, no. 8476, November 28, 1741.

<sup>37</sup> *PSZ, Sobranie 1*, no. 11582, June 28, 1762; *PSZ, Sobranie 1*, no. 11598, July 7, 1762.

of redemption. The commission she convened in Moscow in 1767 to codify Russian law issued an “Act, signed by the Departments, elected from all callings (*zvaniia*) of the Russian people for the composition of a new Code” which the legal historian Oleg Omel’chenko has described as “a supplementary ‘public’ (*obshchestvennaia*) coronation.” The Act repeated the acclamation of the event and praised Catherine for righting all the wrongs—illegality, financial ruin, and the dishonoring of Orthodoxy that she had attributed to Peter III. After her accession,

A wondrous change took place! Happiness broke through the fog of sorrows! Despair in the heart gave way to the sweetest hopes!... Everywhere the courage and altruism of the Most Kind Sovereign were glorified... We can enumerate Her good deeds: injury and disorder were corrected and ended. Our Orthodox faith is triumphant and beholds a Monarch giving Her subjects an example of piety. Justice [*pravosudie*] reigns with Her Majesty on the Throne. Altruism dwells in Her soul and unceasingly softens the severity of the laws. Vices disappear, and their roots are severed...<sup>38</sup>

Catherine’s break with the past reflected an Enlightenment faith in the ruler who could reform the administrative system on the basis of fundamental laws determined by reason. From Catherine the Great through the reign of Nicholas I, the Russian ruler strove to appear as the champion of legality and to incorporate the advancement of the law into the imperial myth. Legality and law now elevated the image of enlightened ruler as transcendent absolute monarch. Catherine was extolled in verse and depicted in paintings as an emanation of Minerva, and as the successor to Numa and Solon—one who would bestow an enlightenment system of law on Russia.

Montesquieu had introduced the enlightenment conception of “a fundamental law.” He defined monarchy as a government in which “only one person governs according to fixed and established laws,” which he termed “fundamental laws”—laws that would be permanent and would provide guarantees of consistency and continuity in the operation of state. The observance of fundamental laws, he argued, distinguished monarchy from despotism, in which “one person drives everything forward without law or

<sup>38</sup> PSZ, Sobranie 1, no. 12978, September 27, 1767; Omel’chenko, “Stanovlenie zakonodatel’nogo regulirovaniia prestolonaslediia,” 35-36.



rule by his will and caprices.”<sup>39</sup> Article 28 of the Nakaz mentioned the term, indicating that the execution of the laws required special instructions so that the courts of justice could ensure that “the Will of the Sovereign might be obeyed according to the fundamental Laws of the State . . . ”<sup>40</sup>

But in 1767 Russia had no law either designated or accepted as “fundamental.” Most obviously, Russia lacked the one fundamental law considered vital for a monarchy—a law of succession. Denis Diderot, during his visit to Petersburg in 1773 and 1774, impressed on Catherine the significance of such a law. He warned her of the doleful consequences of determining the outcome according to the wishes of the previous ruler. Drawing upon Montesquieu, he wrote, “What a source of disputes in the family! What a source of revolutions in the empire! What a source of base adulation! . . . What a source of intrigues!” But Diderot declined to venture suggestions. “This subject is beyond my powers,” he wrote.<sup>41</sup>

Indeed, it would remain an unresolvable dilemma: how to reconcile the notion of a fundamental law, permanent law, above human intervention, with the prerogatives of a monarch, who in the cause of the general welfare, vaunted his or her absolute powers? Catherine sought to use those powers to introduce concepts of dynastic law that placed heredity above utility and competence. An incomplete draft of a project from 1779 began by stating that that a succession law would be vital to the process of codification, which she had begun with the Codification Commission of 1767. It asserted that the stability of the throne depended upon heredity succession. “The first and fundamental law [*nachal'noi zakon*] of this monarchical rule [*samoderzhavnoe vladychestvo*] should be issued and drafted by Our Imperial hand—that is the steadfastness of the throne and stability in its inheritance.”

She went on to detail the disasters attendant on the weakness of the succession, referring to early Russian history, the breakdown of unity and the Tatar yoke, and the fall of Byzantium, but not to previous decades. The lines of inheritance would follow only descending lines of the family, first male, then

<sup>39</sup> Montesquieu, *De L'Esprit des lois* (Paris: Garnier, 1973), Vol. 1: 14, 22.

<sup>40</sup> B. Nol'de, “Zakony osnovnye v russkom prave,” *Pravo* No. 8 (1913): 452-55, 459-60; W. F. Reddaway, ed., *Documents of Catherine the Great* (New York: Russell & Russell, 1971), 218.

<sup>41</sup> “De l'importance de fonder la succession à l'empire,” in Denis Diderot, *Mémoires pour Catherine II* (Paris: Éditions Garnier Frères, 1966), 50-51, 288.

female: the same order that had been set forth in the Austrian system adopted in the Testament of Catherine I. But the draft made clear that the succession would not derive from past generations, which would have included Peter III, but with herself, defined as the Emperor-progenitor (*Imperator-rodonachal'nik*) as the founder of a new legal order, and with her son, Paul as the heir.<sup>42</sup>

In 1785, Catherine began to devise a detailed and systematic proposal for a succession law, which elaborated on the principles set forth in the 1779 draft. The final version appeared as the fourth and largest section of her Instruction to the Senate of 1787. It emphatically stated the importance of dynasty and described at length the lines of succession and the importance and the need to maintain the ruling family. Omel'chenko concluded that in the project Catherine “gave a concrete basis of a potential public law understanding of the Imperial Family.” But the contradiction between the image of the unlimited enlightened monarch and the establishment of a dynastic order persisted. Again the dynasty was to begin with her, defined as progenitor. The monarch was to bestow the title of “heir to the throne”—which accorded with Peter’s law of succession—and if he failed to do so before his death, the throne would pass to his oldest son. The project also allowed the sovereign to remove an heir from the succession and detailed the circumstances that would permit such a change.<sup>43</sup> But Catherine did not promulgate such a law. Nor did she designate an heir. She left the situation as uncertain as it was at Peter the Great’s death. Rumors circulated of a “Testament of Catherine II,” which might have removed Paul Petrovich from the succession, but historians have discovered no such document nor any other indication that such an intention existed.<sup>44</sup>

### THE PROMULGATION OF A LAW OF HEREDITARY SUCCESSION IN RUSSIA

Ascending the throne, Paul Petrovich determined to institute laws of hereditary succession by primogeniture. He too faced the dilemma of reconciling a legal definition of succession while fulfilling the imperative of appearing as transcendent above limitation of law or tradition. As a result, he presented his establishment of hereditary succession as a heroic repudiation of Catherine’s

<sup>42</sup> Omel'chenko, “Stanovlenie zakonodatel'nogo regulirovaniia prestolonasledia,” 36-38.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 39-46.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 46-48.

reign. His accession manifesto declared that he was ascending “the ancestral (*praroditel'skii*), hereditary, imperial All-Russian throne,” as if hereditary succession had not been broken.<sup>45</sup> Although he did not perpetrate a coup, his appearance in the capital assumed the aspect of an act of violence. His Gatchina units invested St. Petersburg. He held his first *Wachtparade*, which he would repeat daily without fail during his reign. He issued decrees imposing Prussian military rules upon the Russian army.<sup>46</sup> These steps portended the new order he was determined to bring to Russian monarchy.

He dramatized his assumption of power in a series of macabre ceremonies to erase his mother's reign from the history of the previous century and to demonstrate that he had inherited the throne directly from his father, Peter III. On November 19, he and the members of the imperial family attended a ceremony of disinterment of Peter III at the Alexander Nevskii Monastery. The coffin was opened and the members of the family proceeded to kiss the remains. On November 25, Paul staged the posthumous coronation of Peter III by placing the imperial crown on his dead father's casket. The burial ceremony at the Peter-Paul Cathedral on December 6, demoted Catherine one further step. The imperial crown rested on Peter III's coffin, while Catherine's remained bare. The scene symbolically and posthumously dethroned Catherine the Great as ruling monarch and began the process of sacralization of the regalia, which in his reign were to be presented as opulent symbols of hereditary right.<sup>47</sup>

Paul I's introduction of a law of hereditary succession by primogeniture also took place as a dramatic break from the previous order. Again the coronation portended the new reign. On Easter Sunday, April 5, 1797, after the crowning and anointment, arrayed in full regalia, he declaimed the law from the steps of the throne of the Assumption Cathedral and ordained that it should be placed for preservation at the cathedral's altar.<sup>48</sup> The law provided rules for primogeniture of succession, modeled on the “Austrian

<sup>45</sup> PSZ, Sobranie 1, no. 17530, November 6, 1796.

<sup>46</sup> N. K. Shil'der, *Imperator Pavel Pervyi* (St. Petersburg: A. S. Suvorin, 1901), 287-294; G. R. Derzhavin, *Sochineniia* (St. Petersburg: Imp. Akademiia Nauk 1871), 6: 700-701; N. Ia. Eidel'man, *Gran' vekov; politicheskaiia bor'ba v Rossii, konets XVIII-nachala XIX stoletiiia* (Moscow: Mysl', 1986), 52-53.

<sup>47</sup> *Kamer-fur'erskii zhurnal*, 1796 (St. Petersburg: Ministerstvo Imperatorskogo Dvora, 185?) 788-91, 821-24, 860-68.

<sup>48</sup> PSZ, Sobranie 1, no. 17910, April 5, 1797.

system,” with women following in line only in the absence of a male heir. Oleg Omel’chenko has remarked that all major provisions repeated articles in Catherine’s projects.<sup>49</sup>

The law stated that the ruling emperor was also ruler of the imperial family. All marriages of members of the imperial family required his permission. Following the practice of German principalities, Paul presented it as a family agreement, signed by himself and the Empress. Its form emulated the collective testaments of German ruling families in the eighteenth century. However, as Boris Nolde noted, this tradition was unknown in Russia, and both the succession law and the Statute on the Imperial Family were issued not as private agreements arrived at by a family council, but as state decrees. They were equivalent to “a state command [*gosudarstvennoe velenie*] the content of which was considered to have fundamental significance but that from the formal point of view merged with acts of the authority to issue decrees.”<sup>50</sup>

The succession law made no reference to native precedent. Like Peter’s law, it was formulated as a symbolic statement of the emperor’s determination to work for the welfare of the realm. Paul had been educated in Enlightenment philosophy and presented his law in terms of the rationalist principles he had learned from his tutors. It would ensure “the tranquility of the State, based on a firm law of inheritance.” The opening lines announced the choice of his oldest son, Alexander, as heir “according to natural law.” Paul’s succession law also evoked the attribute of love as an affectionate bond uniting the dynasty. “We want this Act to serve as the most powerful proof before the entire world of Our love for the Fatherland, of the love and harmony of Our marriage, and of Our love for Our Children and Descendants. As a sign and testimony of this We have signed our names and sealed it with our Coats of Arms.”<sup>51</sup>

Paul’s succession law announced that connubial love as a trait to be honored and displayed by the imperial family, following the example of German states that had begun to elevate the monarch as a model of bourgeois family devotion and rectitude, a model that Nicholas I would embrace and promote. On the same day as Paul promulgated his succession law, he decreed the Statute of the Imperial Family and specified that the laws regulating the family be placed “among the fundamental laws [*fundamental’nye zakony*] of

<sup>49</sup> Omel’chenko, “Stanovlenie zakonodatel’nogo regulirovaniia prestolonasledia,” 48-50.

<sup>50</sup> B. Nol’de, “Zakony osnovnye v russkom prave,” *Pravo* no. 9 (1913): 541.

<sup>51</sup> PSZ, Sobranie 1, no. 17910, April 5, 1797.

Our Empire.”<sup>52</sup> The Statute explicitly stated the utilitarian premises of the succession law, identifying the welfare of the realm, not with the unconstrained will of the father, but with the flourishing of the imperial family. The “increase [*umnozhenie*] of the Sovereign’s Family [*Gosudarevaia Familiia*]” was one of the bases for the “illustrious condition” of a state. Russia had experienced the principal blessing, “seeing the inheritance of the Throne confirmed in Our Family, which may the All-High perpetuate to eternity.” These words echoed current views favoring the growth of population and the precepts of his hero, Frederick the Great, who, in his testament and letters, declared the fecundity of the royal family essential to the preservation of the state.<sup>53</sup> For this purpose, he saw it as his duty to “order and establish everything that belongs to Our Family, introducing those rules that unfailingly accord with the situation of the Empire and natural law.” Paul proved true to his goal of “the increase of the Sovereign’s Family,” fathering ten children, nine of whom survived infancy.

But Paul gave little evidence of devotion to connubial or paternal devotion. He made a practice of displaying his mistresses at court, leading to embarrassing scenes of domestic discord rather than harmony. His suspicions of his oldest son, Grand Duke Alexander, prompted him to consider removing him from the succession, which would have been in accordance with Peter’s succession law rather than his own. In 1800, he awarded the title of Tsesarevich to his second son Constantine, presumably in recognition of acts of valor on the battlefield, though Article 31 of the Statute of the Imperial Family specified that the titles “Heir, Tsesarevich, Grand Duke, and Imperial Highness belong only to the Heir to the Throne as promulgated to the nation [*vsenarodno*].” In 1801, he prepared papers to legitimize the children of one of his mistresses and considered banishing the empress.<sup>54</sup>

German notions of connubial love hardly influenced the conduct or the inclinations of his oldest sons. Alexander’s aversion to hereditary monarchy, declared in the epigraph, expressed not only the ideas conveyed by La Harpe, but the strong disposition of Russian monarchs to display their rule as

<sup>52</sup> PSZ, Sobranie 1, no. 17906, April 5, 1797. This Statute actually was issued before the succession law and was termed “Act of Confirmation” (*Akt utverditel’nyi*).

<sup>53</sup> Weber, “Dynastiesicherung und Staatsbildung,” 113-16; Schönplflug, “Die Heiraten der Hohenzollern,” 60-63.

<sup>54</sup> Eidel’man, *Gran’ vekov*, 240-41; Shil’der, *Imperator Pavel Pervyi*, 478-79; E. P. Karnovich, *Tsesarevich Konstantin Pavlovich* (St. Petersburg: A. S. Suvorin, 1899), 74.

a representation of something more exalted than mere descent, specifically as dedication to the ultimate good and happiness of the realm. Neither Alexander nor Constantine presented an image of a happy family life. Neither produced an heir, and Constantine, who retained the title of *Tsesarevich* after Alexander’s accession, was little inclined to take on the role of *paterfamilias*. Constantine early sought to end his marriage to the Grand Duchess Anna Fedorovna. Residing in Warsaw from 1816 as Chief of the Russian Armies in Poland, he resolved to wed a Polish noblewoman, Joanna Grudzinska.

Since the reign of Peter the Great, it had been incumbent on all members of the imperial family, like western royalty, to choose spouses only of royal and therefore foreign lineage, though this principle had never been inscribed in law. Indeed, the dynasty became known as “Holstein-Gottorp-Romanov” due to the intermarriages with Germany royalty. Paul’s Statute on the Imperial Family, however, merely indicated that only legitimate children of marriages approved by the ruling emperor could receive material support as members of the imperial family.<sup>55</sup>

To accommodate Constantine’s wishes and to act in accordance with Paul’s law of succession Alexander issued an imperial edict in 1820 announcing approval of the annulment of Constantine’s marriage and permitting him to proceed with his marriage. The decree introduced the principle of “unequal” or morganatic marriages into Russian law that was adopted by German royal houses wishing to introduce a degree of flexibility into marriage rules by allowing princes wishing to embark on second marriages to wed spouses not of royal lineage by forfeiting royal titles and rights for their progeny. Alexander’s edict stated the goal of preserving the tranquility of the imperial family and the empire, when a member of the imperial family married one “not with the corresponding dignity” in other words not belonging to a ruling or sovereign house. In that case his children could not inherit the throne.<sup>56</sup> Constantine retained the title of *Tsesarevich*, and remained next in line to succeed Alexander. The manifesto was promulgated only in Poland, perhaps in response to the dowager’s concern for the peasants’ veneration of the sacrament of marriage and respect for members of the imperial family.

Constantine let it be known that he did not wish to rule. He remarked, “They would suffocate me as they suffocated my father,” referring to the story

<sup>55</sup> PSZ, Sobranie 1, no. 17906, April 5, 1797, article 79.

<sup>56</sup> PSZ, Sobranie 1, no. 28208, March 20, 1820.

that the guards officers had smothered Paul with a pillow. In 1822, he wrote to Alexander that he wished to renounce his right to inherit the throne. Alexander responded with a rescript recognizing Constantine's request. Then he signed a manifesto drafted by the Metropolitan Filaret declaring that Constantine had renounced the throne and naming the next in line, the young Nicholas Pavlovich, heir to the throne. He thus resorted to the practice of designation, the principle of Peter's succession law. But he did not promulgate the decree, depriving it of legal force. Instead, he had it and the other documents secreted in the chambers of the State Council and in the Assumption Cathedral. It was known only to a few officials and clerics. Although rumors circulated about Constantine's renunciation of the throne, neither Nicholas nor Constantine was aware of the document's existence.<sup>57</sup>

As a result, Alexander's death on November 19, 1825 left the entire government perplexed. At first, a decree from the St. Petersburg Police Chief announced that officials, clerics, and officers were to take the oath of fealty to Emperor Constantine Pavlovich. Count M. A. Miloradovich, the Saint Petersburg Governor-General, insisted that Nicholas obey Paul's succession law, which he noted, did not permit succession by designation. Nicholas then swore allegiance to Constantine followed by the generals and guards regiments of the capital, a breach of the tradition of swearing the military only after the civil official authorities. Meanwhile, the State Secretary Alexei Olenin, opened the envelopes with Constantine's letter, the rescript and the manifesto, before the State Council. But Nicholas refused to accept the orders contained in the documents until they were confirmed by Constantine. The tension in Petersburg grew during the prolonged exchange of letters between Petersburg and Warsaw. On December 12, 1825, Nicholas received Constantine's declaration of abdication, and Mikhail Speranskii drew up Nicholas's accession manifesto, dating his ascension to the throne on November 19. The various ranks of State Service were now ordered to swear the oath to Nicholas.

Alexander had left the succession to the discretion of his leading officials and the twenty-nine year old Grand Duke Nicholas Pavlovich, whose previous service had been spent as a guards' commander. The ensuing confusion gave

<sup>57</sup> My discussion is based on V. A. Uspenskii, "Progulki s Lotmanom i vtorichnoe modelirovanie," *Lotmanovskii Sbornik* 1, ed. E. V. Permiakov, 111-21 (Moscow: ITs.-Garant, 1995), and S. V. Mironenko, *Stranitsy tainoi istorii samoderzhaviiia* (Moscow: Mysl', 1990), 84-93.

the insurgents the chance to rally their regiments, many of whom had already pledged allegiance to Constantine, to stage an insurrection on Senate Square on December 14, 1825. The Decembrist, S. P. Trubetskoi, wrote, “No other situation could be more favorable to realize the intention of the Secret Society.”<sup>58</sup>

Learning of an impending revolt, Nicholas took the initiative and undertook a virtual coup d'état. On December 13, he presented his accession manifesto to the State Council, which the Council approved that very evening. He left the members of the Council little choice. “Today, I request you to take the oath; tomorrow I shall command you.”<sup>59</sup> The next day he rode out before the rebels on Senate Square and, after failing to convince them to withdraw, dispersed them with gunfire. Nicholas's memoir described his decision as an act of self abnegation. “I saw that either I had to take on the spilling of the blood of a few, and save nearly all, or being merciful to myself, to sacrifice the state.”<sup>60</sup>

The principles of dynastic succession came to Russian monarchy as another emphatic assertion of change, a heroic and public display of appropriation of a tradition that had gained ascendancy in Europe in the aftermath of the Napoleonic wars but was hardly rooted in Russia's past. Nicholas appeared as conqueror. His dispersal of the rebels by force provided the initial episode in a scenario that glorified the salvation of the regime. Nicholas's accession manifesto, written by Mikhail Speranskii, declared his desire “to affirm his respect for the fundamental law of the Fatherland on the succession to the throne,” and his determination “to safeguard the basic law of succession from any infringement in order to dispel the last doubt about the purity of Our intentions and to protect Our dear Fatherland from the slightest even momentary uncertainty about the Legitimate Sovereign.” The closing lines vowed that he would follow his brother's example and declared “May Our reign be only a continuation of his reign.” All future accession manifestos would contain similar declarations of affiliation with the deceased ruler.<sup>61</sup>

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., 114.

<sup>59</sup> W. Bruce Lincoln, *Nicholas I: Emperor and Autocrat of All the Russias* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1978), 22-26, 35.

<sup>60</sup> “Iz zapisok imperatora Nikolaia I,” *Byloe* 10 (1907/1910), 77, 86-87.

<sup>61</sup> N. K. Shil'der, *Imperator Nikolai Pervyi* (St. Petersburg: A.S. Suvorin, 1903), 1: 254-56, 642-44.



But despite the sentimental evocation of fraternal devotion, Nicholas followed the pattern of his forebears and broke sharply with the views and policy of his brother's reign. Custine's succinct observation, cited in the epigraph, characterizes Nicholas's actual opinion of his brother's rule. Most strikingly, while embracing the principle of dynasty ascendant in the West, Nicholas made clear that he rejected the cosmopolitan ethos, expressed in Catherine's dictum, Article 6 of the *Nakaz*, and embraced by Alexander I, that Russia was a European country. Nicholas reaffirmed Paul's laws, now elevating devotion to the imperial family and the system of autocracy as a national trait. In his manifesto on the sentencing of the Decembrists, he declared that the failure of the uprising had demonstrated that the monarchy enjoyed the devotion of the Russian people. Like Prokopovich, he and his ideologists would interpret their submission as a sign of consent, a tacit election, but they would now project this devotion into the past as a distinctive feature of the Russian nation that had spared Russia the evils of revolutionary Europe.<sup>62</sup>

Nicholas's coronation in September 1826 introduced a family scenario for Russian autocracy. Hereditary succession would be consecrated by demonstration of the transcendent love uniting the imperial family and the Russian people. The coronation displayed the Russian people's devotion to the ruling dynasty, making the love of members of the imperial family, which Paul had prescribed, a principal and distinctive attribute of Russian monarchy. Pavel Svin'in's semi-official account presented the family as an object of popular affection. Nicholas rode down the avenue flanked by his brother Michael, his brother-in-law, Prince Karl of Prussia, the Duke of Württemberg, and his son Alexander. It was Alexander, not the emperor, who was endearing. "The kind Russian people admired the angelic charm of the Heir to the Throne with indescribable rapture." The author went on to point out that this "Royal Child" (*Derzhavnyi Mladenets*) was particularly dear to Muscovites because he had been born in the Kremlin.<sup>63</sup> Svin'in's description of the ceremonies in the Assumption Cathedral focused on the members of the family; they and their German relatives are the only participants identified by name. He evoked the warm emotional response of both those in attendance

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., 1: 704-706.

<sup>63</sup> "Moskovskiiia sovremennye letopisi: perepiska izdatelia Otechestvennykh Zapisok," *Otechestvennye Zapiski* 27 (1826): 288-89.

and the “inhabitants of Moscow” the moment after the investiture of the Emperor and Empress.<sup>64</sup> He described similar scenes during the anointment, communion and recessional.

Nicholas elevated the imperial family as the emotional center of his court and the central symbol of his reign, a symbol of moral purity of Russian autocracy as the purest form of absolute monarchy. Engravings circulated that showed Nicholas with his son Alexander, and with their daughters. On December 14, Nicholas had brought Alexander before the Sapper Battalion, which had protected the imperial family from the insurgent Grenadiers’ Regiment. Nicholas made clear that he and the heir were one. He asked the troops to love his son as they loved him. The scene became emblematic for his reign, commemorated in popular pictures and on the bas-relief of the statue that Alexander II erected to his father in 1859. The fact that Alexander had stood at his father’s side on the day of the rebellion was inscribed in his service list along with the military honors awarded to him on that day.<sup>65</sup>

### THE PROMULGATION OF “THE DIGEST OF STATE LAWS”

Like Catherine the Great, Nicholas sought to appear as bearer of the principle of law to the Russian state. Like her he presented the advancement of legality as an element of his scenario: the law would be a sign of the supreme wisdom and virtue of the ruler. On January 31, 1826, less than two months after his accession, Nicholas established the Second Section of his personal chancellery to pursue the goal of codification of Russian laws, which had eluded Russian rulers since the reign of Peter the Great. He appointed Mikhail Speranskii, the leading statesman of the time, chief rapporteur. Under Speranskii’s direction, the Second Section published the *Complete Collection of Laws* in 1830 (*Polnoe sobranie zakonov*) and in 1832 a Digest of Laws (*Svod Zakonov*), those laws presumably in effect. Nicholas followed

<sup>64</sup> “Istoricheskoe opisanie Sviashchennogo Koronovaniia i Miropomazaniia ikh Imperatorskikh Velichestv Gosudaria Imperatora Nikolaia Pavlovicha i Gosudaryni Imperatritsy Aleksandry Fedorovny,” *Otechestvennye Zapiski* 31 (1827): 196-99.

<sup>65</sup> M. Korf, *Voshestvie na prestol Imperatora Nikolaia Iogo* (St. Peterburg: Tipografia Ilogo Otdelenie E. I.V. Kantseliarii, 1857), 220.

the work closely, dictated its guiding principles, and reviewed reports at every stage.<sup>66</sup>

Following the example of the house laws of Prussia and other German states, Nicholas sought to incorporate Paul's dynastic legislation, his "fundamental laws," into the codification. Speranskii identified fundamental laws with norms of natural law and did not believe that they belonged in a digest of positive laws. But Nicholas sought to reaffirm Paul's view of fundamental laws as those presenting the dynasty as the immutable basis of the Russian State, and insisted that the Succession Law and Law of the Imperial Family appear among a body of Fundamental Laws, *osnovnye zakony* to be printed at the beginning of the Digest of Laws and entitled *The Digest of Laws of the Russian Empire, compiled at the Command of Emperor Nicholas the First*.<sup>67</sup>

Nicholas seized the mantle of legality for the dynasty. He dramatized his achievement at a special meeting of the State Council held to mark the publication of the Digest of Laws on January 19, 1833. He declared, "My Imperial Father, of Blessed Memory, for the first time established the succession on firm bases of law and published the Statute of the Imperial Family, which he, so to say, consecrated at the altar of the Assumption Cathedral." Alexander I, he continued, had added laws about the institution of a regency and the succession which were also placed in the cathedral. The account continued, "The Tsar considered it necessary to bring all together these fundamental laws, published long ago and known to all, in one place."<sup>68</sup>

The ceremony closed with a moving scene of recognition of Mikhail Speranskii for his work on the codification. "The Tsar rose from his seat and approached the table where the volumes of laws lay, summoned Speranskii, embraced him, and taking from his breast the star of the Order of Saint Andrew the First Called, the highest decoration for a civil servant in the empire, conferred it on Speranskii." The members of the State Council all

<sup>66</sup> On Speranskii and the codification see Marc Raeff, *Michael Speransky: Statesman of Imperial Russia* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1969), 320-46, and Tatiana Borisova, "Russian National Legal Tradition: Svod versus Ulozhenie in Nineteenth-Century Russia," *Review of Central and Eastern European Law* 3 (2008): 295-342.

<sup>67</sup> *Svod zakonov Rossiiskoi Imperii: poveleniem Gosudaria Imperatora Nikolaia Pavlovicha sostavlennyi* (St. Petersburg: n.p., 1832).

<sup>68</sup> *Gosudarstvennyi soviet, 1801-1901* (St. Petersburg: Gosudarstvennaia Tipografiia, 1901), 56-57.

in uniforms, wearing their decorations, look on as Nicholas, stiff and erect, confers the order on Speranskii who bows slightly in humility. His brother, Grand Duke Michael Pavlovich, the most decorated of those present, stands to their side.<sup>69</sup> (Figures 1 and 2) The scene appeared in pictures and later as another bas-relief of the statue of Nicholas I in Isaac’s Square.

The inclusion of the Digest of “Fundamental State Laws” (*Svod osnovnykh gosudarstvennykh zakonov*) and the public honoring of Speranskii in the *Digest* was an act of cooptation, both of the concept of fundamental law and of the state administration personified in its leading figure, into the dynastic scenario. The format of the Fundamental Laws, clear bold type and pagination in Roman numerals unlike the Digest itself, with its small, fainter print, and pagination in Arabic numerals, made clear their distinct and preeminent status. They represented an act of symbolic appropriation, the imperial family taking possession of the attributes of state legality to validate and elevate their claims to absolute power. In this way, the incorporation of the family into the legal order in the manner of the German states proceeded not as an act of legalization of an entrenched dynasty, but as a decree from the throne—a display of power asserting the supremacy of the dynasty, now bearing the moral aura of familial dignity, over the law and institutions meant to dispense and protect it.

The presentation of the emperor as the agent of legality made the contradiction between his autocratic will and the regularization of the government a permanent and ineradicable characteristic of the Russian state in the nineteenth and early twentieth century. This was evident in the section of the Fundamental Laws devoted to the emperor and laws of state. The articles deal preponderantly with the imperial family. Part One is devoted to the Emperor and the State Institutions. Whereas 47 of the 81 articles concern the succession and preservation of the monarchy, only 34 detail the emperor’s relationship with state institutions and their function. Part Two, a revised version of Paul’s Statute of the Imperial Family, consists of 121 articles.

The most important articles opening Part One, those defining the monarch’s authority, assert a direct connection between the tsar’s governmental and familial authority. Article One, providing the definitive formula of autocratic power in imperial Russia, states: “The Imperial All Russian

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<sup>69</sup> Ibid., 57.

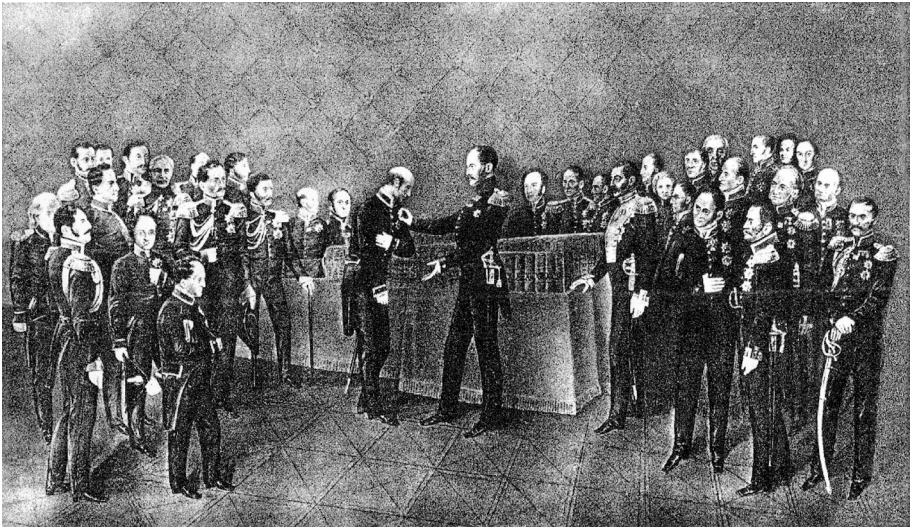
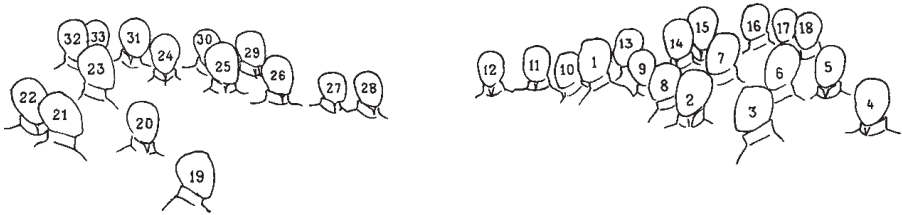


Figure 1.

Nicholas I, conferring the Order of St. Andrew the First Called on Michael Speranskii for his work on the Digest of Laws in the Presence of the State Council. *Gosudarstvennyi Soviet, 1801-1901* (St. Petersburg: Gosudarstvennaia Tipografiia, 1901)



1. Великий Князь Михаил Павлович.
2. Князь Виктор Павлович Кочубей.
3. Князь Петр Михайлович Волконский.
4. Графь (епослдетей Князь) Иларион Васильевич Васильчиков.
5. Дмитрий Николаевич (епослдетей Графь) Блудов.
6. Графь Егор Францевич Канкрин.
7. Василий Романович Марченко (въ замяні Гос. Секретаря).
8. Дмитрий Васильевич Дахов.
9. Князь Карл Андреевич Ливен.
10. Федор Иванович Огала.
11. Графь Петр Александрович Голостой.
12. Графь Юрий Александрович Головин.
13. Василий Александрович Пашков.
14. Князь Дмитрий Владимирович Голицын.
15. Сергей Сергеевич Кушников.
16. Графь Степан Фомич Грабовский.
17. Графь Павел Васильевич Голицын-Кузовов.

18. Григорий Иванович Выламов.
19. Князь Александр Николаевич Голицын.
20. Графь Карл Васильевич Нессельрод.
21. Графь (епослдетей Князь) Александр Иванович Чернышев.
22. Николай Семенович (епослдетей Графь) Мордвинов.
23. Графь Юлий Попесевич Литта.
24. Князь Александр Сергеевич Мещинов.
25. Графь Карл Федорович Тол.
26. Александр Яковлевич Сукин.
27. Князь Егорий Францевич Дручковой-Любеной.
28. Петр Егорович (епослдетей Графь) Эссен.
29. Князь Алексей Алексеевич Долгорукий.
30. Князь Дмитрий Иванович Лобанов-Ростовский.
31. Графь Петр Христианович Витгенштейн.
32. Графь Викентий Иванович Красницкий.
33. Александр Александрович Рожнецкий.

Figure 2.

Guide to persons in Figure 1. *Gosudarstvennyi Soviet, 1801-1901* (St. Petersburg: Gosudarstvennaia Tipografiia, 1901)

Monarch is autocratic and unlimited. To obey his supreme power is ordained not only by fear but by conscience as well.” The two sentences have different sources. The first, “The Imperial All Russian Monarch is autocratic and unlimited” derives from the Statute of the Imperial Family, article 71, ordaining that every member of the family show “complete *respect, obedience, and subjecthood* to the Reigning person as well as peace-loving conduct in the preservation of domestic quiet and harmony.” In the contrary situation, the monarch, “ruling as unlimited Autocrat” (*neogranichennyi Samoderzhets*) could dismiss the errant individual and deal with him as “one disobeying Our will.” Article One of the Fundamental Laws thus based his governmental authority on his absolute power as head of the imperial family, while article 71 from the Statute of the Imperial Family drew his absolute authority over the family from his definition as Autocratic power in Part One. The relationship is circular, pronouncing what was regarded as a necessary equivalence between the state and familial authority of the emperor. The second sentence in the formula, “To obey his supreme power is ordained not only by fear but by conscience as well,” derives from several laws of Peter, the most important being the Military Statute of 1716.

The thirty-four state laws that sought to define the parameters of monarchical power in relation to governmental officials and institutions are sandwiched between the laws on succession and accession and the Statute of the Imperial Family. Article 47 links the two discourses of the document, the family and the state, by drawing upon norms introduced by Catherine the Great and Alexander I establishing the emperor as the source of state law: “The Russian Empire is governed on the firm foundation of positive laws, statutes, and institutions emanating from the Autocratic Power.” This article was drawn from Catherine’s manifesto of December 14, 1766, which summoned the commission to codify laws of the empire (*PSZ*, 2801), and Alexander I’s manifesto of January 1, 1810 (*PSZ*, 24064), which announced the establishment of the new State Council. Catherine’s manifesto declared that she was summoning representatives from the estates to “preserve justice” and to “legalize State institutions” so that “each state office in posterity had its limits and laws for the observance of good order in the entire state.” Alexander’s manifesto affirmed “that the true reason of all the improvements consisted in the establishment of the administration on the firm and immutable bases of law, according to the level of enlightenment and the expansion of public activity.”

Articles numbered 47 to 56, which prescribed the procedures for drafting, issuing, revising and promulgating laws, did not make clear the role of the tsar or administration in issuing legislation, or the way to distinguish a law from an administrative regulation. Rather, they opened the system to intervention from the throne, by the tsar or his agents, at all levels.<sup>70</sup> Article 50 provided that drafts of law are to be reviewed in the State Council, then submitted for the emperor's discretion and would gain legal force only "as an act of the Autocratic Power." Article 54, however, stipulated that "a new law and an addition to a law are enacted only with the signature of the supreme authority," and many laws were issued on this basis without the participation of the State Council. The seeming contradiction between articles 50 and 54 reflected the ambiguity of juridical norms in the tsarist system.

In governmental practice, the emperor and officials followed legal procedures, except when the emperor or his favored officials judged it more expedient to exercise his personal, unlimited authority directly through his decree power. The historian Anatolii Remnev concluded, "Russian monarchs were ready to rule with the assistance of laws, but not on the basis of laws."<sup>71</sup> The union of the imperial family with the imperial state apparatus expressed in the ceremony of January 19, 1833 introduced an uneasy equilibrium that existed until the last decades of the century between the monarch's personal power and the claims to legality in the Fundamental Laws. The highly educated officials who served in the chancelleries of the highest state institutions felt a dominating sense of uncertainty and arbitrariness, the laws sometimes observed and sometimes ignored at the indication or behest of the emperor himself or of one of the figures endowed with his favor through personal audiences or his official designation. The Committee of Ministers, the point of institutional contact between the tsar and his administration, provided a stage for an ongoing drama as the officials plied their particular policies and through reports, intrigues, and subtle readings

<sup>70</sup> N. M. Korkunov, *Ukaz i zakon* (St. Petersburg: M. M. Stasiulevich, 1904), 323, 328; A. D. Gradovskii, *Nachala russkogo gosudarvennogo prava* (St. Petersburg: M. M. Stasiulevich, 1901), 1: 27-31, 44-47.

<sup>71</sup> A. V. Remnev, *Samoderzhavnoe pravitel'stvo: Komitet ministrov v sisteme vysshego upravleniia Rossiiskoi imperii (vtoraia polovina XIX-nachalo XX veka)* (Moscow: Rosspen, 2010), 135.

and manipulations of the ruler, awaiting a denouement that would resolve the issue.<sup>72</sup>

The Fundamental State Laws elevated the image of the Russian monarch by uniting the rules governing the imperial family with the laws of the Russian state and thus giving the autocracy legal cachet. The merging of family and state laws established a metonymic association by contiguity: the Imperial Family assumed the exalted character of a monarchy that honored “fundamental laws” both in family matters and matters of state. The fundamental laws left the procedures of legislation and the limits of the emperor’s legislative powers indefinite, permitting him to intervene without regard to law and to issue decrees with the force of law at will. These were not the immutable fundamental laws that Speranskii had envisioned, which is probably one reason why he did not expect them to be attached to the *Digest of Laws*. These laws remained in force until the revisions enacted in 1906 to take account of the October manifesto. In the meantime, the dynasty ruled on the basis of a legal system that was its own emanation.

### CEREMONY AND THE BURDENS OF DYNASTY

The dynastic scenario would, in different versions, continue to shape the representation of the Russian monarch until the end of empire, elevating the family as an embodiment of the monarch’s transcendence. Nicholas introduced ceremonies of dynasty that identified the governing elite and estates of the realm with the emperor, the empress, their children, and particularly the heir. The conferral of the Order of St. Andrew on Speranskii expressed the monarch’s determination to display his bond with the state administration in ceremonies and celebrations of the imperial court. There, lesser ranking civil officials joined the highest representatives of the state elite to witness imperial processions in the Winter Palace, the gala celebrations of New Year’s Day, Easter, and the emperor’s name day.<sup>73</sup>

Nicholas also introduced the panoply of ceremonies that elevated the dynasty and particularly the bond between father and son as principal symbol

<sup>72</sup> See *ibid.*, and M. D. Dolbilov, “Rozhdenie imperatorskikh reshenii: Monarkh, sovetnik i ‘vysochaishaia volia’ v Rossii XIXv,” *Istoricheskie zapiski*, 9 (127) (2006): 5-48.

<sup>73</sup> *Scenarios of Power*, 1: 322-26.



of the moral preeminence of the ruling house. They presented Alexander, the first Russian heir to succeed his father peacefully since the seventeenth century, as a demonstration of dynastic continuity. At his sixteenth birthday in 1834, on Easter Sunday April 22, 1834 Alexander appeared in a majority ceremony composed by the Metropolitan Filaret of Moscow. Before the assembled elite of the Russian state, the son pledged obedience to his father, the autocracy, and the laws of Russia. He pronounced oaths, the first an oath of succession, before highest ranks of the Russian state, the second a military oath before officers of the armed forces.

To display the heir as the object of the nation's love for the dynasty, Nicholas sent Alexander on a tour that brought the dynastic scenario to the reaches of the Russian empire. The journey took place from April to December, 1839, after Alexander's nineteenth birthday. Accompanied by the poet Vasilii Zhukovskii, who supervised his education, and S. A. Iur'evich, an adjutant of Nicholas, the heir covered a distance of over thirteen thousand miles. It was the longest tour of the empire by a Russian emperor or heir and took him to regions, including parts of Siberia, never visited by a member of the imperial family. Alexander's charm awakened sentiments that attached the population to the autocracy, drawing the local elites into the family love as a trope for lofty and humane feelings. Zhukovskii called the tour Alexander's "all-national betrothal with Russia."<sup>74</sup> At the conclusion of his tour in Novocherkassk, Alexander received the *pernach*, the Cossack mace, from his father, in a new ceremony that marked his appointment as honorary ataman of the Don Cossack host.

In Nicholas's reign, the performance of scenes of family devotion revealed the family's moral transcendence and the vitality of the dynasty. The assertion of the primacy of the family principle in maintaining the order and prosperity of the realm endowed the house with a symbolic preeminence that ensured the continued subordination of the state and legal order to the personal and moral sway of the monarchy. But the merger of family with state, and the merger of filial affect and with service to the monarchy, linked the conduct of the monarchs' personal life with the operations of government offices and produced tensions and anomalies that introduced discord and a sense of unreality into autocratic rule. The family scenario inscribed in the

<sup>74</sup> S. S. Tatishchev, *Aleksandr II: Ego zhizn' i tsarstvovanie* (St. Petersburg: A. S. Suvorin, 1903), 1: 89; For a detailed discussion of Alexander's upbringing see *Scenarios of Power*, 1: 343-51.

Fundamental Laws, not only subjected the members of the imperial family to the emperor as head of state as well as of the family, but also implied that the private conduct of each member bore a burden of public obligation as if his conduct represented an extension of the imperial state. The heirs to the throne were expected to perform the scenario of the virtuous paterfamilias, incarnating the moral supremacy of the imperial family. The fate of the state and dynasty hung on their character and talents.

The daunting personal obligations incumbent on the heir to the office of tsar and emperor of Russia were spelled out in the exhortations of the tutors to Nicholas's oldest son, the Grand Duke Alexander Nikolaevich. Alexander's mentors repeatedly evoked the lofty calling he had to live up to in order to justify the autocratic power of the dynasty he would wield. The boy's every step and misstep in the microcosm of the family had consequences for the macrocosm of the realm, as he was reminded by his instructors' rebukes and his father's icy stares. Zhukovskii constantly reminded him of his moral obligations. In a letter of 1832, he congratulated Alexander the Grand Duke on a victory over “the common hated enemy...called laziness.” His ally was the feeling of “*dolzbnost'*,” duty or office, which would help him to conquer the talisman “moral worth” (*nравственное достоинство*). The moral education of the boy was not merely a matter of preparing his mind to exercise reason. It was a basis for the moral leadership of the people. “The mob can have material strength; but moral power is in the soul of sovereigns: for they can be active representatives of justice and good.”<sup>75</sup>

Alexander's instructor of religion, V. B. Bazhanov, admonished him that he should do more than govern his subjects well, in the service of God. He should protect the morality and piety of his people and serve as an exemplar of personal virtue. “The eyes of the whole people are turned to the Tsar, who by his merit and image is the Vicar of God on earth.” He had to provide a model of respect for religious teachings, propounded by the church, of Christian conduct, and to be “the best spouse, the best father of a family.” Alexander's adjutant, S. A. Iur'evich, wrote to him in 1847, “Your domestic happiness is the guarantee of the welfare of the Russian tsardom.”<sup>76</sup>

<sup>75</sup> V. A. Zhukovskii, *Sochineniia* (St. Petersburg: n.p., 1885), 6: 386-87.

<sup>76</sup> *Gody ucheniia ego Imperatorskogo Vysochestva Naslednika Tsesarevicha (Sbornik Russkogo Istoricheskogo Obschestva)* 31, (St. Petersburg: 1881), 105-08; S. A. Iur'evich, “Pis'ma ob Avgusteishikh Synoviakh Aleksandra II,” Unpublished manuscript, Baltic and Slavonic Division, New York Public Library, 135.

Although Alexander performed the domestic scenario of Nicholas's reign and staged the ceremonies to surround heirs to the throne, the story of his life, we know, tells of his failure to live up to these injunctions. His father's severe image never left him, appearing before him frequently in dreams throughout his reign. His own inclinations led him otherwise, and just as his determination to win the love of his people led him to introduce the reforms that contradicted Nicholas's scenario of stern administrative oversight, his open infidelities made clear the moral deficiencies of a monarch whose power rested in part on self-control, willpower, and the capacity to sacrifice personal gratification for the welfare of the realm.

His philandering began early. In the previous century, the ruler's marital behavior had not been a vital part of his role as ruler, but now, with the sovereign or future sovereign presented as a model for his servitors and subjects, the personal life of the emperor and other members of the imperial family clashed with the moral and symbolic imperatives of the Russian monarch. In this respect, the crisis of the imperial family that ensued in the last decades of the regime carried particularly serious implications. Alexander's passionate romance with Catherine Dolgorukova, his attentiveness to the children he fathered with her, their marriage after the empress's death, which many considered a violation of the coronation vows, all spoke to an open rebellion against the constraints of a domestic scenario, an undoing of the heritage that had justified the persistence of the autocratic power he wielded.

Several of Alexander's brothers and sons also took advantage of the atmosphere of moral laxity. His brothers, Constantine and Nicholas Nikolaevich, engaged in rather well-known affairs with ballerinas. Prince Dmitrii Obolenskii wrote in his diary, in March 1874, of the Grand Dukes Vladimir and Alexei's carousals with gypsies during the imperial family's recent visit to Moscow: "The debauchery has actually taken on colossal dimensions and no censorship prohibitions can guard the imperial prestige from debasement when dissolute youth unconstrained by fear of responsibility, feelings of propriety, or a sense of their own dignity, impudently and publicly drag their imperial calling in the mud."<sup>77</sup>

<sup>77</sup> D. A. Obolenskii, *Zapiski kniazia Dmitriia Aleksandrovicha Obolenskogo, 1855-1879* (St. Petersburg: Nestor-Istoriia, 2005), 352.

Such conduct besmirched the image of the dynasty, calling into question the claims of moral and personal ascendancy that both set the imperial family above mortal weakness and self-interest and presented its members as moral exemplars of the Russian state. Their affairs with women who were not their social equals, as a result, had more serious implications than their European counterparts'. Liberal ideas and revolutionary events had led European monarchs to adapt to the changes of the previous half-century. They sought flexibility in the enforcing family matrimonial regulations and tolerated morganatic unions when expedient—as did Emperor Franz Josef when he accepted Archduke Franz Ferdinand as his heir.<sup>78</sup>

### THE NATIONAL MYTH AND THE REPRESENTATION OF DYNASTY

The assassination of Alexander II brought about a sharp reaction against the European principles and imagery and the striving for legality that had inspired state reforms since the reign of Catherine. Conservative critics associated the loss of control at the end of Alexander's reign with the laxity and immorality of members of the imperial family. Alexander III sought to redeem the integrity of autocratic government and the imperial family by recasting the monarchy's representation as a national myth, which, by reaching back beyond the Petrine reforms, glorified an assertion of decisive authoritarian rule.

The national myth, introduced in the first months after the assassination of Alexander II, reached back to pre-Petrine Russia of the seventeenth century, consigning the intervening period to oblivion. Invoking ideas borrowed from Slavophiles, Alexander III claimed to return to the traditions of early Russia, which had survived in the substratum of national life, when Muscovite tsars were truly Russian and, with the support of the Russian people and the Orthodox Church, were endowed with the strength of will to wield firm, personal power. He maintained the narrative of heroic savior of the realm, his transcendence now emanating from his power to stand apart from his fumbling predecessors and resurrect the distant past. A scion of Western royalty, he was

<sup>78</sup> On the flexibility regarding unequal marriages in Prussia, see Schönplflug, “Die Heiraten der Hohenzollern,” 141-42, and John C. G. Rohl, *Young Wilhelm: the Kaiser's Early Life, 1859-1888* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 332-53.

presented as ethnically Russian: gruff, artless, but straightforward, forceful, and even ruthless, he appeared as the most Russian of Russians. His full red beard—the first beard worn by a Russian monarch since the seventeenth century—the new Russian style guards’ uniforms he wore and introduced with large jackboots, his early trip to Moscow, where he pronounced his union with the Russian people, after having been betrayed by foreign influences—all proclaimed his closeness to his subjects. His coronation and religious festivities displayed the union of the people with the Orthodox Church and the tsar and demonstrated the survival and resurrection of autocratic power, triumphing over the revolutionary menace.

The national myth assigned little importance to principles of legality or regularity in the operation of government that were embodied in the now suspect Great Reforms. The decree of April 19, 1881 reaffirming the principle of autocratic power rather emphasized the importance of *vigor* (*bodrost'*) in the exercise of that power, which meant, in practice, a revitalization of police power, through the Ministry of Interior and the organs of the police. The officials of the State Council and the Ministry of Justice were suspect because of their attachment to the reforms and legality and their opposition to Alexander’s counter-reforms. Alexander III sought officials who were “true Russians,” those who regarded legality as equivalent to the fulfillment of his will. The equilibrium between autocracy and the legal state ordained by the Fundamental Laws thus became strained.<sup>79</sup>

Alexander dealt with the moral crisis of the imperial family by vigorously exercising his paternal powers as defined in Article 71 of the Statute of the Imperial Family. He issued a new version of the Statute, which limited the benefits of the collateral lines of the house and clearly defined the marital obligations of members of the family.<sup>80</sup> He introduced a strict moral regime over the Grand Dukes, barring Constantine Nikolaevich from residing in Petersburg and expelling Nicholas Nikolaevich from service. He tried to prevent unequal,morganatic marriages of the Grand Dukes though they remained legal according to the Fundamental Laws.

Conflict between his intentions to discipline his male relatives and the Fundamental Laws arose during the 1880s. Alexander was determined to

<sup>79</sup> Remnev, *Samoderzhavnoe pravitel'stvo*, 152, 165-69, 214, 293-94, 301-03, 335, 395-98; *Scenarios of Power*, 2: 200-202, 256-63.

<sup>80</sup> PSZ, *Sobranie* 3, no. 3851, July 2, 1886.

prevent his cousin, the Grand Duke Michael Mikhailovich, from entering into morganatic marriages, but his efforts were in vain. In 1889, he issued a decree to the Minister of the Court, prohibiting all marriages of members of the Imperial Family to “those who do not have corresponding rank, that is, who do not belong to a ruling or sovereign [*vladetel’nyi*] house” (*PSZ*, 5868, March 23, 1889).<sup>81</sup> He ordered that his will should be communicated to the heads of the families (*semeistva*) that belonged to the Family (*familiia*). The decree indicated his “care for utmost preservation of the rights and privileges” of his house, in keeping with “Fundamental State Laws.”

The decree exercised the power that Nolde had identified in the promulgation of Paul’s Fundamental Laws and bypassed the State Council. The practice was simplified by revisions of the Digest of Laws introduced by the chief of the Second Section, E. V. Frisch, in February 1885, which created the device of “a signed supreme decree” from the tsar. This made possible the insertion of decrees which were like administrative regulations in the Digest of Laws without submission to the State Council.<sup>82</sup> Alexander even believed that his decree on morganatic marriages should be attached to the Fundamental Laws. He ordered that it be conveyed directly to the Codification Division of the State Council for publication in the Complete Collection of Laws and to be placed as a note to article 63 of the Statute of the Imperial Family in the Fundamental Laws. The 1906 edition of the Fundamental Laws, under Article 188, contains the anomaly of a law providing that offspring of morganatic marriages cannot inherit rights of the imperial family while the footnote to the article forbids all such marriages!<sup>83</sup> When in 1891 Michael Mikhailovich nonetheless prepared to wed the countess, Alexander stripped him of military and court rank and exiled him abroad.<sup>84</sup>

Alexander III shifted the reference point of imperial representation from the reception of European absolutist imagery to an idealized seventeenth

<sup>81</sup> *PSZ*, Sobranie 3, no.5868, March 23, 1889.

<sup>82</sup> Remnev, *Samoderzhavnoe pravitel’stvo*, 152.

<sup>83</sup> Marc Szeftel, *The Russian Constitution of April 23, 1906: Political Institutions of the Duma Monarchy* (Brussels: Editions de la Librairie encyclopédique, 1976), 106.

<sup>84</sup> David Chavchavadze, *The Grand Dukes* (New York: Atlantic International Publications, 1990), 177-79.

century, when a pious Russian tsar who was one with the Orthodox Church and the Russian people exercised unlimited personal authority. Nicholas II's scenario elevated him as a less severe but more exalted and grandiose ruler, endowed with a divinely ordained religious mission. The representations of the first decade of his reign sanctified him and the empress Alexandra as embodiments of the spirituality of early Russia, exemplars of a holy family. Nicholas made clear that his designation as tsar came directly from God, which set him above the administration and even the Orthodox Church. At his coronation, he was presented as the chosen of the Lord, as one who embodied the "idea of Christian autocrat."<sup>85</sup> In subsequent years, he displayed his piety and his religious bond with the Russian people at public appearances in Moscow during celebrations of Holy Week, in Sarov at the canonization of St. Serafim, and during the Tercentenary events of 1913.

Nicholas and Alexandra sought their dynastic roots among their distant Muscovite forebears, presenting themselves as reincarnations of pre-Petrine royalty, transcending time and cultural change. Alexandra became indignant when she learned that the *Almanach de Gotha* had designated the Russian imperial dynasty as "Holstein-Gottorp-Romanov," and demanded that "Holstein-Gottorp" be deleted. When the editors refused, she tried, unsuccessfully, to ban the volume's import into Russia.<sup>86</sup> The emperor and empress appeared in seventeenth-century dress at the 1903 costume ball. Though the event was presented as a masquerade, it was the first time that a Russian tsar appeared in masquerade costume, a break with tradition that was thought to portend the return of early Russian dress to the court. Numerous pictures of the pair in seventeenth-century costume circulated in the popular press (Figure 3). Nicholas and Alexandra celebrated the long-awaited birth of a son in 1904 by naming him Alexei, after Tsar Alexei Mikhailovich.

Nicholas II's exalted medieval persona was an expression of the growing distance between him and the officials who headed the Russian government, whom he regarded with distrust and even contempt. He preferred to exercise his power through individuals who approached him with humility and

<sup>85</sup> Wortman, *Scenarios of Power*, 2: 344-45, 353.

<sup>86</sup> A. A. Mosolov, *Pri dvore poslednego Rossiiskogo imperatora* (Moscow: Ankor, 1993), 43-45.

deferred to his Muscovite persona—like his Minister of Interior, Dmitrii Sipiagin, who liked to appear as a seventeenth-century boiar, and the personal agents he dispatched to the Far East to pursue an adventurous foreign policy that would culminate in the Russo-Japanese War. He also instituted special commissions and conferences that reported directly to him. He strove to assert what A. M. Bezobrazov described as “proprietary power,” (*khoziaskaia vlast’*) reminiscent of Muscovite Rus’ when Russian princes and tsars claimed Rus’ as their personal appanage. “Thank God,” Bezobrazov wrote, “that we still have proprietary power, otherwise, with all our scoundrels and idiots attached to the various bureaucratic mechanisms, we simply would have perished in vain.”<sup>87</sup>

The Fundamental Laws of 1832 had evoked a symbiotic relationship between autocratic monarchy and the state administration. Nicholas’s disdain for officials and institutional formalities dispensed with this relationship, straining the symbolic union embodied in the Fundamental Laws.<sup>88</sup> When the establishment of a State Duma increased the enmity between sovereign and state, Nicholas made clear that the limitations of his prerogatives did not preclude his claim to act as autocrat. During the deliberations on revision of Article 4 of the Fundamental Laws in April 1906, he finally accepted the deletion of the word “unlimited” from the formula defining the monarch’s power as “autocratic and unlimited,” *samoderzhavnyi i neogranichennyi*.” But he insisted on the retention of the word “autocratic.” The word autocrat, *samoderzhets*, meant more to him than juristic concepts of an absolute monarch. It expressed the symbolic preeminence, the transcendence inscribed in the mythical narrative of his divinely inspired hereditary power. It evoked a figure designated by God, sharing the historical destiny of the Russian people and ruling above and apart from the institutions of the Russian state.<sup>89</sup>

In the aftermath of the revolution of 1905, Nicholas and Alexandra enacted what appears as the ultimate version of the dynastic family scenario.

<sup>87</sup> Remnev, *Samoderzhavnoe pravitel’stvo*, 314, 317-18. On the concept of the ruler as proprietor in Muscovy, see Kliuchevskii, *Sochineniia v deviaty tomakh*, 2: 119-21, 3: 15-16.

<sup>88</sup> Wortman, *Scenarios*, 2: 341-42, 374-77; Remnev, *Samoderzhavnoe pravitel’stvo*, 301-11, 314-18.

<sup>89</sup> Andrew Verner, *The Crisis of Russian Autocracy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), 299-300.





Figure 3.

Nicholas II in Robes of Tsar Alexei Mikhailovich. M. S. Putiatin, ed. *Letopisnyi i Litsevoi Izbornik* (Moscow, S. S. Ermolaev, 1913)

Living a sanctified life in the precincts of the Fedorov Village, a medieval town built at Peterhof in the years after the revolution, they displayed the transcendence of a holy family, just as the legitimation of the tsar’s authority was challenged by the insurgent forces of popular sovereignty. At the Fedorov Cathedral, constructed in early Russian style, they showed their dedication to the Fedorov Mother of God, the protectress of the dynasty, whose icon had blessed the young Michael Fedorovich when he accepted the throne in 1613. Surrounded by guardsmen dressed in seventeenth century attire, Nicholas envisioned himself leading a recrudescence of Russian monarchy, reenacting its resurgence after the Time of Troubles. A collection of scholarly essays that accompanied the Tercentenary in 1913, and bearing the title *Izbornik* like early Russian anthologies, contained historical studies of the Russian Romanov past and was embellished with pseudo-medieval decorations as in illuminated manuscripts. The frontispieces showed them again in seventeenth century attire, with Nicholas wearing the crown and holding the scepter. One article traced Alexandra’s genealogy to seventeenth-century contacts between Saxon princesses and Russian tsars!<sup>90</sup>

The figuration of the dynasty as ancient, ethnically Russian, and divinely inspired also strengthened Nicholas’ determination to exert forceful authority over the marital choices of the Grand Dukes. It was his lot to ascend the throne when the call of duty was weakening for many who felt it their right to marry the women they would wed. After Michael Mikhailovich, Nicholas’s uncle Paul Aleksandrovich, Nicholas’s cousin, Kirill Vladimirovich, and finally and most significant his brother, Michael, embarked upon or wanted to embark upon marriages contrary to the imperial will. (The Grand Duke Alexander Mikhailovich was about to follow their example, but his mistress refused the offer.) In 1902, Nicholas sent Paul Aleksandrovich into exile for contracting a morganatic marriage with a divorced wife of a colonel.<sup>91</sup>

Nicholas considered the enforcement of his will on these matters of such urgency that he assigned high officials to assist in his efforts. Grand Duke Kirill Vladimirovich had wed his cousin Victoria Melita, of Saxe-Coburg,

<sup>90</sup> M. S. Putiatin, ed., *Letopisnyi i Litsevoi Izbornik Doma Romanovykh: Iubileinoe izdanie v oznamenovanie 300-letii tsarstvovaniia* (Moscow: Literaturnyi i Istoricheskii Otdel, 1913).

<sup>91</sup> Grand Duke Alexander Mikhailovich, *Once a Grand Duke* (New York: Farrar and Rinehart, 1932), 140-41, 240.

without so much as requesting Nicholas's permission, a requirement according to the Fundamental Laws. That was the first breach: the second was his marriage to a first cousin, a violation of church law. Nicholas then convened two conferences to determine the implications of the case for the Grand Duke's rights of succession and inheritance.

The first conference, in December 1906, was presided over by no one less than the Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Petr Stolypin. The conference's resolution confirmed that the marriage violated church laws and should be regarded as invalid and the children as extra-marital. The second, in January 1907, chaired by E. V. Frisch, now Chairman of the State Council and including Stolypin, ruled unanimously that Kirill Vladimirovich had forfeited the right of succession to the throne. However, Nicholas never approved this resolution. He yielded to the entreaty of his uncle, Kirill's father, the Grand Duke Vladimir Aleksandrovich, and allowed the Grand Duchess and her recently born daughter to preserve their titles. He did not, however, rule on the rights of succession, which later, in emigration, would allow Kirill Vladimirovich and his descendants to advance claims to the throne.<sup>92</sup> Likewise, he charged Stolypin with the task of directing the police surveillance of his younger brother, Michael, to prevent the Grand Duke and his mistress, Countess Brassova (Natalia Wulfert) from fleeing abroad and marrying. The couple, however, succeeded in eluding the police tail and took wedding vows in a Serbian Orthodox church in Vienna.<sup>93</sup>

The Grand Dukes bridled at the newly imposed restrictions. In 1911, Nicholas II responded to their objections by allowing them to convene a conference of Grand Dukes and their less august relatives, the Princes of the Blood, to consider changes in the law under the chairmanship of Grand Duke Nicholas Nikolaevich. The majority of the members requested that morganatic marriages be allowed for Grand Dukes and made recommendations for the clarification of the rules on such marriages for Princes of the Blood. Nicholas

<sup>92</sup> R. G. Kراسиukov, "K probleme prestolonaslediiia v Rossii v sovremennom aspekte," *Vestnik Sankt-Peterburgskogo Universiteta*, Ser. 2, Vyp. 2 (No. 9): 4-6.

<sup>93</sup> R. Sh. Ganelin, "Velikii kniaz' Mikhail Aleksandrovich i Nikolai II," in *Dom Romanovykh v Istorii Rossii* (St. Petersburg: Izd. Sankt-Peterburgskogo Universiteta, 1995), 225-29. See also the excellent study by Rosemary and Donald Crawford, *Michael and Natasha: The Life and Love of Michael II, the last of the Romanov Tsars* (New York: Scribners, 1997).

relented for the latter, but he stalwartly refused to reverse his father's decree for the Grand Dukes.<sup>94</sup>

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Nicholas and Alexandra's bizarre impersonations were the last of the exalted representations of the ruling dynasty that had justified its rule since the eighteenth century in the absence of legal tradition of dynasty. In this light, Alexander I's exchange with Napoleon at Tilsit suggests that it was not only enlightenment ideology or La Harpe's influence that had led him to distrust heredity as a sufficient grounding for monarchical succession. The insufficiency of a native dynastic tradition and its legal underpinnings, which might have made the dynasty a basis for state continuity and administrative order, required performance of scenarios of heroic acts of transformation and renewal: the Russian monarch justifying his accession by appearing as the Palladium of Russia, the guarantor of its well-being and future greatness.

Nicholas I introduced the concept of dynasty into his scenario, presenting its achievements and conduct as exemplifications of the nation's destinies. Law and legality were represented as attributes of dynasty and embodied in fundamental laws that combined autocratic power with legal regulation in an amalgam that left the boundaries of each one only vaguely defined. The uneasy equilibrium between the two persisted until the 1880s, whereupon the autocracy, under siege from liberal and revolutionary threats, began to introduce national representations and ceremonies that discredited legal and institutional limitations and presented the tsars as rulers with divine sanction and ethnic credentials to exert unlimited power. Nicholas II's scenario expressed a radical alienation from state institutions, which only intensified with the establishment of the Duma and precluded concessions and compromise. The breach between the autocracy and the legal state proved fatal as the tsar explored the byways of his historical imagination for a narrative of transcendence, while leaving the institutions of the Russian state to confront a rising tide of political and social discontent.

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<sup>94</sup> S. V. Dumin, "Soveshchanie Velikikh Kniazey v 1911 godu: Neravnye braki v Rossiiskom Imperatorskom Dome," *Dvorianskii Vestnik*, No. 3 (46) (1998): 4-5; "Gosudarstvennyi arkhiv Rossiiskoi Federatsii," Fond 601, delo, 2143, l., 58-59.

### 3. Review of Anatolii Viktorovich Remnev, *Samoderzhavnoe Pravitel'stvo: Komitet Ministrov v sisteme vysshego upravleniia Rossiiskoi imperii (vtoraia polovina XIX—nachalo XX veka)*

[*Autocratic Government: The Committee of Ministers in the System of Higher Administration of the Russian Empire from the Second Half of the Nineteenth Century to the Beginning of the Twentieth*]. 511 pp. Moscow: Rossiiskaia politicheskaia entsiklopediia (ROSSPEN), 2010. ISBN 978-5-8243-1392-5.\*



*Samoderzhavnoe Pravitel'stvo* is an expanded version of the author's 1986 *Skandidat* dissertation that traces the history of the Committee of Ministers, the highest executive institution in the tsarist state, from its creation in the reign of Alexander I until its dissolution in April, 1906. It follows the monographic organization of a systematic work of institutional history, describing the Committee's legal bases, or lack thereof, and then focusing on the reform period. Successive chapters describe its composition and competence, its relations with other supreme institutions—the State Council, the *de jure* legislative body of the empire and the Senate, its highest judicial institution—and the numerous state committees subordinate to it. The last two chapters are devoted to the futile efforts to attain a “unified government” from the reform era to the creation of a Cabinet headed by a Prime Minister in October, 1905. The book ends with the dissolution of the Committee of Ministers in 1906. Remnev draws on a wide array of sources, including secondary works, both Russian and western,

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\* This review was completed before Professor Remnev's tragic death. It remains unchanged except for editorial modifications. I knew Anatolii Viktorovich only from his works and a few brief meetings at conferences, where he impressed me with his acuity and knowledge, as well as his articulateness and charm. He represented the best of the post-Soviet younger generation of scholars, with a dedication to serious archival scholarship and a determination to open new areas of research with new insights and methodologies. The reworking of his candidate's dissertation sadly proved to be a valedictory. It gives a sense of what might have been. He will be badly missed.

numerous recently published memoirs and diaries, and extensive archival documents. *Samoderzhavnoe pravitel'stvo* represents the most thorough and informative study of the Russian central administration in the last century of the monarchy that we have to date.

Remnev's dissertation was written in response to what he describes as "a type of boom in the investigation of the history of governmental institutions" that had occurred in the preceding decades (3). The boom was inspired by P. A. Zaionchkovskii, whose teaching and mentorship brought the study of tsarist institutions and the officials who directed them into the historian's purview. For example, his *Pravitel'stvennyi apparat samoderzhavnoi Rossii v XIX v.*, published in 1978, provided quantitative data revealing the changes in social and economic status of government officials and in the size of the administration.<sup>1</sup> Meanwhile, the study of the state system had begun in the west, with works by Marc Raeff, Hans-Joachim Torke, and Walter M. Pintner, which also focused on the changing character of administrative personnel.<sup>2</sup> Zaionchkovskii's students, both Soviet and Western, went on to study the government in the period of Great Reforms, following the example of his own works on the administration.<sup>3</sup> They investigated the reforms as acts of state directed by "enlightened bureaucrats" briefly empowered by the crisis following the Crimean War, and the institutional politics that both enabled them to succeed and established the limits to the reforms they introduced. The preoccupation with reforms, however, left unanswered questions about the nature and functioning of the monarchical state once the reforms ended. The work of Daniel T. Orlovsky represents a partial exception to this pattern,<sup>4</sup> and many of Orlovsky's points adumbrate those made by Remnev in his volume. Orlovsky's work focuses principally on the failures of governmental reforms in the 1860s, the inability of the government to achieve

<sup>1</sup> P. A. Zaionchkovskii, *Pravitel'stvennyi apparat samoderzhavnoi Rossii v XIX veke* (Moscow: Mysl', 1978), 5.

<sup>2</sup> For brief reviews of the themes and problems raised by this literature, see Daniel T. Orlovsky, "Recent Studies on the Russian Bureaucracy," *Russian Review* 35, No. 4 (October 1976): 448-467; Marc Raeff, "The Bureaucratic Phenomena of Imperial Russia, 1700-1905," 399-411.

<sup>3</sup> O. V. Bolshakova, "P. A. Zaionchkovskii i amerikanskaia rusistika, 1960-1980-kh gg.," in *Petr Andreevich Zaionchkovskii: sbornik statei i vospominanii k stoletiiu istorika*, 828-42.

<sup>4</sup> Daniel T. Orlovsky, *The Limits of Reform: The Ministry of Internal Affairs in Imperial Russia, 1801-1881* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1981).

a “conservative renovation,” which proceeded elsewhere in Europe, Japan, and the Ottoman Empire.

Remnev deals with the efforts at reform, but places them in the framework of a functioning system of autocracy from 1801 to 1906. He seeks to examine, citing Mikhail Dolbilov, “the history of autocratic power as a process of administration” (3) in order to show how “autocratic government” manifested itself both in practice and in the mentality of those officials who were both loyal to their sovereign and determined to observe the norms of legality fundamental to a modern bureaucracy.<sup>5</sup> In this way, Remnev examines the structure and function of autocracy rather than conjunctural failures of reform explained by personal dispositions of the tsar and his officials. The book’s title reveals the core contradiction that Remnev believes defined the operations of the Russian state: “autocratic government,” he observes, is an oxymoron, clothing the tsar’s sacral unconstrained power in “rational, legal forms” (6).

The ongoing conflict between autocratic power and the law in the tsarist administration has been a common theme in the historical literature, summarized in the succinct words of Theodore Taranovskii (also cited by Remnev): “In the language of contemporaries, autocracy maneuvered between arbitrariness and legality, between the principle of unlimited personal power and the need to strive for a more rational organization of state” (321).<sup>6</sup> Remnev shows how this tension was reflected in specific operations of the state under the Committee of Ministers and in the mind-set of the officials responsible for its workings. The tension gave rise to “a unique rhetoric” in the plans for reform of the system and the arguments of ministers and other officials to advance policies that would presumably strengthen the state. “High governmental dignitaries (*sanovniki*) and their conservative allies and opponents had to play according to the general scenario, presenting themselves as true defenders of autocracy” (5). But such efforts at reform at the same time involved obstructions to the ruler’s will. At every level of administration, a tug of war went on between working according to regulations and law and heeding the will of the autocrat.

<sup>5</sup> The reference is to Mikhail Dolbilov, “The Political Mythology of Autocracy: Scenarios of Power and the Role of Autocrat,” *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* No. 4 (2001): 774-75.

<sup>6</sup> T. K. Taranovskii, “Osobennosti rossiiskoi samoderzhavnoi monarkhii v XIX stoletii,” in *Rossiiskaia Monarkhiia: voprosy istorii i teorii*, ed. M. D. Karpachev (Voronezh: Istoki, 1998), 166.

The Committee of Ministers provides the ideal setting to investigate these operations. Although it was burdened with a profusion of minor matters demanding the tsar's signature, it remained the supreme executive institution of the empire, the contact point between the administration and the tsar. It considered matters that could not be resolved in the State Council or the Senate: ministers would move them to the Committee's jurisdiction, where they could expect a more favorable outcome. It also took up matters that the tsar considered urgent and were therefore not subject to legislative procedures. This occurred on such critical occasions as after Dmitrii Karakozov's assassination attempt on Alexander II in 1866, when, through the Committee, chief of police Petr Shuvalov assumed a preponderant role, and in the 1890s when Sergei Witte dominated it in order to promote measures to advance industrialization (see page 85).

The Committee of Ministers was an institution that was not an integral component of the ministerial system that Mikhail Speranskii endeavored to create in the first years of the reign of Alexander I. Unlike the State Council, the supreme legal institution of the government, and Senate, its highest judicial instance, Speranskii regarded the committee only as a location where ministers would gather to report to the tsar collectively. When it took institutional form, he asked that it be abolished. It was not mentioned in the General Statute of Ministries of 1811, though the General Instruction to the Ministries indicated that when laws were inadequate or when the permission of the ruler was required, matters should be submitted to the emperor through the Committee of Ministers. It received formal definition in 1812 as a temporary institution to deal with the government in the tsar's absence, described by the Minister of Justice, K. D. Troshchinskii, as a form of "supervisory power [*bliustitel'naia vlast'*]" implementing measures enacted by the judicial and legislative powers" (30-31).

Remnev approaches the Committee of Ministers as a microcosm of the functioning of the state—an ongoing demonstration of the oxymoronic "autocratic government." The indefiniteness of the Committee's responsibilities remained characteristic of its activity throughout its existence, and indeed of the functioning of the ministerial system as a whole. It resembled a cabinet, but lacked the key element of a cabinet—a prime minister, who would chair a government of ministers dedicated to a united policy. Whereas monarchies like Prussia and Austria utilized the services of a chancellor to direct the ruler's policy, such an option was precluded by the autocrat's jealousy of power. Rather, the sovereign dealt individually with each minister, playing



them off against each other, thus forestalling the development of institutional solidarities that might counter his will and leading to open rivalries between them, most flagrantly between the Ministers of Finances and Interior during the last decades of tsarism.

Reform-minded officials sought to remedy these problems and to establish a unified government that would operate according to the law. As early as 1841, State Secretary Modest Korf deplored the absence of “a general bond.” “Every [ministry] acts only according to its own objectives, not perceiving that the actions of one [ministry] inevitably have a consequence for and an influence on another.” In 1844, he wrote in his diary, “The absence of any unified direction or general unity in the measures and initiative of the Government may come about because there is no prime minister or Cabinet of Ministers” (329).<sup>7</sup> In 1862, he submitted a proposal that would have restored to the State Council the right to determine which measures would be designated laws. But the proposal preserved the tsar’s prerogative to issue decrees that had the force of law without the Council’s approval (143-44). Remnev also discusses at length a project drafted by the Foreign Minister, Chancellor Alexander Gorchakov in 1868, which proposed appointing an individual, presumably Gorchakov himself, to head a “united ministry whose members would act under his direction” (354-56).

To solve the problem of governmental unity, Alexander II introduced a new institution, a Council of Ministers (*Sovet Ministrov*), in 1857, and in 1861 established it by law. The Council deliberated on problems that arose with the enactment of the Great Reforms and that exceeded the competence of the individual ministers. The tsar chaired its meetings. Remnev makes clear that the Council never achieved the unity of a cabinet, and merely reproduced problems endemic to the Committee of Ministers. The individual ministers sought beforehand to divine or influence the tsar’s opinion, which the Committee as a whole then proceeded to endorse (362). Like his uncle, Alexander I, Alexander II soon tired of meeting with the assembled ministers. After 1862, the Council met intermittently, only two to four times a year by the end of his reign. It was abolished in 1882.

In 1865, Grand Duke Constantine Nikolaevich, appointed chairman of the State Council, succeeded in convincing Alexander II to issue a decree

<sup>7</sup> For the full critique Korf composed in 1844, see E. V. Dolgikh, *K probleme mentaliteta rossiiskoi administrativnoi elity pervoi poloviny XIX veka: M. A. Korf, D. N. Bludov* (Moscow: Indrik, 2006), 181-83.

providing that “in the future ministers should not be emboldened to go to the tsar with special reports on matters that have already been submitted to the State Council.” But the ministers persisted in the practice. The Grand Duke declared in exasperation, “This is absolutely contrary to law, but if anyone remarks about its illegality, then his mouth is shut by a reply that it has received supreme consent (*vysochaishee soizvolenie*)!!! That is to say, to defend himself against a charge of illegality, the minister protects himself with the name of the tsar!” (141-42)

Serious efforts at reform of the central institutions then ceased and were revived only on the eve of the revolution of 1905. The ministers’ practices, which had struck the Grand Duke Constantine as hypocritical, were the result of the contradictory pressures that made duplicity necessary to reconcile the contradictory motivations intrinsic to the system of autocratic government. Officials continued to regard the tsar as supreme figure enjoying a quasi-sacral aura who alone wielded sovereign power in the Russian state. They gave several justifications for their reverence. First, they proposed that the tsar’s distance from the administration and indifference to special interests guaranteed an objectivity of judgment expressed in his “supreme will” (*vysochaishaia volia*). The historian and jurist B. N. Chicherin, writing in 1861, expressed his distrust of a prime minister in Russian monarchy. The other ministers would suspect a prime minister of being a favorite of the tsar, and the prime minister in turn “not relying on the support of public opinion, would hide everything.” But without a prime minister, Chicherin contended, the monarch could feel free to recruit “all the most able people in all of the country,” and rely on public opinion “formed by people of moderate persuasion” (352-353).

A second opinion pervasive among the officialdom and conservative advocates of autocratic government was that the tsar’s absolute power was an expression of the will of the Russian people, the *narod*, who presumably adhered to what Daniel Field has described as “peasant monarchism.”<sup>8</sup> I. I. Tkhorzhevskii, who served in the Committee’s Chancellery, wrote:

In the severe and agitated school of the Committee of Ministers, a basic political impression quickly took form: after all the clashes and storms of the ministers, when our carefully compiled reports usually were turned into imperial commands, they immediately came alive, became part of Russian life, Russian reality [*byt*]. Those rejected by the tsar remained in the drawer as dead letters. The tsar impressed everything with a radiant

<sup>8</sup> Daniel Field, *Rebels in the Name of the Tsar* (Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1989), 208-14.

life-giving stamp.... In the psychology of the Russian people, only the authority of the tsar—no matter who assisted him, the Duma or officials—remained the source of law (324-25).

Like the image of the reforming tsar, the notion of the people's worship of the tsar was a component of the officials' own psychology. For them, it was the tsar who breathed life into the workings of the administration. Modest Korf wrote in his diary that a personal report to the tsar was "a joy that represents the ultimate goal of all our service" (110). Whether or not the great mass of the Russian population actually believed that "the personal authority of the tsar ... remained the source of law," the officials serving the tsar certainly did, while they continued to nurture hopes for reform.

With the accession of Alexander III, the concept of a legal autocracy was eclipsed by a neo-Slavophile image of tsar as national ruler, united with the people by faith and feeling. The national myth ushered in an era of extreme distrust between the tsar and his institutions. The representation of the ruler as a national tsar expressed a determination to increase his personal power and to enhance the role of the executive institutions at the expense of the legislative and judicial arms, the State Council and the Senate. A proposal by E. V. Frisch, submitted in 1885, made the signature of the tsar on a decree (*imennoi ukaz*) the formal sign of a law, which would be issued as a signed supreme decree (*podpisnoi vysochaishii ukaz*). This provision, approved by Alexander III, permitted even administrative rulings to be entered directly into the *Svod Zakonov* without consideration by the State Council (151-52), and further blurred the line between the tsar's personal authority and permanent laws of state.

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One of the major contributions of Remnev's study is his demonstration of the concrete workings of monarchical agency. In most works on imperial Russia, the monarch appears as a figure adventitious to the administration, one who approves governmental policies or does not, advances reforms or opposes them. Remnev shows how the monarchy systematically worked within and through the administration. He takes account of the different modes of interaction pursued by successive monarchs while they continued to regard their servitors with abiding distrust. "However paradoxical it may seem, Russian monarchs often saw the main threat not in representative institutions but in pre-modern attempts on their power by their closest assistants and advisers" (494).

The source of monarchical power in Russia, I have argued, derived not from the legality of the monarchs' acts or their own adoption of an administrative ethos, but from their transcendent role as protagonist of myth, from which they descended to the role of ruler of state.<sup>9</sup> The monarchy constituted its own universe, with its own political culture governing the imperial family, the tsar's entourage, and the court. From Peter through the reign of Alexander II, the tsar appeared as the embodiment of state institutions, realized most fully in the figure of Nicholas I, who absorbed leading officials into Russian monarchical culture as the highest expression of western absolutism. But the reforms of Alexander II placed this relationship in jeopardy, and it broke down in the course of subsequent decades. The culture of Russian monarchy had vested itself in the forms of European absolutism, but without its legal traditions and estate institutions.

The psychology and imagery of absolute transcendence persisted when the symbiosis between monarch and state broke apart in the last decades of the nineteenth century. Remnev's study reveals this clash of mentalities and ultimate goals as integral to the processes of government, from the efforts of reform to the mechanics of administration, as it was expressed in the "unique rhetoric" that trimmed between aspirations to change and fawning subservience to the sovereign. From Remnev's analysis we can understand the operations of the Russian government as an institution of monarchy with its own *modus operandi* in tension with the institutions of the administrative state.

If the first tension was between the unlimited power of the autocratic ruler and the desire to observe the limits and regularity of legality, the second set the tsar's symbolic supremacy at odds with practical implications of his obligation to intervene at will at all levels of the state hierarchy. The quasi-sacral image of a distant tsar coexisted with his authority as highest official, the "first servant of the state," to manage all matters, to "envelop everything" (*use okhvatit'*). The Russian monarch was faced with the dilemma of the absolute monarch articulated by Norbert Elias with regard to Louis XIV: the king had "to govern" (*pravit'*) and "to administer" (*upravliat'*). In this respect, the image of the tsar shadowed the work of all officials, his supreme will remaining the one source of legitimate authority. "The religious myth of the tsar and the [officials'] profane acquaintanceship with the head of state," Remnev writes, "inevitably gave rise to a conflict that threatened to destroy the very essence of supreme power, its ideological grounding" (323).

<sup>9</sup> See my article, "The Representation of Dynasty and the 'Fundamental Laws' in the Evolution of Russian Monarchy," Number 2 in this volume.

The tsar had to reconcile the irreconcilable: to maintain distance and yet be involved at all levels. These contradictory imperatives gave rise to an ongoing sense of uncertainty that enhanced the role of the Committee of Ministers, whose indefinite purview rendered it a ready instrument of manipulation and intrigue. The very uncertainties that officials felt about the tsar's views, or for that matter about the procedures to be followed, ensured that his will would not be challenged. The means to achieve his ends was the exercise of personal ties with officials whose authority was measured not so much by their office as his personal trust, making them his allies in the forbidding landscape of the administration.

Remnev analyzes the action of personal agency in three spheres of state under the Committee of Ministers: the Ministries, the Committee's Chancellery, and the specialized committees established under its purview. Officials and other figures could move between these spheres, individuals whom Alfred Rieber has described as "free-floaters."<sup>10</sup> According to the initial rules governing the Committee, ministers were to submit reports and recommendations to the Committee as a whole, which then would be confirmed by the tsar. Nicholas I at first insisted on the observance of this practice, but then relented, and ministers began to deal directly with him (110, 332-33). The resolutions then would be formalized as statutes of the Committee of Ministers confirmed by the emperor, many of which would appear in the *Polnoe Sobranie Zakonov*. As Dolbilov has shown, meetings of ministers and other high officials with the tsar took the form of conversations during which they sought to "divine the imperial will" (*ugadyvat' vysochaishuiu voliu*). "Divining the imperial will" could involve subtle manipulation, planting ideas in the tsar's mind while convincing him that they were his own.<sup>11</sup> Alfred Rieber has pointed out that the minister then might become "an autocrat in his own right with a vast network of clients who are professionally trained and loyal to their department"<sup>12</sup> (333).

The Chancellery of the Committee of the Ministers was under the tsar's direct supervision, and Remnev's section on it is most illuminating. On the

<sup>10</sup> Alfred Rieber, "Bureaucratic Politics in Imperial Russia," *Social Science History* 2, No. 4 (Summer 1978): 407.

<sup>11</sup> M. D. Dolbilov, "Rozhdenie imperatorskikh reshenii: Monarkh, sovetnik i 'vysochaishaia volia' v Rossii XIX v," *Istoricheskie zapiski* 9 (127) (2006): 5-48.

<sup>12</sup> Alfred J. Rieber, "Interest Group Politics in the Era of the Great Reforms," *Russia's Great Reforms, 1855-1881*, 59.

basis of memoirs and diaries, as well as secondary works on changing personnel policies, he traces the evolution of the Committee's Chancellery from an institution that was merely a subordinate clerical apparatus into a source of expertise and instrument of power.<sup>13</sup> The first half of the nineteenth century witnessed a growing emphasis on clarity and elegance of style. Mikhail Speranskii, Modest Korf, and Iakov Grot brought a "literary language" into Chancellery documents, making them accessible and even pleasant reading for the sovereign. Jurists introduced scholarly legal terminology, analyses, and theoretical principles derived from journals. "Scholarship became an attribute of those serving in the chancelleries of higher governmental institutions, and editing was lifted to the level of an art" (74). Later in the century, the graduates of the elite schools, the Lycée, and the School of Jurisprudence, as well as the universities, filled the chancelleries and promoted "the intellectualization of the bureaucracy" and the appearance of the "professional bureaucrat" (78-79).

Remnev shows how these exemplars of professional expertise in the chancellery served the monarch, rather than the autonomy of the bureaucracy. They were of high social standing, graduates of the elite schools or the university. One of their number, I. I. Tkhorzhhevskii, described them as "hussars of the civil service" (72). They developed their own bureaucratic "poetics" that enabled them to construct narratives that concealed the intricacies and inconsistencies of the ministers' arguments and produced lucid, easily understood narratives for the tsar. Their role as editors vested them with a special power in the reporting of discussions in both the Committee and State Council.

Remnev places these developments under the rubric of modernization, increasing the administration's "effectiveness" (73). Improving effectiveness no doubt was a consideration in the changes of the culture and personnel of the chancellery. But the process also permitted the sovereign to make use of the expertise of educated and cultured noblemen who did not occupy high administrative offices. The heads of the Committee's Chancellery, the *upravliaiushchie delami*, could enjoy access to the court and the favor of the tsar. Remnev draws extensively on the unpublished memoirs of N. A. Kulomzin, a graduate of the Juridical Faculty of Moscow University, who served as

<sup>13</sup> L. E. Shepelev, *Chinovnyi mir Rossii XVIII-nachalo XX v.* (St. Petersburg: Iskusstvo-SPB, 1999), 47-55; Dolgikh, *K probleme mentaliteta rossiiskoi administrativnoi elity*, 151-53; and my *The Development of a Russian Legal Consciousness* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976), Chapter 8.

Head of the Chancellery from 1883-1902 and also held the position of State Secretary. "The head of the chancellery was completely independent and was not subordinate to the Chairman of the Committee of Ministers," Kulomzin wrote in his memoirs, which describe his dominating role in determining the agenda and decisions of the committee. His office united "the powers of the secretary and the official making the report" (83).

Under his direction, the chancellery summarized and often rewrote ministerial reports. In composing the journals of sessions, Kulomzin abbreviated and simplified the views of the ministers and other officials so that all the views were expressed in simple terms presenting clear alternatives. In this way, he justified the trust of the tsar, who aspired to absolute impartiality of presentation, while carefully concealing his own views, which suited whichever minister enjoyed the tsar's favor. Since the Head of Chancellery could not aspire to independent influence or power, his relations with the tsar lacked the tension and pretense of those with other figures in the bureaucracy. Kulomzin presented the journals of the Committee to the tsar for confirmation and formulated his resolutions—*tsarskie voprosy*, *poveleniia*, and *otmetki*. This power had no legal basis but was freely practiced from at least 1861 (94). The numerous reports from the provinces submitted to the Committee usually did not reach the tsar's desk: the Head of Chancellery spared him the mountain of detail about provincial matters.

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Many specialized "supreme committees" (*vysshiaia komitety*) were created under the purview of the Committee of Ministers to deal with cases that escaped the competence of the established institutions. These comprised "branch [*otraslevye*] committees" assigned matters concerning the censorship, the peasantry, Old Believers, railroads, and finances. Territorial Committees were introduced to bring unity to the administration of regions under the jurisdiction of Governor-Generals, whose power often overlapped with the competence of central ministries. Remnev, noted for his distinguished works on the administration of Siberia and the Russian Far East, examines the conflicts and operations of the various Siberian committees in the course of the nineteenth century, as well as those for the Caucasus, the Western Provinces, the Kingdom of Poland, Finland, and the Jewish Committee.<sup>14</sup> A final

<sup>14</sup> See for example his *Samoderzhavie i Sibir': administrativnaia politika v pervoi polovine XIX v.* (Omsk: Izd-vo Omskogo universiteta, 1995), and *Rossia Dal'nego*

section is devoted to the Siberian Railroad and the Far Eastern Committees. These sections are rich in detail and insight and will be most informative for historians concerned with the specialties and regions administered by the individual committees.

At the close of the nineteenth century, when the notion of a national tsar free from institutional constraints was in the ascendant, the committees also became convenient sites for the machinations of the tsar's personal agents. Remnev mentions numerous contemporary books that elaborated the notion of a union between tsar and people that would overcome the "dividing wall" of the state institutions, which validated Nicholas II's open disdain of all administrative officials. He provides vivid descriptions of a process of deinstitutionalization. By the end of the century, this resulted in the multiplication of numerous "verticals of power" that Remnev likens to the chaos of pre-Petrine *prikazy*, which had arisen on an ad-hoc basis (223).

Their activities could further important goals of state, as in the case of Sergei Witte, who acted as a "free-floater" agent of industrialization in the committees he chaired—the Financial Committee and the Siberian Railroad Committee—and then proceeded to dominate the Committee of Ministers to the dismay of his colleagues there. The currency reform—the adoption of the gold standard—was enacted through the Finance Committee, temporarily chaired by Nicholas himself in order to avoid the opposition of other officials, particularly those in the State Council. The Chancellery of the Committee of Ministers served as the Siberian Committee's office staff, and Kulomzin, Witte's ally, played a considerable role in directing the section that served the committee. Kulomzin drafted the project for the manifesto announcing the beginning of the construction of the Trans-Siberian Railroad and behind the scenes influenced the opinions of the other ministers (299-300).

But the reliance on personal agents had calamitous consequences for Russian Far-Eastern policy. Nicholas created the Far East Committee to empower A. M. Alekseev and the guards' officers A. M. Bezobrazov and V. M. Vonliarliarskii in their schemes to advance Russian ambitions in the Far East. The Committee, which Nicholas chaired, replaced the Siberian Railroad Committee but merely served as a cover for the escapades of the Bezobrazov group. Its members played to Nicholas's sense of himself as pre-Petrine tsar, wielding divinely inspired personal proprietorial power unencumbered by

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*Vostoka: Imperskaia geografiia vlasti XIX-nachala XX vekov* (Omsk: Izdanie OmGU, 2004), in addition to his numerous articles and edited volumes.



institutions. Bezobrazov wrote of Nicholas's "proprietary power" (*khoziaskaia vlast'*) as being reminiscent of Muscovite Rus', when Russian princes and tsars claimed Rus' as their personal appanage. "Thank God," Bezobrazov wrote, "that we still have proprietary power, otherwise, with all our scoundrels and idiots attached to the various bureaucratic mechanisms, we simply would have perished in vain" (314).

The disorder and confusion in government of the first years of the twentieth century gave rise to new plans for a united government and a cabinet system, which Remnev relates and analyzes. He gives a detailed—perhaps overly detailed—discussion of the various plans to introduce a prime minister and a cabinet, all of which Nicholas adamantly opposed. Only the General Strike of October, 1905 and the collapse of authority forced him to yield and establish a Council of Ministers, with his *bête noir*, Sergei Witte, Prime Minister appointed on October 17, the day he issued the October Manifesto. Remnev's narrative ends with the dissolution of the Committee of Ministers in April, 1906.

"Autocratic government," analyzed with such acuity and force in this volume, resumed its practices of personal ties and machinations with the tsar, and by the advent of war, "united government" had proved little more than an ephemeral fiction.<sup>15</sup> Remnev reveals "autocratic government" not only as a system difficult to reform, but as a troubled symbiosis between a monarchy and an administrative state, inhabiting different mental universes. The alliance that Alexander III and Nicholas II evoked between tsar and people overcoming the barrier (*sredostenie*) between them was an alternative to the merger between tsar and state that had its origin in the principles of the early modern absolute state. For the rulers of Russia, Remnev observed, the threat of constitutionalism was no greater than the threat of ambitious officials, which for Nicholas II mounted to the level of phobia. The menace to the Russian state in the first decades of the twentieth century came not only from the revolutionary organizations and dissatisfied masses, but from a tsar seeking at all costs to preserve his heritage of undefiled symbolic supremacy. Remnev's book enables us to understand both the durability and the failings of a political culture that harbored the very sources of its own breakdown.

<sup>15</sup> For a close examination of the ill-fated efforts to sustain a united government between 1905 and the outbreak of war in 1914, see David M. McDonald, *United Government and Foreign Policy in Russia, 1900-1914* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992).

Part II

Scenarios of Family  
and Nation





## 4. The Russian Empress as Mother



Like monarchs of all periods, the monarchs of nineteenth-century Europe strove to exemplify certain dominant values of their era. Prominent among these was a trust in the sanctity of the family and the high role of the parent. Queen Louise and King Frederick William III of Prussia, Emperor Franz-Joseph, and, of course, Queen Victoria became symbols of royalty's adoption of the familial values of the middle class. They created an aura of domestic respectability that enhanced claims to reverence and obedience that had been challenged by the French Revolution. The queen or empress, as first lady of the land, had to become the first mother as well, embodying the purity, wisdom, and selflessness associated with child-rearing. Her virtues would guarantee the sound moral development of her children and ensure the future of the dynasty.

The princesses who came from Germany (or, in one case, from Denmark) to wed the Russian heirs brought with them current European attitudes about the roles of the wife and the mother. Beginning with the reign of Nicholas I, the Russian royal house also adopted these attitudes, and family responsibility and loyalty became part of its ethos. Upon her arrival the future empress would take on a new name and a new faith and then become the subservient wife, devoted to the tasks the nineteenth-century mind assigned to women—among them, motherhood. But the role of mother in the royal family would not be an easy one. There were problems inherent in the personal inclinations of the individual empresses, and maternal and royal obligations were in many ways mutually exclusive. In addition, the political and psychological circumstances of the Russian royal house often discouraged the mother's active participation in the lives of her children. This paper examines the evolution of the Russian empress's role as mother, particularly her relationship to the heir. My aim is

to highlight several aspects of this relationship, in the hope that they may be explored more thoroughly in further research.<sup>1</sup>

In Russia, as elsewhere, the emphasis on the family marked a rejection of the eighteenth century and its values. The reprehensible past was epitomized by Catherine the Great, who, possessed by ambition, flagrant in her inconstancy and indifference to the family, seemed threatening to the very notion of nineteenth-century legitimacy. Most important, she had been an accomplice in the murder of her husband. Catherine was a product of Peter the Great's succession law, which had eliminated the precedence of family and of men over women in the succession. The law had expressed a fear of the natural heir: the first-born son, as Absalom, was a potential threat to the strength and wisdom of the monarchy. Peter's succession law argued from the premise of utility: the successor had to be qualified to serve the best interests of the empire, regardless of his position in the family.<sup>2</sup>

In the eighteenth century, the heir's mother was suspect on two accounts. Not only could she use her influence over her son to further her own selfish political designs, but her closeness to the heir could also lead to personal attachment and dependency that would divert him from concern for the welfare of all. The qualities of the good monarch were strength, wisdom, and an ability to submit personal impulses to the voice of reason. The son was to be in the image of the father, or the present ruler, and to realize the hopes for a strong, enlightened monarchy. After giving birth, the mother was accordingly banished from association with the heir. Eighteenth-century Russian monarchs followed practices of mother avoidance that were common in the absolutist states of Europe.<sup>3</sup> Peter the Great tried to keep his son Alexei away from the

<sup>1</sup> The empresses discussed in this paper are: Maria Fedorovna (1) (1759-1828)—Sophie, daughter of the Duke of Württemberg, wife of Paul I, mother of Alexander I and Nicholas I; Alexandra Fedorovna (1) (1798-1860)—Princess Charlotte of Prussia, wife of Nicholas I, mother of Alexander II; Maria Aleksandrovna (1824-1880)—Princess Maximilien of Hesse-Darmstadt, wife of Alexander II, mother of Grand Duke Nicholas Aleksandrovich and Alexander III; Maria Fedorovna (2) (1847-1928)—Princess Dagmar of Denmark, wife of Alexander III, mother of Nicholas II. Alexandra Fedorovna (2) Princess Alix of Hesse-Darmstadt, wife of Nicholas II.

<sup>2</sup> *PSZ, Sobranie pervoe*, 46 vols. (St. Petersburg, 1830-43), no. 3893, February 5, 1722.

<sup>3</sup> See David Hunt, *Parents and Children in History* (New York: Basic Books, 1970), 17. Hunt writes of the upbringing of Louis XIII: "The dauphin was physically separated from his mother, discouraged from developing any kind of deep affective ties with

tsaritsa Evdokiia Lopukhina; a generation later, Empress Elizabeth removed Grand Duke Paul from the care of his mother, Catherine, immediately after his birth, and Catherine, when empress, did the same, taking the Grand Duke Alexander away from his parents, the Grand Duke Paul Petrovich and the Grand Duchess Maria Fedorovna.

The new attitude toward the family was heralded by the succession law of Paul I, promulgated in 1797. Issued in response to the power struggles and assassinations of the previous century, this law conceived the threat to the monarchy to be not the first-born son but the conniving empress who, devoid of family responsibility, pursued her own ambitions and disrupted the succession. The first words of the law ensured priority to the first-born son, and, following the “Austrian” principle of succession, gave preference to men before women. Proclaimed at the end of the coronation of Paul and Maria Fedorovna and signed by both husband and wife, it took the form (extraordinary for Russia) of a familial act or collective testament.<sup>4</sup>

The 1797 succession law was a first, symbolic step toward transforming the empress from a political rival into a helpful member of the imperial family. It remained for the royal house to become a closely knit family and to fortify its power through kinship bonds. Tsar Alexander I, who came to the throne through the assassination of his father, cared little for his wife, and produced no heir, could not himself achieve this goal. But he held lofty ideals of family life which had been nurtured by the sentimental literature he had read. The emblematic event in this respect was a conversation with his younger brother Nicholas Pavlovich in 1819. Alexander pointed out that neither Constantine (the second in line) nor he himself, both of whom had been brought up under Catherine's supervision, had enjoyed a happy family life or had provided an heir. Revealing that Nicholas was to be his successor, Alexander sadly confessed that he felt himself incapable of realizing his own ideal of family happiness.<sup>5</sup>

Nicholas Pavlovich, the first of Maria Fedorovna's sons to be reared under her supervision, was also the first to present himself as a family man. While

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her, reminded constantly that he belonged to papa: thus did absolutism attempt to sabotage the Oedipus complex.”

<sup>4</sup> PSZ, XVII, no. 910, April 5, 1797: B. Nol'de, “Zakony osnovnye v russkom prave,” *Pravo*, no. 9 (1913): 524-526; V. I. Zhmakin, “Koronatsii russkikh imperatorov i imperatrits, 1724-1856,” *Russkaia Starina*, no. 6 (1884): 636.

<sup>5</sup> *Shil'der, Imperator Nikolai Pervyi*, 1:122.

in Paris he had met the Duke of Orleans and had admired his close family life. "What enormous happiness it is to live that way, in a family," Nicholas exclaimed. "It is the only true and firm happiness," the Duke replied.<sup>6</sup> In 1819, the twenty-three-year-old Nicholas, though uncouth, unpopular, and poorly educated, could already boast a loving wife and a son. As Tsar Nicholas I, he would make fatherhood and paternal authority an important part of the image of manhood presented by the tsar. He personified the masculine virtues of potency, authority, and austere ruthlessness. The ability to win love, in which his brother Alexander I had excelled, would be relegated to the empress.

The nineteenth-century empress was to fit the new conceptions of the family and to act as cherishing mother to her child. Her principal sphere was to become the home, rather than the court or state. The official world came to represent alien and unpleasant obligations to her. "Both of us," Alexandra Fedorovna (1) wrote, "had a horror of everything that was *the court*."<sup>7</sup> She had to embody the purity and respectability of the regime, and, at the dynastic level, to act out the woman's nineteenth-century role as moral custodian of a society that otherwise could not attain high morality. The model that she provided depended on her separation from the brutal and often gruesome demands of autocratic polity. She had to stand apart as a sentimental ideal, rewarded with admiration and even worship for her forbearance and passivity. No longer "mother of the fatherland," as Catherine II had been styled, she would become the mother of the family.

The empresses brought high notions about motherhood and the family with them when they came to Russia. As a girl, Maria Fedorovna (1) had been taught that a mother's mission was to educate her children, an attitude reinforced by her own parents' long and close marriage. Alexandra Fedorovna (1) shared the familial values of her parents Queen Louise and King Frederick William III. Upon the death of her mother, her father told her that she had replaced the queen in his eyes. She always kept a bust of her mother on the desk in her study.<sup>8</sup> Maria Fedorovna (2) came out of the strong patriarchal tradition of the Danish royal house. Of the nineteenth-century empresses, only Maria

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 46.

<sup>7</sup> "Imperatritsa Alexandra Fedorovna v svoikh vospominaniakh," *Russkaia Starina*, no. 10 (1896): 52.

<sup>8</sup> A. Th. Von Grimm, *Alexandra Feodorowna, Kaiserin von Russland* (St. Petersburg: J. J. Weber, 1866), 1: 58, 226.

Aleksandrovna lacked such a background, but she, too, brought to Russia feelings of the importance of a mother's role in the upbringing of her children.

Under Nicholas I, motherhood was extolled in verse, art, and architecture. Zhukovskii greeted the birth of the heir Alexander Nikolaevich in 1818 with an epistle to Alexandra Fedorovna (1) that dwelled on the parents' joy and the feelings of the young mother.

Your child, like a heavenly messenger,  
Told your soul of a better life,  
Alit the purest hopes within it.  
Now your wishes are not for you,  
Your joys not for yourself;  
Wrapped in diapers,  
Still without words, with unseeing eyes,  
He finds love in your eyes.<sup>9</sup>

At the accession of Nicholas, a series of prints and paintings showed members of the royal family to the nation. They represented a departure from the usual eighteenth-century practices of separate portraiture or large court scenes. The English artist George Dawe completed a series of engravings of Nicholas's family. An engraving of Thomas Wright, after a painting of Dawe released not long after Nicholas's accession, set the young Alexander Nikolaevich, the emperor and the empress in medallions set above a scene of the Winter Palace bathed in sunlight.<sup>10</sup> (Figure 1) Another showed Alexandra Fedorovna (1) holding the infant Olga Nikolaevna with her right arm while Alexander grasps her skirt and looks lovingly at his little sister.<sup>11</sup> (Figure 2) At Peterhof, Nicholas set off a small private estate, Alexandria, for the empress and built a "cottage" in English style where the family would create a rustic domestic life. There Alexandra reigned as a kind of goddess-mother, indulging her whims and receiving ostentatious signs of love and respect.<sup>12</sup>

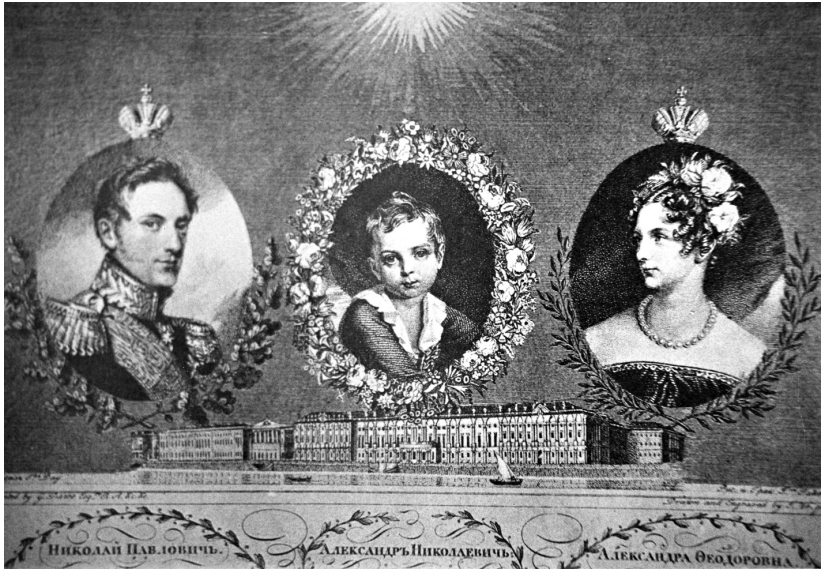
<sup>9</sup> V. A. Zhukovskii, "Gosudaryne Velikoi Kniagine Aleksandre Fedorovne na rozhdenie v.k. Aleksandra Nikolaevicha, poslanie," *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii* (St. Petersburg: A. F. Marks, 1902), 2: 125.

<sup>10</sup> *Shil'der, Imperator Nikolai Pervyi*, 1: 297.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 1: 385.

<sup>12</sup> See A. Shemanskii and S. Geichenko, *Krizis samoderzhavii: Petergofskii Kottedzh Nikolaia I* (Moscow: Gos. Izd-vo Izobrazitelnykh iskusstv, 1931).





*Figure 1.*

Emperor Nicholas I, Grand Duke Alexander Nikolaevich,  
and Empress Alexandra Fedorovna, 1826.

Engraving by Thomas Wright. Artist, George Dawe.  
From Shil'der, *Imperator Nikolai Pervyi*, Vol. 1: opp. 296.



*Figure 2.*

Empress Alexandra Fedorovna, Grand Duke Alexander Nikolaevich  
and Grand Duchess Olga Nikolaevna.

Engraving by Thomas Wright. Artist, George Dawe.

From Shil' der, *Imperator Nikolai Pervyi*, Vol. 1: opp. 384.

Yet if the symbols and gestures of family and motherhood became elements of the new panoply of autocracy, the actual role of the empress as mother was limited. The old suspicions lingered when it came to rearing and educating an heir. The callow and frightened princesses who arrived from Europe were not considered capable of rearing a future autocrat. In addition, the demands on her time for court ceremonial and charitable work were great, and current social mores did not allow an empress to participate in many of the more menial tasks of child-rearing. It was, above all, as child-bearers that the nineteenth-century empresses were exalted as mothers; beginning with Alexandra Fedorovna, they executed this responsibility conscientiously. Alexandra Fedorovna gave birth to five children in her first seven years of marriage; Maria Aleksandrovna to her first four children in five years, and Maria Fedorovna (2) to her first three in four years.

Other family members assumed the chief responsibility for directing and supervising the training and education of the heir. Maria Fedorovna (1), who had seen her first children removed by Catherine, followed similar practices when she became a grandmother. While she could not separate mother and child, she did preside over the early upbringing of Alexander Nikolaevich and selected the staff that cared for him.<sup>13</sup> Though it may be true that Alexandra Fedorovna (1) chose Zhukovskii as Alexander's preceptor, her role in her son's education went no further. Nicholas I supervised the education of his children, presumably because the empress was burdened by so many other obligations that she could not attend to it.<sup>14</sup> Alexander II claimed to assign chief responsibility for his own children's education to his wife, Maria Aleksandrovna: "she has more time for it." However, her strong convictions and interest in state affairs aroused suspicions, and she was kept from exerting a significant influence on her sons' education. Only the outcry of liberal public opinion in 1857 and 1858 about the careless education of the heir made it necessary for her to participate in the search for new preceptors.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>13</sup> S. S. Tatishchev, *Imperator Aleksandr II*, 1: 6.

<sup>14</sup> K. K. Merder, "Zapiski K. K. Merdera, vospitatelia Aleksandra Nikolaevicha," *Russkaia Starina*, No. 7 (1885): 42; Grimm, *Alexandra Fedorovna*, 2: 104, 112-14.

<sup>15</sup> E. S. Kamenskii, "Ot detstva do prisiagi; iz zhizni avgusteishikh detei Imperatora Aleksandra II," *Istoricheskii vestnik* 37, no. 1 (January 1916): 102-103; F. A. Oom, "Vospominaniia," *Russkii arkhiv* 34, nos. 5-8 (1896): 245. For a discussion of the controversy and changes in Grand Duke Nicholas Aleksandrovich's education, see *Scenarios*, 2: 92-99.

Later in the century, misgivings about the heir's mother began to diminish. Maria Fedorovna (2) played a significant role in Nicholas II's education, since it was not of great interest to Alexander III. She made every effort to keep tutors from gaining an influence over her son, perhaps distressed by the sway over her husband exerted by his former tutor, Constantine Pobedonostsev.<sup>16</sup>

It is clear that the grand duchess or empress had little contact with her children. From the moment of delivery, numerous servants saw to the care of the infant. Robust peasant women were brought in from their villages to nurse him.<sup>17</sup> The nineteenth-century empresses could not or would not heed the dictum of the current child-rearing literature that breastfeeding by the mother contributed to the child's well-being. Maria Aleksandrovna, whose first-born son, Nicholas, had been given to a wet nurse, expressed the desire to breastfeed her second, Alexander—but, like many of her wishes, this one was refused. Her father-in-law Nicholas I insisted that the child be fed by a wet nurse.<sup>18</sup> Fears for the empress's health, current expectations of how an empress should act, ceremonial demands, and the desire for more children all combined to discourage the empress from breast feeding. Empress Alexandra Fedorovna (2), influenced by Victorian practices, insisting on nursing her first three children, Olga, Tatiana, and Maria.<sup>19</sup>

Servants performed the early work of rearing. The heir spent his first years in the care of a staff of women, headed by a court lady of high standing and impeccable reputation. The children's nurses were foreigners, usually English, as were their governesses. It was common for the grand dukes to develop strong attachments to the women who cared for them in their early years and to remain fond of them throughout their lives. However, when the heirs reached the age of seven they were abruptly removed to the care of men, who would seek to initiate them in the military ethos and practices central to the representation of the monarchy and to provide them with the civil education necessary for governmental and diplomatic obligations.

<sup>16</sup> E. Flourens, *Alexandre III, sa vie, son oeuvre* (Paris: E. Dentu, 1894), 77-78.

<sup>17</sup> I have found direct mention of the use of wet nurses for Nicholas I, Nicholas Aleksandrovich, Alexander III, and Nicholas II. Alexandra Fedorovna I returned from Moscow to St. Petersburg separately from the heir, less than two months after the birth, suggesting that she was not nursing him.

<sup>18</sup> A. I. Iakovleva, "Vospominaniia byvshei kamer-iungfery Imperatritsy Marii Aleksandrovny," *Istoricheskii Vestnik* 9, no. 2 (February 1888): 410.

<sup>19</sup> See *Scenarios of Power*, 2: 334.

A hierarchy of officers and teachers saw to the “moral” and intellectual training of the heir, who was placed directly in the care of an avuncular officer enjoying the tsar’s trust. The heir’s mother, as well as his father, would be invited to carefully prepared examinations, where she could watch and approve of her son’s performance.

Descriptions of tsars’ early childhoods are few and vague, making it difficult to reconstruct their daily lives. From available accounts, it appears that the children visited their mothers for one or perhaps two hours a day, rarely longer. When the empress was taking one of her frequent trips to Europe, for health reasons or to visit relatives, the children were deprived even of this contact. Alexandra Fedorovna (1) left in September 1820 on a journey that lasted more than a year, while the two-and-one-half-year-old Alexander remained in St. Petersburg under the supervision of his grandmother, Maria Fedorovna (1). Maria Aleksandrovna took a seven-week trip through Germany in the fall of 1843, only two months after the birth of her first son, Nicholas. She visited her home, Darmstadt, the next spring for six weeks while pregnant with her son Alexander. Among her subsequent travels was a lengthy trip to Europe in 1847, when Alexander Aleksandrovich was just two years old and Vladimir three months.<sup>20</sup> If one counts the time of confinement for births and convalescence, it is clear that there were long stretches when the young heir would be separated from his mother. Injunctions against reliance on servants and exhortations for the mother to take direct care of her child could lead only to fastidiousness in the selection of the nursery staff.

Yet, despite obstacles to intimacy, Russian empresses appear to have exerted a significant influence on the development of the heirs’ personalities. In their personal characteristics, mannerisms, and tastes, the nineteenth-century tsars resembled their mothers far more than their fathers. Nicholas I’s rigid self-righteousness and despotism, Alexander II’s poise, flirtatiousness, and absorption with the frivolous and external, Alexander III’s asociability and brooding religiosity, and Nicholas II’s cold charm, suspiciousness, and secretiveness all appeared to derive from their mothers. The tsars emulated their fathers chiefly in their devotion to the principles of autocracy. The public image of the tsar, represented by the father, embodied demands that the heir found intimidating and beyond his powers. The heir saw his father as tsar, as a person rising to fulfill the demands and ceremonies of the office he was

<sup>20</sup> *Tatishchev, Emperor Aleksandr II*, 1: 116.

obliged to assume.<sup>21</sup> But the mother could act not only as empress but also as an individual with thoughts and feelings of her own. The heirs seem to have received their notions of personal life from their mothers.

Although the empress continued to remain apart from the chief tasks of child-rearing, she was expected to show affection and kindness to her children when she did see them. Barred from the formal tasks of socialization, she was allowed and encouraged to perform the role of emotional nurturer. In this sense the new conceptions of motherhood affected the ideas of how a mother should act and how a child should approach her, even if they did not greatly alter child-rearing practices in the imperial family. The heir may have spent little time with his mother, but this time was the high moment of the day. Since the quality and intensity of parental contact are often more important in shaping a relationship than the amount of time spent with a child, the empress could provide an emotional focus in the heir's life, and could serve as a highly praised model of virtue.

The importance of the empress to her children is evident from the feelings they expressed about her absence. Grand Duchess Olga Nikolaevna wrote that it was like "paradise" for the children to be near their mother, Alexandra Fedorovna (1). They were desolate when she was gone: "If mother was away, we were like lost souls."<sup>22</sup> When Nicholas I and Alexandra visited the south during the Russo-Turkish War of 1828, Alexander Nikolaevich, then ten years old, was inconsolable. He wandered through the palace at Tsarskoe Selo saying, "Here is where Papa and Mama have dinner. Here sat Papa, and there Mama. Where are they now?" He lost interest in play, and his usual cheerful manner disappeared. He wrote in his diary, "My nice Mama and Mary left for Odessa. I cried a lot."<sup>23</sup> Nicholas II, when about ten, lived for the two hours a day he could spend with his mother, whom he worshipped. It was a time of love and recreation in the midst of a general isolation and regimentation. "The children longed for their mother, enjoyed her warmth, did not want to be parted from her." When Maria Fedorovna (2) was giving birth to Mikhail Aleksandrovich, her sons could not see her, and they became forlorn. "The childrens' cheeks were sunken. They became pale and began to eat and sleep poorly."<sup>24</sup>

<sup>21</sup> See *Scenarios of Power*, 1, 343-62.

<sup>22</sup> Olga Nikolaevna, Grand Duchess, *Son iunosti* (Paris: Voennaia Byl', 1963), 35.

<sup>23</sup> Merder, "Zapiski," *Russkaia Starina*, no. 2, (1885): 355-356.

<sup>24</sup> Il'ia Surguchev, *Detstvo Imperatora Nikolaia II* (Paris: Vozrozhdenie, 1953), 88-90, 92-93.

Maria Aleksandrovna was more reserved with her children, and her concern expressed itself in worry and strictness. She appeared sad in the presence of her children.<sup>25</sup> Yet the heir missed his parents when they were away in 1847. The four-year-old Grand Duke Nicholas Aleksandrovich exclaimed, “Papa went away. Mother went away. Lina went away. But what can we do?” Just before their return he said, “When Papa, Mama, and Lina come back I will be so happy that I will walk on my head.”<sup>26</sup> The younger sons, including the future Alexander III, retained a sense of being deprived of parental warmth and attention, and they recalled these feelings bitterly later on.<sup>27</sup>

Loved, worshipped, regretted, the empress became one who was sought after and imitated by her children. She provided an example which, as Olga Nikolaevna suggested, affected the children, even if she did not concern herself directly with them.<sup>28</sup> Her example was one of personal feeling and conduct, a model of emotional expression. The father had to contain or suppress his personal feelings and conform to the public image of tsar—a distant and awesome figure. The empress could provide an initial sense of comradeship and the first lessons in the ways that royalty could appear human.

The empress’s treatment of the heir might conflict with the spirit of his formal education. She could shield him from the demands of strength and self-control impressed by his teachers; she could pamper him, and show understanding for his weaknesses. Or her refusal to provide such support could be viewed as rejection and lead to difficulties in expressing such feelings. The former pattern prevailed in the early lives of Alexander II and Nicholas II. In Alexandra Fedorovna (1), Alexander was able to find a way to avoid his studies and to go to the theater or for a walk. After a fall from a horse, which brought only rebukes from his father, he could spend a whole day in the company of his mother. Maria Fedorovna’s (2) protective attitude toward Nicholas II was partly responsible for decreasing the rigor and seriousness of his education, resulting in a diminished importance being assigned to formal training. Maria Aleksandrovna, on the other hand, did not provide such consolation for her

<sup>25</sup> A. F. Tiutcheva, *Pri dvore dvukh imperatorov, Vospominaniia, Dnevnik, 1853-1882* (Cambridge, UK: Oriental Research Partners, 1975), 2: 63-66, 102, 116-117.

<sup>26</sup> S. A. Iur’evich, “Pis'ma ob avgusteishikh synov'iakh Aleksandra II,” Unpublished manuscript, in New York Public Library, 49, 131.

<sup>27</sup> Oom, “Vospominaniia,” 254; “Iz dnevnika A. A. Polovtsova,” *Krasnyi Arkhiv*, 33 (1929), 187.

<sup>28</sup> Olga Nikolaevna, *Son iunosti*, 35.

children and was critical of their progress. Both Nicholas Aleksandrovich and Alexander III grew up without an alternative source of support in their mother, and both remained ill at ease in expressing their feelings.<sup>29</sup>

It was not only association and identification that fostered a bond between empress and heir, but also their common position as prominent but necessarily subservient members of the imperial family. Since both of them were potential rivals for authority, the tsar regarded them with suspicion when matters of state were at issue. They shared a common passive role, serving as parts of the ornamentation of autocracy: they were both gracious victims of the requirements of state. Alexandra Fedorovna (1) was to play the doll who displayed autocracy's conversion to domesticity and male dominance. In return for her effacement, she could count on the satisfaction of her caprices. For her amusement Nicholas I turned Peterhof into a playground where she could live in a world of make-believe. He treated her as a child, playing games by posing as a servant who brought her presents. She was called a little bird, *ptichka*, upon her arrival in Russia, and charmed all around her into obedience to her whims. She represented what Alfred Rieber has described as the "flirtatious" response to the dilemma of the woman's role in the nineteenth-century Russian court.<sup>30</sup> But the air of frivolity hid the isolation and condescension she felt as empress. Her public appearances alternated with increasingly frequent bouts of disease and nervous illness that made her the object of more serious attention.<sup>31</sup>

Her son, Alexander Nikolaevich, was paraded about as proof of the dynasty's persistence and fertility. On the day of the Decembrist revolt he was displayed, and at the coronation and the ensuing balls and festivities. His poise and charm won general admiration. Subordinating his own impulses, he, too, accepted a stage role. In his submission to the demands of the classroom, in his abandonment of his first real love, and in his participation in governmental matters, he struggled to accept this enforced denial. The letters of Alexandra and Alexander to Zhukovskii at the time of the coronation express a common

<sup>29</sup> Merder, "Zapiski," *Russkaia Starina*, no. 8 (1885) 224-225; no. 9 (1885): 433; no. 12 (1885): 504; Tiutcheva, *Pri dvore dvukh imperatorov*, 2: 63-66, 116-17, 191.

<sup>30</sup> "Imperatritsa Alexandra Fedorovna v svoikh vospominaniakh," 16; Alfred J. Rieber, Introduction to Tiutcheva, *Pri dvore dvukh imperatorov*.

<sup>31</sup> Alexandra Feodorovna, *Grimm*, passim; Tiutcheva, *Pri dvore dvukh imperatorov*, passim.



sympathy in the sharing of ritual excess. Alexandra, admiring the figure cut by her eight-year-old son, sympathized with him when he burst into tears in the middle of the ceremony. Alexander, in his turn, wrote to Zhukovskii, "Thank God, Mama stood that long ceremony."<sup>32</sup>

Both Alexander III and Maria Aleksandrovna felt the effects of Alexander II's suspicion of family members. Mother and son were treated as unwanted and insignificant. Maria Aleksandrovna, a melancholic woman of doubtful legitimacy from a lesser German state, was alien to the demanding court milieu she was supposed to exemplify. After her arrival in Russia, she tried to share her husband's interests, and she did enjoy discussions with him and other important figures. Such eagerness, however, only revived misgivings about her ambitions and stirred Alexander's insecurities. At the moment of her husband's accession, Maria was given to know that her involvement in government could not be received kindly, and she was denied all possibility of influence. It was said that these steps were prompted by rumors that the empress, not the emperor, would rule.

Maria Aleksandrovna then retreated into her own coterie. She found solace in mysticism and a Slavophile absorption with Russia, becoming the model of what Rieber calls the "pietistic, sentimentalist, passive type." In contrast to her frivolous predecessor, she attracted loyalty by her sincerity and helplessness, evoking solicitude rather than delight. Though not inclined to self-indulgence, she suffered from frequent illness and nervous disorders, which made her well-being of concern to others.<sup>33</sup> Her son, Alexander Aleksandrovich, plodding and seemingly dull, was regarded as something of an embarrassment and remained in the shadow of his older brother Nicholas until the latter's death in 1865. Then he began to share his mother's mystical and Russophile interests, encouraged by his tutor, Constantine Pobedonostsev. His association with Pan-Slavism and attempts to meddle in government put left him languishing in a virtual state of disgrace during the 1870s. Meanwhile, the tsar's establishment of a second household with his mistress, Catherine Dolgorukova, created a condition of open hostility between emperor and empress, the tsarevich clearly siding with his mother.

<sup>32</sup> "Pis'ma Imperatritsy Aleksandry Fedorovny k V. A. Zhukovskomu, 1817-1842," *Russkii Arkhiv* 35, no. 4 (1897): 498-499.

<sup>33</sup> Tiutcheva, *Pri dvore dvukh imperatorov*, 1: 79-81, 2: 79, 117, 123; Oom, "Vospominaniia," 245.

In this context, we can see the tsarevich and empress sharing certain strategies in dealing with the overpowering figure of the tsar. In the face of Nicholas I's stern paternal sense of obligation and self-denial, Alexandra Fedorovna (1) and Alexander Nikolaevich strove to please by compliance and conspicuous shows of joy and delight. Alexander II's distrust and contempt for members of the family led Maria Aleksandrovna and Alexander Aleksandrovich to withdraw and find their own goals and interests, which were remote from, and often antithetical to, the tsar's. Alexander III, though a good family man, was intolerant of disagreement and grew violently angry when crossed; Maria Fedorovna (2) and Nicholas II used a combination of deceit and placation to cope with him. They used the same devices with others, particularly men, whom they regarded as outside of or threatening to their domestic alliance. Nicholas, who was unusually dependent on his mother, remained squeamish about befriending or trusting anyone outside the family. Wary of outsiders, mother and son propitiated them with superficial shows of civility. Writing to Nicholas when he was nineteen, during his first participation in military maneuvers, Maria Fedorovna reminded him that everyone would be watching his first "independent" steps. She instructed him to behave courteously with his comrades but warned him to avoid "too much familiarity or intimacy," and to beware of flatterers. Nicholas replied, "I will always try to follow your advice, my dearest, darling Mama. One has to be cautious with everybody at the start." Contemporaries would remark on both his sociability and his extreme wariness of personal attachments.<sup>34</sup>

The foreign identity of nineteenth-century empresses created additional grounds for rapport. From the reign of Nicholas I, the imperial family began to stress its Russian character and to use Russian within the family and the court. The empresses had to endeavor to show their Russianness and to prove their fealty to their new nationality. They expressed their attachment to Russian culture in many ways, but most effectively in the piety of their Orthodox faith. Their sense of national difference was shared by the heirs, who grew up with feelings of ambivalence about their own national identity. They usually spoke to their mothers in French or German, later English, while Russian increasingly became the language of their everyday

<sup>34</sup> Edward J. Bing, ed., *The Secret Letters of the Last Tsar* (Toronto: Nicholson and Watson, 1937), 33, 36.

contacts outside the family. They were never quite sure what language was their own.<sup>35</sup> They, too, looked upon their Russian character as something assumed, external to themselves, to be discovered and displayed. They showed Russian tastes in dress and food and encouraged Russian art, music, and ballet. Devotion to Russian Orthodoxy would be the chief expression of their national identity, just as their association with the church formed their most apparent bond with the Russian nation. The particular character of the piety of the last three tsars closely resembled that of their mothers.

In closing, we can say that the nineteenth-century Russian empresses exerted considerable influence on the characters, personal styles, and tastes of their sons, the heirs. The circumstances of autocracy gave the empress and the tsarevich similar roles to play in enhancing the image of the tsar-father. The empress's foreign origin made her something of an outsider, leading to uncertainties in the heir's own feeling of nationality. Initially, the sense of rapport between mother and son was discouraged by the fears of maternal influence that were intrinsic to eighteenth-century views of monarchy. As the royal house came to accept the middle-class values of childhood, motherhood, and the family, the barriers to mother-son closeness fell away and the stigmas were replaced by expectations of an affectionate relationship. The greater acceptance of the mother's role in emotional nurturing and the fear of the hostile world surrounding the imperial family made possible a more intimate relationship between mother and son. Nicholas II's closeness to his mother and dependence upon her were a striking and uncommon characteristic of an heir.

While we can only speculate about the effects of this relationship, the example of Nicholas II would appear to confirm some of the old absolutist fears concerning close association of the heir with his mother. Maria Fedorovna's (2) influence over Nicholas's upbringing served to emphasize family ties at the expense of formal training and official obligations. Her protectiveness encouraged traits that contemporaries recognized as passive and infantile.<sup>36</sup>

<sup>35</sup> Alfred J. Rieber, "Commentary," *Group for the Use of Psychology in History Newsletter* (March 1976): 30-31.

<sup>36</sup> "Dnevnik V. N. Lamzdorfa," *Krasnyi Arkhiv* 46 (1931): 7-8; Elizabeth Narishkin-Kurakin, *Under Three Tsars* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1931), 161-162; Charles Lowe, *Alexander III of Russia* (New York: MacMillan, 1895), 369-370.

Yielding to affectionate feelings, whether toward his mother or his wife, Nicholas would sometimes allow emotional indulgence to take precedence over official obligations. Personal whim increasingly dominated his public personality as he seemingly assigned more importance to family life than to public office. The result was to jeopardize the separation between the tsar's public and private selves—a differentiation which had been intrinsic to the imagery of autocracy.<sup>37</sup> It became difficult for Nicholas to play the role of self-abnegating tsar who, in his devotion to office and nation, stood above personal attachments and sensitivities.



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<sup>37</sup> On the role of private tastes and motivations and the predominance of his private self, see “Publicizing the Imperial Image in 1913,” in *Self and Story in Russian History*, ed. Laura Engelstein and Stephanie Sandler (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2000), 94-119; *Scenarios of Power*, 2: 409-11, 489-502.

## 5. The Russian Imperial Family as Symbol



On the occasion of his coronation, Easter Sunday, April 5, 1797, Emperor Paul I issued two edicts that drew a close connection between the flourishing of the imperial family and the well-being of the state. He decreed his Law of Succession, then had it placed “for preservation” in an ark in the Assumption Cathedral. The law supplanted the Petrine rule of designation with an order of heredity succession. Paul sought to ensure “the tranquility of the State,” to be “based on a firm law of inheritance upon which every right-thinking person is certain.”<sup>1</sup> A Statute of the Imperial Family, issued the same day, declared the “increase of the Sovereign family (*Familiia*)” one of the grounds for the “illustrious condition” of the state. Russia had experienced the principal blessing, “seeing the inheritance of the Throne confirmed in Our Family, which may the All-High perpetuate to eternity.” The statute specified the estates and revenues to go to members of the family, the titles they held, and the rules of inheritance they would observe. It established an Appanage Department to manage the family’s estates and income.<sup>2</sup>

The need to restore a reliable order of succession was widely understood in Russia during the second half of the eighteenth century. Leaving the succession to each ruler’s discretion had put the throne at the disposition of the cliques in the court, particularly the guards’ regiments. The turmoil accompanying each succession, it was clear, endangered the security of the state. Catherine II, herself a beneficiary of this situation, set about composing a new succession law, as early as 1766. She remarked, in a draft of the statute that “the first and

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<sup>1</sup> PSZ, sobranie 1, no. 17910, April 5, 1797.

<sup>2</sup> PSZ, sobranie 1, no. 17906, April 5, 1797.

fundamental law of this autocratic (*samoderzhavnoe*) rule issued and drafted by our imperial hand, should, by its essence, be the steadfastness of the throne and firmness in its inheritance.” The project would have appointed Paul her successor and established an order of hereditary succession following the male line. Catherine returned to this question in 1785. A project of this year also provided for hereditary succession in the male line. Both projects contended that such a law was necessary to preserve the unity and indivisibility of the empire, the reason that Peter had cited in justification of succession by designation.<sup>3</sup>

However, Catherine did not issue a succession law. Indeed, hereditary succession, though preferable in principle, hardly suited the interests or tastes of Russian monarchs of the late eighteenth century. Even after Paul promulgated his law, it proved hard to follow, and neither he nor his firstborn son, Alexander, acted in a way to implant a firm or certain system of inheritance. A dynastic tradition could not be established by an edict alone; it required the elevation of family values and patterns of public conduct and these took hold in Russia only in the second quarter of the nineteenth century. The law could only have the desired effect when it corresponded to the principal symbols that the monarch used to represent his power. This paper will discuss the emergence of the imperial family as principal symbol of Russian monarchy as it was presented to the elite in ceremonies, literature, and visual representation—what I call a dynastic scenario.

The modes of behavior and representation that governed the imperial court until 1825 were consistent with the principles underlying Peter the Great’s succession law of 1722. The law stated the fundamental incompatibility between the principle of inheritance and Peter’s own conception and practice of monarchy. Petrine absolutism was grounded on a principle of utility; the monarch’s dedication to the well-being of the state justified his extensive authority. Peter’s statutes proclaimed the submergence of the past, and the principle of hereditary monarchy could hardly withstand this razor. An ineffectual or destructive son was an obstruction to the goals of monarchy. The succession took on the features of an oedipal drama recounted in Alain Besançon’s account of the bitter struggle ending in the death of Alexei Petrovich. Peter’s second-born son, Peter Petrovich, had died in 1719, thereby depriving him of a male heir. The succession law projected the father-son

<sup>3</sup> For a detailed discussion of the problem of succession, see article 2 in this volume.

conflict into the next century. The son, possessed by “the malice of Absalom,” was an ever-present threat to the throne, the greatest source of instability and a peril to the general good. These notions were formulated and elaborated in the tract, *Pravda voli monarshei*, which has been generally attributed to Feofan Prokopovich.<sup>4</sup>

The results of the law are well-known to us from the series of coups and the constant fears of plots and usurpers that menaced the throne during the eighteenth century. But a law does not operate in a vacuum, and in many respects it continued to reflect the dominant values of the rulers and the court. The utilitarian legitimation continued to dominate in the manifestos, odes, coronation orations, and the symbolism of the court in the eighteenth century. As Cynthia Whittaker has shown, the conception of the “reformer-tsar” defined the persona of each of the monarchs. In a more practical sense, the absence of a husband for the reigning empress ensured that the well-being of the noble elite would be observed. In either case, a heir was an incubus, menacing the claims based as much or more on achievements than hereditary rights. The heir represented a potential challenge to the claims of having ushered in an “age of gold” or paradise; his existence, posing the suggestion of an alternative, impugned the panegyric mystique.<sup>5</sup>

Thus, Elizabeth designated Peter of Holstein her successor, keeping him and his wife Catherine under close watch, but there was already an effort to remove him before she breathed her last. Peter III pointedly omitted mention of his son, Paul, in his decree of accession, which became one of the grounds cited by Catherine II when she deposed him seven months later. Catherine herself may have viewed hereditary monarchy as a necessity to maintain the stability of empire, and she called Paul “heir” in her accession manifesto, but

<sup>4</sup> Alain Besançon, *Le tsarévitch immolé; la symbolique de la loi dans la culture russe* (Paris: Plon, 1967), 109-22; G. Gurvich, “*Pravda voli monarshei*” Feofana Prokopovicha i eia zapadnoevropeiskie istochniki (Iur’ev: K. Mattisen, 1915); Mikhail Zyzykin, *Tsarskaia vlast’ i zakon o prestolonasledii v Rossii* (Sofia: A. A. Liven, 1924), 72-82.

<sup>5</sup> On the age of gold in Russia, see Stephen J. Baehr, *The Paradise Myth in Eighteenth Century Russia* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991), 38-40, 44-49; and “Fortuna Redux: The Iconography of Happiness in Eighteenth Century Courtly Spectacles,” in *Great Britain and Russia in the Eighteenth Century: Contacts and Comparisons*, ed. A. G. Cross (Newtonville, MA: Oriental Research Partners, 1979), 110.

confirming her son's rights was something that she never ventured to do, and rumors, probably without substance, suggested that she wished to replace him with her grandson, Alexander, in the last years of her reign.<sup>6</sup>

The utilitarian premise was not an abstract idea but a behavioral principle affirmed in the statements and ceremonies of the imperial court. The metaphor of a god, the performance of classical allegories in the court, were meant to set the ruler apart, to show him or her as the exemplification of eternal values of reason, beauty, and justice, achieved by the reign of a sovereign qua deity. The standard of conduct set by the courts of France and the German principalities hardly emulated the biblical example of the righteous and humble nuclear family. The word "virtue" was used to designate the type of civic behavior consonant with the conduct of the genteel servant of the state and not Christian probity. The escapades of the empresses were hardly matters for discreet silence. Indeed, for those following the example of Louis XIV, the display of lovers was a display of power, Eros and wisdom representing modalities of a classical symbol of transcendence.

The members of the ruler's family were included in the realm of monarchical representation during the eighteenth century. Peter the Great designated the birthdays and name days of members of the imperial family *tabel'nye* or *vysokotorzhbestvennye dni*, in the manner of German princes. Family members, particularly the heir, were kept safely distant from center stage. Catherine II, who had no claim to the throne except her relationship to her son, included him in major ceremonies, but, especially as he grew older and more threatening, tried to keep him away from the life of the court. The popularity he attracted when he visited Moscow in 1775 with his first wife, the Grand Duchess Natalie Alekseevna, so troubled Catherine that she forbade Paul and his second wife, Grand Duchess Maria Fedorovna, from visiting Moscow after their wedding in 1781.<sup>7</sup>

It was Paul's intention to end this distrust and to introduce a feeling of reverence for the imperial family as dynasty. In the initial days of his reign, he

<sup>6</sup> PSZ, Sobranie 1, no. 11390, December 25, 1761; Petr Bartenev, *Osmnadsatyi vek; istoricheskii sbornik* (Moscow: T. Ris, 1869), 4: 217; the story of Catherine's reputed intention to remove Paul from the succession is discussed in Oleg Omel'chenko, "Stanovlenie zakonodatel'nogo regulirovaniia prestolonaslediiia, 36-46.

<sup>7</sup> E. S. Shumigorskii, *Imperatritsa Mariia Fedorovna (1759-1828)* (St. Petersburg: I. N. Skorokhodov, 1892), 1: 174.



set about restoring his father, Peter III, to the imperial genealogy, emphasizing his own descent from Peter the Great. Paul staged a macabre ceremony of disinterring Peter III and then crowning his coffin, staging the coronation that his unfortunate father had not hastened to plan. To establish the spousal character of the monarchy, the corpse of Catherine was lifted from her coffin and crowned at the side of her dead husband's coffin. Paul thus made an initial gesture to establish the symbolic role of the imperial family.<sup>8</sup>

This was reflected in the unprecedented form of the new succession law, a covenant between him and the empress Maria Fedorovna, which they had composed in 1788. The decree carried both signatures. The families of the German states often made such family agreements, but they did not issue them from the throne with only two signatures. It thus represented an element of private law given public force by the sovereign will. On the basis of their agreement, the emperor and empress designated their son Alexander heir, "by natural law." The statute introduced what was called the "Austrian system" of succession: male primogeniture of succession, with women following in line only in the absence of a male heir. It required the permission of the ruler for marriages of all those in line for the throne. It also spelled out the organization and conditions of regencies in case the heir had not reached maturity, to prevent a recurrence of the events that had kept Paul himself from the throne in 1762.<sup>9</sup>

Just as Peter's succession law sought to deal with the peril of an incompetent successor, Paul's sought to ensure "the tranquility of the State," which was "based on a firm law of inheritance upon which every right-thinking person is certain." If Peter's Succession Law was directed at the scheming and perfidious son, Paul's took care to support the claims of the son and to leave no room for the pretensions of an ambitious consort. Love now was to be defined in terms of the dedication and constancy to be exemplified by the members of the imperial family, who identified their destinies with those of the fatherland. The conclusion of the law declared that it provided "proof before the whole World, of Our love for the Fatherland, the love and harmony of our marriage, and love for Our Children and Descendants."

<sup>8</sup> *Kamerfur'erskii tseremonial'nyi zhurnal, 1796g* (St Petersburg: Ministerstvo Imperatorskogo Dvora, 185?), 788-91, 821-24, 861-68.

<sup>9</sup> *PSZ, Sobranie 1*, no. 17910, April 5, 1797; B. Nol'de, "Zakony osnovnye v russkom prave," *Pravo*, No. 9 (1913): 524-26.

Paul I introduced the legal and symbolic basis for the dynastic monarchy. He also fathered the children who represented and established the dynasty in the first half of the nineteenth century. However, he had been raised in the ways of the eighteenth century, and governed in the circumstances of a court in which such values held little respect. While he sought to restore the respect due to the father of the family, his behavior in this regard followed the pattern of absolute monarchs of the last century. Even before his accession, he had openly taken Catherine Nelidova as mistress, and during his reign he continued to exhibit his infidelities, particularly with Anna Lopukhina, the daughter of his procurator-general, to whom his court had to show the proper signs of respect. Paul's relationship with his son, Alexander, also followed the eighteenth-century pattern. The distrust between father and son, fed by Catherine's infatuation with her grandson, only grew after her death. Paul suspected, possibly with some grounds, that Alexander was involved in conspiracies to oust him from the throne. In the last two years of his reign, he began to hint of plans to name a new heir.<sup>10</sup>

Neither Alexander nor his younger brother Constantine Pavlovich evinced a predilection for the family or married life. Both were married young, at Catherine's instance, to princesses who quickly wearied them. Constantine's spouse, the Grand Duchess Anna Fedorovna, left Russia in 1801, only five years after their marriage, and his liaisons were numerous and well-known in the court. Alexander, after the first few years, paid little attention to the Empress Elizabeth Alekseevna, who spent most of his reign living a lonely isolated life. His numerous dalliances became the subject of the talk of the European elite, for whose eyes, indeed, many of them were presented. The two daughters Elizabeth bore him died in infancy, and he left no heir.

The Imperial Family at the close of Alexander's reign provided no basis for the sure and reliable political continuity that Paul had envisioned in his law of succession. Constantine had shown reluctance to rule, and in 1820, after divorcing the Grand Duchess Anna, contracted a morganatic marriage with a Polish aristocrat. While not a legal bar to the throne, the marriage

<sup>10</sup> N. Ia. Eidel'man, *Gran' vekov*, 240-41; Shil'der, *Imperator Pavel Pervyi*, 287-94; E. P. Karnovich, *Tsesarevich Konstantin Pavlovich*, 74. The title ostensibly was given as a reward for Constantine's exploits with Suvorov in Italy and Switzerland, but was motivated, in part, by Paul's suspicions of Alexander. I thank Mikhail Safonov for his observations on this matter.

made him an unlikely candidate to represent the future of the dynasty. Yet Constantine made no open statement of abdication. Alexander, in effect, was forced to act according to the Petrine law and choose his successor. He apparently informed his younger brother, Nicholas, of his decision to designate him heir. But he did so in so secretive and fumbling in a manner that virtually ensured a succession crisis at his death. The manifesto Alexander signed in 1823 was placed, with two letters from Constantine indicating his intention to abdicate, in the State Council, the Senate, the Holy Synod, and the Assumption Cathedral in Moscow. But it had not been promulgated, for reasons that remain inscrutable, and therefore had no legal force. At the moment of Alexander's death, it was known only to Alexei Arakcheev and A. N. Golitsyn, the Metropolitan Filaret, Maria Fedorovna, and possibly to Nicholas himself.<sup>11</sup> The succession crisis that ensued created the setting for the uprising of December 14, 1825.

#### MARIA FEDOROVNA, NICHOLAS PAVLOVICH, AND THE CREATION OF A DYNASTIC SCENARIO

The verbal, visual, and ceremonial presentations of the reign of Nicholas I elaborated the themes of family and dynasty. As in the eighteenth century, Europe provided the model of these values, and Russian monarchs adopted and displayed them in their most consistent and uncompromising forms. The Russian court not only upheld family values but glorified them as attributes of Russian autocracy. Just as Catherine the Great sought to display the Russian empire as the most enlightened and progressive of states, Nicholas I would present it as the exemplar of the familial values of the west. In so doing, he created the dynastic ceremonies and symbolic forms that would rule Russia until the fall of the monarchy.

Clearly, the principal factor promoting an ethic of family solidarity was the specter of revolution: the threat of violent overthrow united father with son and brother, and encouraged shows of affection rather than caution. However, as the examples of Paul and Alexander suggest, the threat was insufficient in itself to instill the norms and patterns of conduct necessary to make the imperial family a central symbol of monarchy. This awaited the reception of

<sup>11</sup> S. V. Mironenko, *Stranitsy tajnoi istorii samoderzhavii* (Moscow: Mysl', 1990), 74-85; W. Bruce Lincoln, *Nicholas I: Emperor and Autocrat of All the Russias*, 22-26.

the sentimental or early romantic family ethos that arose after the French revolution.

The monarchies that reemerged on the ashes of Napoleonic Europe differed fundamentally from those of the previous century. Once restored to their dominant position in domestic and international affairs, monarchs had to adapt to take into account the new social and political forces awakened during the revolutionary period. The principle of popular sovereignty may have been defeated, but only by calling upon the principle of popular sovereignty itself in rallying national feeling against Napoleon's forces. Nineteenth-century monarchs began to develop ways to represent themselves as the embodiments of national feeling rather than as distant figures whose title to rule stemmed from otherworldly origins.<sup>12</sup>

In certain respects, this change was the next step in the ongoing "desacralization" of European monarchy during the eighteenth century. But the new imagery could be no less elaborate or fanciful than the old. The spinning of personal and historical mythology around the monarchs would continue over the next half-century, elevating them as figures revered or worshiped by the elite and uniting conservative elements of the nation during periods of rapid change. If the monarch could no longer be presented as a god, he or she could be idealized as a better kind of mortal, embodying the features that people admired. Francis II of Austria and especially Frederick-William III of Prussia exemplified what Heinz Dollinger described as the "leading-image of bourgeois monarchy." Self-effacing, modest, averse to elaborate public presentations, they preferred the comfort of their homes. An affectation of simplicity and equality replaced resplendent majesty as a royal ideal.<sup>13</sup>

While this image may have appealed to "bourgeois" values, European monarchs succeeded in divesting it of egalitarian connotations. They displayed a style of life that may have been bourgeois in its origins, but by the early nineteenth century took on the attributes of a cultural ideal that was portrayed in the literature and art of the period. The new monarchs appeared as immanent rather than transcendent ideals: no longer gifts from the heavens, shedding benefactions on the land, they became exemplars of human conduct,

<sup>12</sup> See Heinz Dollinger, "Das Leitbild des Bürgerkönigtums in der europäischen Monarchie des 19. Jahrhunderts," in *Hof, Kultur, und Politik im 19. Jahrhundert*, ed. Karl Ferdinand Werner (Bonn: L. Röhrscheid, 1985), 325-62.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 345-52.

of modest virtue, to be admired by their subjects. This virtue was demonstrated in the monarch's private life, particularly in the realm of the family. European rulers of the eighteenth century had hardly been encumbered by biblical strictures; their nineteenth-century successors were expected to provide models of probity for their subjects.

The increasing autonomy of European bureaucracies encouraged this change. Administrative reforms of the early nineteenth century in Prussia and Austria created a separation between court and bureaucracy, limiting the monarch's powers over administrative institutions and making his symbolic role all the more significant. The Prussian king and the Hapsburg emperor, as centers of aristocratic society and the emerging middle-class elite, epitomized common values of family and religion that appealed to both. The idealization of the monarch's family elevated the ruling dynasty as the historical embodiment of the nation. The sentimental family idyll, thus, was united with the national past to create a myth of the ruler as national ideal.

King Frederick-William III was the model of the effacing king, who exemplified probity, constancy, and piety. In the austere tradition of Prussian royalty, he constructed no immense palaces. The single "palace" he built, at Paretz, hardly suited a court; he told the architect David Gilly, "Everything should be made very simple, just think that you are building not for a prince but an ordinary landlord." He hated public appearances and preferred to walk alone in the woods. He disliked the etiquette of the court and would, unpredictably, ignore it. Only on the parade ground did Frederick-William show a taste for show, but the symbolic value of his military leadership was destroyed by the debacle at Jena in 1806.<sup>14</sup>

Frederick-William also differed from his predecessors in his preference for a virtuous and ideal family life. From the outset of his reign, he presented himself as a model of familial rectitude. At his accession in 1797, he banned his predecessor's mistresses and introduced "almost the style of a German burgher home" to his court.<sup>15</sup> In addition to this strict morality, his family

<sup>14</sup> Thomas Stamm-Kuhlmann, "Der Hof Friedrich-Wilhelms III. von Preussen 1797 bis 1840," in *Hof und Hofgesellschaft in den deutschen Staaten im 19. und beginnenden 20. Jahrhundert*, ed. Karl Möckl (Boppard am Rhein: H. Boldt, 1990), passim; Hajo Holborn, *A History of Modern Germany, 1648-1840* (New York: A. A. Knopf, 1964), 2: 375-76.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 375.

represented an ideal of romantic love to unite the nation. In the aftermath of the French Revolution, he sought to emphasize not the distance between king and nations but their common values. The first issue of the new journal, *Jahrbücher der Preussischen Monarchie unter den Regierung von Friedrich Wilhelm III*, published in 1798, identified the household of the king, which was “pervaded with the values of true domesticity,” with the greater family of the people.<sup>16</sup>

The image of the family united the monarchs and subjects who “entered into this beautiful sphere.” The royal family now began to put on display the ideal of love in marriage. An essay in the June 1798 issue of *Jahrbücher der Preussischen Monarchie*, entitled “Belief and Love,” averred, “We have seen in our time that a marvel of transubstantiation has come to pass. Has not the court turned into a family, the throne into heaven, a royal marriage into an eternal union of the heart?”<sup>17</sup> Dispossessed of his kingdom after the battle of Jena, forced to accept the reforms instituted by Baron Heinrich Stein, Frederick-William indeed was left with private realm as his only domain. He claimed no designation from above and even removed the words “from the grace of God” from his title. A painting of “Frederick-William and Queen Louise with their Children” typified the Biedermeier style and became a model for subsequent royal family pictures.<sup>18</sup>

If Frederick-William exemplified paternal feeling and morality, Queen Louise became the model of cultivated, selfless mother and spouse. She combined the elements of “true religiosity” and “true patriotism,” epitomizing “the new Prussian wife.” She participated in the German literary awakening of her day, though her first language remained French. From the pietism of Gerhardt, she acquired a faith in the spiritual perfectibility of mankind, and, influenced by the theories of Rousseau and Pestalozzi, she tried new approaches to the upbringing of her children. After her death in 1810, shortly after returning from exile to Berlin, she became the subject of a cult of the pure and holy woman. Poets sung her virtues; artists depicted her in terms of the transfiguration and with the features of the Virgin Mary. One adept of this

<sup>16</sup> Wulf Wülfing, Karin Bruns, and Rolf Parr, *Historische Mythologie der Deutschen* (Munich: W. Fink, 1991), 59.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 60.

<sup>18</sup> Holborn, *A History of Modern Germany*, 2: 396; Dollinger, “Das Leitbild des Bürgerkönigtums,” 347.

cult was the queen's oldest daughter, Princess Charlotte, the future Empress Alexandra Fedorovna of Russia.<sup>19</sup>

Following the example of his father-in-law, Frederick-William III, Nicholas I presented himself as a model of constancy, family values, and simple religious faith. The ruler's superordinate character now derived not from his Olympian achievements, but from the immortality of a dynasty consecrated by God and history. Nicholas created the illusion that the hereditary rights of the dynasty were identical to the historical destinies of the Russian state. Russian imperial presentation, however, did not permit the retiring, private lifestyle of the Prussian king. The monarch as exemplar of private virtue had to be presented in a scenario, an elaborate dramatic performance of domestic dedication, to be admired and imitated by his servitors. The Prussian manner of reserve had to be combined with the French model of constant representation of the monarch as supreme being. Nicholas as stern and righteous paterfamilias became the living manifestation of the moral preeminence of the dynasty.

It was the dowager empress, Maria Fedorovna, who shaped the new scenario and instilled familial values in Nicholas during the last decade of Alexander's reign. Only forty-two years old at Paul's death, Maria Fedorovna retained precedence as the principal figure at the imperial court. While Alexander shunned public appearances, she presided over social functions, family dinners and outings, enforcing the strict etiquette she had observed in Paul's reign. Her palace at Pavlovsk became the social and cultural center of the monarchy. She brought to Russia Protestant notions of the altruistic mission of women and the image of empress as protector of the poor and bereft. She developed the network of foster homes and women's training institutes that she had founded under Paul and encouraged other charitable activities. Maria Fedorovna initiated the tradition of secular charity as a women's concern in Russia.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>19</sup> Wülfing et al., *Historische Mythologie*, 61-78; Stamm-Kuhlmann, "Der Hof Friedrich-Wilhelms III," 318; Bogdan Krieger, "Erziehung und Unterricht der Königin Luise," *Hohenzollern Jahrbuch* (1910): 117-73; A. Th. Von Grimm, *Alexandra Fedorovna, Empress of Russia* (Edinburg: Edmonston and Douglas, 1870), 1: 51-54.

<sup>20</sup> On Maria Fedorovna's creation of a conservative core and promoting conservative national values in her court, see N. N. Mazur, "Iz istorii formirovaniia russkoi natsional'noi ideologii (pervaia tret' XIX v.)" in "Tsep' nepreryvnogo predaniia...": *Sbornik pamiati A. G. Tartakovskogo*, ed. V. A. Mil'china, A. L. Iurganov (Moscow: Rossiiskii Gosudarstvennyi Gumanitarnyi Universitet, 2004), 196-250.

Maria Fedorovna shared the religious and ethical values of the Prussian royal house. Her father, a Duke of Württemberg, had been in Prussian service, and she had been educated both in stern patriarchal Protestant values and the French manners and tastes of the German courts of the eighteenth century. As Grand Duchess and Empress, she maintained close family ties, intervening to ensure her parents and siblings' marriage alliances, positions in Prussian and Russian service, and, when necessary, subsidies to avert financial disaster. Her attachment to her parents was encouraged by the sentimental literature of the late eighteenth century. She wrote to them in 1780 that she admired the stoics' ability to remain indifferent to everything, but had no desire to emulate them. "The closer I come to maturity the more I become convinced that the ability to feel nurtures our soul: without it people become savage and cease being people."<sup>21</sup>

These sentiments remained with Maria Fedorovna, and she strove to instill them in the members of the Russian imperial family. She introduced the practice of demonstrative mourning for the deceased members of the house and the sense that family bonds only grew stronger after death, aspects of "cult of memory" ascendant in the west. She hallowed the memory of her parents and her husband with two memorials built in the park at Pavlovsk, "To My Parents," and "To My Husband-Benefactor." Thomon's "To My Husband-Benefactor," completed in 1810, is a monument in the form of a Greek temple to her grief for Paul, for whom her feelings had been less than tender. The interior is occupied by Ivan Martos's statue of a mourning wife, her head resting at the side of an urn. The motif of twenty-four weeping faces on the metopes expresses the feeling of sorrow due the father of the dynasty.<sup>22</sup>

Maria Fedorovna tried to show her children the importance of marriage and marital love, but her oldest sons remained deaf to her pleas. She became the family conscience, warning her children that they served as personal models for their subjects. When, in 1803, the Grand Duke Constantine informed her that he wished to terminate his marriage to the Grand Duchess Anna Fedorovna with a divorce, the empress replied with an angry letter. After describing "wounds of the heart" he had inflicted on her, she pointed out the symbolic implications of such a step. It would bring "ruinous consequences for

<sup>21</sup> Shumigorskii, *Imperatritsa Mariia Fedorovna*, 1: 149.

<sup>22</sup> *Pamiatniki arkhitektury prigorodov Leningrada* (Leningrad: Stroiizdat. Leningradskoe otdelenie, 1983), 248-49.



public morals as well as the lamentable and dangerous temptation for the entire nation.” The humblest peasant far from the capital, noting the absence of the Grand Duchess’s name next to his in church prayers, would lose respect for the sacrament of marriage and for religious faith itself.<sup>23</sup>

Maria Fedorovna’s romantic vision of family relations and connubial love was extolled by her protégé, the poet Vasiliï Zhukovskii. Zhukovskii’s verse shifted the referent of imperial virtue from a civic ideal, personified in figures of the gods, heroes, or Roman emperors, to the private ideals of the nursery and the hearth. He announced the new motif in an ode to Maria Fedorovna of 1813.

And where is a more glorious subject for the poet?  
Tsaritsa, mother, spouse, daughter of tsars,  
The beauty of tsaritsas, the joy of the hemisphere,  
Who can find the language proper for it?

Zhukovskii concluded the ode with an evocation of Alexander’s imminent return to Russia. He presented the moment as a family, not a mythical event, personal affection expressing imperial glory.

Blessed hour! In the form of martial heroes,  
He bends his illustrious head,  
The Lord-son before the mother-tsaritsa,  
May their love bless this glory—  
And withal the saved world lies,  
Before your sacred hand!<sup>24</sup>

Maria Fedorovna’s three youngest children, Nicholas, Michael, and Anna, grew up sharing strong feelings of family solidarity. Ignored by the court, they drew close to each other. They formed their own club, “triopathy,” and wore special rings, one of which they gave to their mother as an honorary member. They maintained close ties throughout their lives, what Anna Pavlovna

<sup>23</sup> E. P. Karnovich, *Tsesarevich Konstantin Pavlovich*, 141-48; Shil’der, *Imperator Nikolai Pervyi*, 1: 128.

<sup>24</sup> V. A. Zhukovskii, “Gosudaryne Imperatritse Marii Fedorovne,” *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii* (St. Petersburg: A. F. Marks, 1902), 2:24-25

described as their “family union.” Their later correspondence continued to express an intimacy of feeling and a common purpose that united the members of the house.<sup>25</sup>

Grand Duke Nicholas Pavlovich shared his mother’s reverence for the institution of marriage and inclination to regard marital vows as lofty and sacred. When Nicholas showed an interest in Princess Charlotte of Prussia on his return from France in 1814, Maria Fedorovna’s esteem for him, previously none too high, rose appreciably. She herself had dreamt of such a match, and in 1809 had discussed the possibility with Queen Louise herself. Princess Charlotte worshipped the memory of the queen, whose bust she later kept in her boudoir. She made herself in her mother’s image, adopting her romantic literary tastes and showing the same devotion to family and children. After Louise’s death, which had occurred in Charlotte’s thirteenth year, she took her mother’s place at her father’s side and learned at an early age the poise and confidence of royalty.<sup>26</sup>

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The writers and artists serving eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Russian monarchs employed the devices of their crafts to present the acts and ceremonies of their sovereign in terms of the monarchical ideals of their age. These devices transformed the transitory appearances of the monarch and the presentations of the court into charismatic moments, expressing the sacred character of imperial rule. The metaphorical mode predominated in eighteenth century texts and illustrations; metaphor transformed the rulers into heroes and heroines, gods and goddesses, establishing a distance between the monarch and his elite, and between the elite and the ruled. The nineteenth-century mode sought to create the illusion of immanence rather than transcendence. Nicholas’s person expressed qualities and values integral to this world, or as was claimed, particular to Russia. In this respect, he adopted the manner of Frederick-William III and other western monarchs who appeared as exemplars of virtue and the private life for their subjects. The principal device that produced the illusion of immanence was the metonym, or, more specifically, the synecdoche, which presented the emperor with his family as a concrete expression of the nation.

<sup>25</sup> S. W. Jackman, *Romanov Relations* (London: Macmillan, 1969), 4, 107, and passim.

<sup>26</sup> A. Th. Von Grimm, *Alexandra Feodorowna*, 1: 52-55.

The texts of Nicholas's reign presented imperial display with new meanings. Rather than expressions of otherworldly spheres where godlike figures cavort and rejoice, ceremonies of the monarch served as microcosms of Russia, representing the attitudes towards authority and modalities of conduct, both official and private, that should prevail in the macrocosm of the empire.<sup>27</sup> In this equivalence, the macrocosm was defined in terms of the microcosm. The emperor, his family, the dynasty, the army and state epitomized the principal qualities of Russia and represented the whole. Here we see a kinship between political and symbolic representation. Both, Kenneth Burke observed, invoke synecdoche to describe the connection between microcosm and macrocosm. All attempts to "represent" the general will of the people in parliamentary institutions involve a transfer of qualities to the representative body that stands for the people as a whole.<sup>28</sup> Likewise, the imagery of official nationality claims to reflect the will of the people by making the tsar in his ceremonial appearances the representation of the whole. Nicholas was frequently described as "the embodiment of Russia." The ceremonies of the monarchy embodying Russia were presented to a broadened elite of officials through the official and semi-official press, which became an important medium during the Napoleonic Wars and expanded greatly during Nicholas's reign.<sup>29</sup>

The elevation of the family became apparent from the moment of Nicholas's victory over the Decembrist revolution. On the afternoon of December 14, Nicholas brought his eight-year-old son Alexander before the Sapper battalion, which had saved the imperial family from a threat from the Grenadiers' Regiment. Nicholas made clear that he and the heir were one. He asked the troops to love his son as they loved him. Then he placed

<sup>27</sup> On the synecdoche as the expression of the identity of microcosm and macrocosm, see Kenneth Burke, "Four Master Tropes," in his *A Grammar of Motives and A Rhetoric of Motives* (Cleveland: World, 1962), 508.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> On the semi-official press, see Nurit Schleifman, "A Russian Daily Newspaper and its New Readership: *Severnaia Pchela*, 1825-1840," *Cahiers du monde russe et soviétique*, volume 29, No 2 (April-June 1987): 127-44; Charles A. Ruud, *Fighting Words: Imperial Censorship and the Russian Press, 1804-1906* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982), 58-59, 64-65; N. L. Stepanov, "'Severnaia Pchela' F. V. Bulgarina," in *Ocherki po istorii russkoi zhurnalistiki i kritiki* (Leningrad: Leningradskii gos. Universitet, 1950), 1: 310-11.

Alexander in the arms of several Cavaliers of the Order of St. George and, at his command, the first officers in each line rushed to the boy and kissed his hands and his feet.<sup>30</sup>

This was the initial demonstration of the new importance of the principle of primogeniture in the life of the imperial house. Nicholas showed that the imperial family rather than the emperor alone represented the spirit and values of autocracy. The scene became emblematic of his reign. It was commemorated in popular pictures and on the bas-relief of the statue Alexander erected to his father in 1858. (Figure 1) The fact that Alexander had stood at his father's side on the day of the rebellion was inscribed in his service list along with the military honors he received on that day.

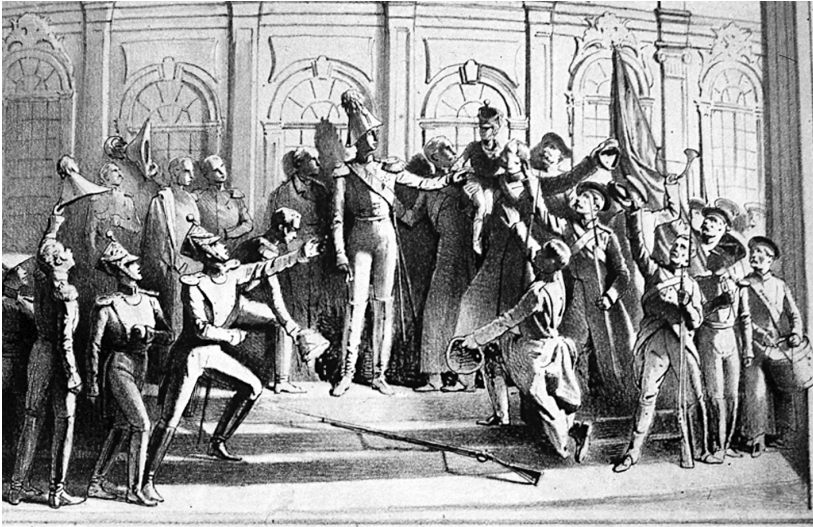
The family as exemplar of autocracy was a central theme of the visual imagery of Nicholas's reign. An engraving by Thomas Wright, after a painting by George Dawe completed not long after Nicholas's accession, indicates the new importance of the emperor's family for the future of Russian monarchy. A portrait of the Grand Duke Alexander Nikolaevich is set in a large medallion surrounded by flowers, between medallions with portraits of the emperor in uniform and the empress in a décolleté gown (see Article 4, Figure 1). The medallions are placed above and dominate a small sketch of the winter palace.<sup>31</sup> It was the family of Nicholas that now represented the benefactions of monarchy, symbolized by the sun emanating from the imperial residence.

The domestic happiness of the imperial family was depicted in the mannered poses of English sentimental art by English artists at the Russian court. The paintings of George Dawe, rendered into engravings by his compatriot, Thomas Wright, presented royal personages for the first time in intimate family groups. One of these shows the empress sitting with the infant Olga Nikolaevna in her right arm, and the seven-year-old Alexander Nikolaevich grasping her gown on the left<sup>32</sup> (see Article 4, Figure 2). Another is a garden scene: Alexander Nikolaevich in sailor suit pushes his little sister Maria, wearing a flowered bonnet, on a swing. Both have the innocent cherubic

<sup>30</sup> M. Korf, *Vosshestvie na prestol Imperatora Nikolaia Iogo* (St. Peterburg: II-oe otdelenie sobstvennoi ego Imp. Vel. Kantseliarii, 1857), 220.

<sup>31</sup> *Shil' der, Imperator Nikolai Pervyi*, 1: 297

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 1: 385.



*Figure 1.*

Bas Relief on Nicholas I Statue. Nicholas I presents his son, Alexander,  
to the Sapper Battalion, December 14, 1825.

By N. Ramzanov.

Lithograph from *Russkii Khudozhestvennyi Listok* (1859)

expressions of nineteenth-century beautiful children. Popular prints took up this theme and showed the emperor adjusting his son's pillow and a family scene at Ekateringof.<sup>33</sup>

Upon the death of the Grand Duke Constantine Pavlovich in June 1831, Nicholas issued a decree declaring, that "Our most beloved son" should henceforth be called "Sovereign Heir, *Tsesarevich* and Grand Duke." (*Gosudar' Naslednik, Tsesarevich i Velikii Kniaz'*) The decree was printed in the press and a series of pictures executed that made Alexander's new title known.<sup>34</sup> Many lithographs and paintings presented the heir at various stages of his education. A lubok of 1831 shows him in stylized equestrian pose; he wears a cuirassier's uniform, and looks dashing and heroic. At the bottom among his various titles the word *tsesarevich* is inscribed in bold capitals. In a watercolor by Alexander Briullov, the heir stands at the center of a group of cadets in dress uniform at Peterhof in 1831. He is the tallest and most poised of the boys. His arm is on a staff; beside him is a waving standard. At his foot, sitting under the barrel of a cannon, is his younger brother Constantine Nikolaevich, not yet four years old. Behind, Merder looks on, and an officer in a plumed hat sits on a horse. Lithographed copies of the painting were sent to all military schools.<sup>35</sup>

Most important, Nicholas made his family the principal subject of imperial ceremonies. Here I will focus on three: the coronation, the ceremony of the majority of the heir, and Alexander's initiation as the hereditary ataman of the Cossacks of the Don. These ceremonies presented the imperial family as the symbol of the monarchy and likened the types of political subordination to the bonds of dear kin. The paternalistic theme of the tsar as father, protecting his children, now took on a higher moral and literary meaning of sentimental love. The various estates of the realm were gathered to show loyalty as familial act. The "love" of the people became a way to absorb them into a greater family embracing all of Russia.

<sup>33</sup> D. A. Rovinskii, *Podrobnyi slovar' russkikh gravirovannykh portretov* (St. Petersburg: Akademiia Nauk, 1886), 1: 19-20; *Imperatorskaia glavnaia kvartira; istoriia gosudarevoi svity; tsarstvovanie Imperatora Nikolaia I* (St. Petersburg: M. O. Volf, 1908), 6.

<sup>34</sup> *Severnaia Pchela*, September 7, 1831.

<sup>35</sup> *Imperatorskaia glavnaia kvartira; istoriia gosudarevoi svity; tsarstvovanie Imperatora Alexandra II* (St. Petersburg: R. Golike and A. Vil'borg, 1914), 43.

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The coronation remained the central declaratory ceremony of Russian monarchy through the nineteenth century, consecrating the showing of the character and goals of the monarchy as well as the character of each new reign. But the central theme of the ceremony had shifted markedly during the nineteenth century. Eighteenth-century coronations had celebrated the successful aspirant to the throne as the champion of the general good, legitimizing dubious claims to succession. Nineteenth-century coronations, beginning with Nicholas's, consecrated the monarchy itself, as it was incarnated in the ruling dynasty of which the enthroned emperor was god-chosen representative. Nicholas's immediate family became embodiment of a dynastic tradition that in fact had begun in practice only with Nicholas's reign.

The principal account of Nicholas I's coronation, written by Pavel Svin'in in his journal *Otechestvennye Zapiski*, presented the entire imperial family as the object of popular affection. In the entry procession to Moscow, Nicholas rode down the avenue flanked by his brother Michael, his brother-in-law, Prince Karl of Prussia, the Duke of Württemberg, and his son, Alexander.<sup>36</sup> It was Alexander, not the emperor, who was endearing. "The kind Russian people admired the angelic charm of the Heir to the Throne with indescribable rapture." The author went on to point out that this "Royal Child" (*Derzhavnyi Mladenets*) was particularly dear to Muscovites because he had been born in the Kremlin. A lithograph issued at the time shows the entry into Moscow at the Tver gate. Nicholas is looking smart on a prancing horse next to his brother and the suite; the empress sits in an open carriage, under a parasol. Peasants stand on the buildings waving their caps; joyous people crowd the windows and the balconies.<sup>37</sup>

With Nicholas's coronation, great reviews and maneuvers became an integral part of the coronation celebrations. They assumed the character of ceremonial expressions of the devotion of the military to the imperial family. Military reviews took place frequently during the month between the entry procession and the coronation ceremonies. On July 30, a parade of over fifty thousand troops paid homage to the dowager empress. Grand Duke Alexander rode in his father's suite, on a magnificent steed. The eight-year old galloped past the emperor, charged up and stopped before him to the delight of the

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 284.

<sup>37</sup> Shil'der, *Imperator Nikolai Pervyi*, 2: 13.

spectators. The son had paid deference to the father. Then, Nicholas led a detachment before his mother and saluted her, giving recognition to her personal and ceremonial preeminence in the house.<sup>38</sup> Nicholas took part in large scale maneuvers of the Moscow regiments on August 15 and 16, which were summarized in Svin'in's articles. The maneuvers not only served as a useful exercise for the troops, but provided the large numbers of foreigners and other spectators "a splendid spectacle rare for the residents of Moscow."<sup>39</sup>

The feeling of the unity of the dynasty was enhanced by the surprise arrival of the Grand Duke Constantine in Moscow. Constantine was peevish as usual, but Nicholas's deferential attention succeeded in calming him by the day of the ceremony. A broadsheet printed at this time shows the three brothers, Nicholas, Constantine, and Michael, riding side by side, with the heir on horseback at Michael's side. On the day of the coronation, a manifesto was issued establishing the rules for a regency and designating Nicholas's "most kind" brother, Michael, regent lest Nicholas die before the heir's majority.<sup>40</sup>

Svin'in's account of the ceremonies in the Assumption Cathedral focused on the members of the family; they and their German relatives are the only participants whom he identifies by name. Svin'in evoked the emotional response of the moment after the investiture of the Emperor and Empress with the regalia: "What rapture (*vostorg*) seized the hearts of those standing by and of all the inhabitants of Moscow learning by the resounding of the bells and the salvos from the cannons that the Imperial Couple were invested with the purple and crowned!" He remarked how Maria Fedorovna overflowed with rapture, *vostorg*. "All of Her [Maria Fedorovna's] thoughts, all of Herself, it seemed, was in the heavens from which the blessing descended upon the Head of Her Crowned Son." He then marveled over the feeling with which Nicholas

<sup>38</sup> S. S. Tatishchev, *Imperator Aleksandr II*, 1: 9-10; Maréchal de Marmont, Duc de Raguse, *Mémoires* (Paris: A l'Expédition [W. Schmidt] 1857), 8: 118-19.

<sup>39</sup> "Istoricheskoe opisanie Sviashchennogo Koronovaniia i Miropomazaniia ikh Imperatorskikh Velichestv Gosudaria Imperatora Nikolaia Pavlovicha i Gosudaryni Imperatritsy Aleksandry Fedorovny," *Otechestvennye Zapiski* (1827), 31: 45-47. Henceforth, "Istoricheskoe opisanie."

<sup>40</sup> *Imperatorskaia glavnaia kvartira... tsarstvovanie Imperatora Nikolaia I*, 219-20; V.I. Zhmakin, "Koronatsii russkikh imperatorov i imperatrits, 1724-1856," *Russkaia Starina* 38 (1883): 14. The rules designated Grand Duke Michael regent in the circumstance that there was no heir of age to ascend to the throne. *PSZ, Sobranie* 2, no. 537, August 22, 1826.



kissed her and his brothers, Constantine and Michael.<sup>41</sup> Svin'in described the anointment, communion, and recessional in similar elevated terms.

The author of the official coronation album, published in Paris, one Henry Graf, also rhapsodized over the family drama. The embrace between the dowager and the young emperor was “with a visible emotion shared by all those present.” But Graf focused primarily on the embrace with Constantine, thus confirming the solidarity of the dynasty for the European audience. “Few of those present could hold back their tears, especially when the Emperor embraced the Tsarevich Grand Duke Constantine, who gathered at this moment the finest fruit of his noble sacrifices.” The illustration entitled “the Crowning” of Nicholas presented, instead of the crowning, Constantine embracing Nicholas, who had already been crowned. An act of affection thus was used to show the tsarevich’s homage to his younger brother and to dispel the uncertainties about his abdication. The same scene was depicted in a popular print of the time.<sup>42</sup>

The spectacle fulfilled the literary and symbolic expectations of the foreign guests and the Russian official elite. The Duke of Raguse found the unity and devotion of the family “one of the most beautiful things the imagination can conceive.”<sup>43</sup> Alexander Benckendorff, the chief of gendarmes and of the Third Section of Nicholas’s chancellery, recalled the family coming out of the cathedral: “The incomparable face of the sovereign shone with beauty under the valuable gems of the imperial crown. The young empress and the heir near the empress-mother also attracted everyone’s gaze. It was impossible to imagine a more splendid family.” Those in attendance also followed the sentimental scenario; they gave their sympathy to the family by weeping—shedding tears of joy to share in the pathos of the triumphant dynasty. Benckendorff remarked on the tears shed when Nicholas handed his sword to Constantine Pavlovich.<sup>44</sup> State-Secretary Dmitrii Bludov wept unabashedly when Maria Fedorovna embraced the emperor. The ceremony confirmed his religious belief. “I was again assured of the sweetness and the

<sup>41</sup> “*Istoricheskoe opisanie*,” 31: 196-99.

<sup>42</sup> *Vues des cérémonies les plus intéressantes du couronnement de leurs majestés Impériales l'empereur Nicholas Ier et l'impératrice Alexandra à Moscou* (Paris: Didot, 1828), 5; IGK, *ts. Nik. I*, 222.

<sup>43</sup> Marmont, *Mémoires*, 8: 132-33; E. F. Komarovskii, *Zapiski* (St. Petersburg: Ogni, 1914), 256-57.

<sup>44</sup> Shil'der, *Imperator Nikolai Pervyi*, 2: 7.

necessity of Faith, that every passion, even the most noble love of Fatherland, not purified by religion, leads only to error and misfortune.”<sup>45</sup>

Nicholas’s coronation introduced scenes of family devotion and reconciliation to the solemn Byzantine rites. The family became a metonymic expression of the constant, devoted, and pure feelings that attached servitors and subjects to the throne. The political bond was sustained by a mythical bond of affection for the imperial family, which the dignitaries of Nicholas’s state would be expected to display at the proper occasions. The shedding of tears of joy, and when necessary grief, became obligatory at court ceremonies—a sign of loyalty and sharing in the family life of the tsar, which symbolized his moral and therefore political supremacy. The elite became absorbed in the family of the tsar, a family that exemplified the current European ideal of dynastic monarchy and the current Russian ideal of utter dedication to one’s sovereign.

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Paul’s Law of Succession of 1797 had set the majority of the heir at the young age of sixteen in order to ensure a smooth succession in the event of the early death of the ruling emperor. Alexander was the first heir to reach that age under the law, and to mark the event Nicholas staged a major ceremony on April 22, 1834, introducing a new rite of passage into the life of the imperial court. Pronounced by all Grand Dukes, the oath made the maintenance of autocracy a filial obligation consecrated by God. Metropolitan Filaret of Moscow composed an imposing ceremony in which the son pledged obedience to his father, the autocrat, and the laws of Russia before the assembled elite of the Russian state.

Alexander’s oath, written by Mikhail Speranskii, gave emphatic statement to the principles of the unity of family feeling with autocratic government and the maintenance of the inviolability of the prerogatives of the father-sovereign. The purpose of the ceremony, Speranskii asserted, was to confer religious sanction on the heir’s future obligations. An oath, he wrote, “is an act of conscience and religion, by which he who vows summons God in witness to the sincerity of his promises and submits himself to His wrath and vengeance in case of violation.” The Archpriest Pavskii’s instruction to Alexander before the ceremony summoned him to renew the vow to Christ that had taken

<sup>45</sup> “Dva pis'ma gr.D.N. Bludova k supruge ego,” 1047.

place at his baptism. “Only a true follower of Christ and sound member of the kingdom of god can be a useful member of the human kingdom.”<sup>46</sup>

Like the promulgation of the succession law, the first ceremony of majority took place on Easter Sunday, lending it an especially sacred character. It was an important rite of passage for the heir, from a child to his father’s helper, joining his father at least symbolically in the exercise of autocratic power. At midnight of New Year’s Eve, 1834, Nicholas and Alexandra had told him that the coming year would be the most important of his life. Alexander wrote in his diary, “I feel its importance and will try to prepare myself as much as I can for this moment, for I know that even after it is over, the main task awaits me, that is to complete what has been begun. I ask the All-Powerful Father to give me strength to follow the example of my father in a worthy manner.”<sup>47</sup>

As the day approached, the solemnity of the occasion and its significance for Russia were impressed upon him. On April 16, Nicholas took him on a walk to the Peter-Paul fortress. He told him of the difficulties he would encounter, and urged him to turn to his father and mother for advice. “I will never forget this conversation,” Alexander wrote in his diary. Nicholas now initiated him in the cult of ancestors, the immortal unity of the dynasty. At the cathedral, father and son kissed the graves of Paul I and Alexander I and their spouses and the grave of Constantine Pavlovich. Nicholas kissed him and said, in French, “When I lie there, visit me sometimes.” “These words touched me so much that I could not contain my tears, and I prayed to myself that the All-Powerful God allow a long life to my dear father.”<sup>48</sup> The next day, Alexander received the epaulette and braids of a Flügel-Adjutant of Nicholas’s suite.

The ceremony of the oath on April 22, 1834 in the Great Church at the Winter Palace was a major state occasion, described in a detailed account published in *Russkii Invalid* and *Severnaia Pchela*.<sup>49</sup> The ceremony sought to involve the entire state in the family drama of the Russian house; the account referred to those present as “all of Russia.” On one side, there stood arrayed the diplomatic corps, State Councilors and Senators. Behind them were Court Officials, members of the Emperor’s Suite, Generals, State Secretaries, and

<sup>46</sup> Tatishchev, *Imperator Aleksandr II*, 1: 62.

<sup>47</sup> “Aleksandr II; Dnevnik, 1834 g.” GARF, 678-1-280, 1.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 21.

<sup>49</sup> *Severnaia Pchela*, April 26, 1834, 365-66; *Russkii Invalid*, April 27, 1834, 407-08.

others with the right of entry “behind the Cavalier Guards,” and the mayor of St. Petersburg. They faced the wives of the diplomatic corps, and ladies of the court. Deputies representing art, science, commerce, and industry were also present. Officers of the guards and lesser civil officials waited in the adjoining halls. From Alexander’s teaching staff, Zhukovskii, Edward Collins, and possibly others attended.<sup>50</sup> The palace was so crowded that Pushkin had difficulty slipping through the back stairways to visit his aunt.<sup>51</sup>

The first part of the event, in the Great Church, was the recitation of the oath as heir to the throne. After the Metropolitan Serafim and other clergy met the imperial family with the cross and holy water, Nicholas led his son to the pulpit, before the life-giving cross and the gospels. Alexander, raising his right hand, delivered the oath. He vowed to serve and obey his father “in all respects” (*vo vsem*). He promised that he would not spare his life, and would give his last drop of blood, the words of Peter the Great. He would defend the rights and power of “the autocracy of His Imperial Majesty” and would “assist the service of his majesty and the welfare of the state.” He pledged to observe all the rulings of the throne and the Laws of the Imperial House. Finally, he called upon God “to guide and teach him in the great service” that had devolved upon him. At this point, he broke down in tears and took several tries to continue. The emperor and empresses then embraced and kissed him.

Metropolitan Filaret in a letter to Prince D. V. Golitsyn described similar feelings. “Kisses and tears reunited father, mother and son. When my own absorption in this inspiring spectacle ended, and my own tears dried, I could see that all present were in tears.”<sup>52</sup> Pushkin indicated in his diary that those who did not weep made sure to wipe their eyes as well.<sup>53</sup> The ceremony was a reprise of the domestic scenario, and a display of feeling, whether real or feigned, showed participation in the spectacle of family solidarity.

<sup>50</sup> I. A. Shliapkin, “Iz bumag odnogo iz prepodavatelei Aleksandra II,” *Starina i Novizna* 22 (1917): 15.

<sup>51</sup> My description is based on the account published in both *Severnaia Pchela*, April 26, 1834, 365-66; *Russkii Invalid*, April 27, 1834, 407-08; *Vysochaishe utverzhdennyi tseremonial prisiagi Gosudaria, Naslednika, Aleksandra Nikolaevicha* (n.p., n.d.); Tatishchev, *Imperator Aleksandr II*, 1: 63-65; Grimm, *Alexandra Fedorovna*, 2: 89-91.

<sup>52</sup> Tatishchev, *Imperator Aleksandr II*, 1: 63-64.

<sup>53</sup> A.S. Pushkin, *Dnevnik Pushkina, 1833-1835* (Moscow-Petrograd: Gosudarsvennoe izdatel'stvo, 1923), 10.

After pronouncing the oath, the heir signed it and Count Nesselrode, the Foreign Minister, removed the document for safekeeping in the State Archive. The first part of the ceremony concluded with the singing of a *Te Deum*, a 301 gun salute from the cannons of the Peter-Paul fortress, and the tolling of the church bells of the capital. Then after the prayer for the long life of the emperor, the imperial family received congratulations from the members of the Holy Synod.

The tears and the family embrace were understood and presented in the sentimental idiom. The report published in *Severnaia Pchela* and *Russkii Invalid*, following the sentimental ascription—and prescription—of emotion, described a general feeling of tenderness, of *umilenie*, which “penetrated all hearts.” It dwelled on the embraces of parents and son. First, Nicholas kissed Alexander three times. Alexander wanted to hug His Mother, but Nicholas reached her first. Then the emperor clasped both of them to him in an embrace. “With this spectacle of all royal and human virtues, a reverent tremor of tenderness [*umilenie*] touched all hearts.” The author of the newspaper accounts compared Alexander’s tears to those of Michael Fedorovich when as a boy he had accepted the throne of Russia; the tears showed his understanding of the importance and greatness of the ritual. “May Your tears, Successor of the Great Tsars, be pleasing to God. May they be a guarantee of the goodness of Your soul and the happiness of Your Fatherland.” The civil ceremony was followed by an equally imposing military ceremony, the heir’s taking of the oath as military officer in the Hall of St. George. The subsequent celebrations, receptions, banquets, and balls continued through Holy Week.<sup>54</sup>

The ceremony of the majority represented the first formal presentation of Alexander as a dynastic symbol, expressing the unity of the governmental and social elite with the dynasty. The rhetoric of the writers close to the throne transformed him into a national symbol as well. A song Zhukovskii wrote for occasion, set to music by Count Mikhail Viel’gorskii, presented Alexander’s birth as a national event. From the heights of the Moscow Kremlin, the poem began, “the Russian Land,” (*Ruskaia zemlia*), had witnessed Alexander’s birth. Years had passed quickly, and now, on the day of the resurrection, the “touching ritual” (*umilitel’nyi obriad*) was taking place in “Petrograd.” Alexander embodied the unity between Moscow and Petersburg, the word for the capital now Russified.

<sup>54</sup> *Severnaia Pchela*, April 26, 1834, 365-66; *Russkii Invalid*, April 27, 1834, 407-08.

The ceremony revealed both generational and political solidarity. Father and son, dynasty and people were united in the person of the heir. The son enters the cathedral, raises his hands to heaven,

Before him the father and ruler,  
The tsar receives the oath of his son.  
Hearken with a blessing,  
To the words of his young soul,  
And raise your arms to heavens,  
Faithful Russia, together with him.<sup>55</sup>

Another “Russian Song,” by one B. Fedorov, appeared in *Russkii Invalid* on May 2. Fedorov used a group of boatmen, rowing up the Neva to the palace, as an expression of the joy of the nation as a whole. The boatmen he imagined provided a synecdochical voice of acclamation, on the birthday of “the kind son.” They sang to the tsar,

Great is your Imperial joy,  
It spreads through all Holy Rus.  
You have raised an Heir for Yourself,  
ALEXANDER, Your young son is Your hope!  
He is the comforting ray of the bright sun,  
Our dawn, our light from the great day!  
Glory to the Russian sun!  
Rejoice Father of the Fatherland!<sup>56</sup>

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Alexander’s tour of the empire after his nineteenth birthday, from April through December 1837, brought the dynastic scenario to the reaches of the Russian empire. Accompanied by Zhukovskii and an adjutant of Nicholas, S. A. Iur’evich, Alexander covered a distance of over thirteen thousand miles. It was the longest tour of the empire by a tsar or tsarevich, and took him to regions, including parts of Siberia, never visited by a member of the imperial family. His charm in public appearances awakened sentiments that attached the population to the autocracy, drawing the local elites into the family love as a trope for lofty and humane feelings.

<sup>54</sup> V. A. Zhukovskii, *Sochineniia* (St. Petersburg: I. D. Sytin, 1902), 4: 22-23.

<sup>55</sup> *Russkii Invalid*, May 2, 1834, 424.

Two events of Alexander's trip assumed especial importance for the role Alexander was to play in his father's scenario—the visit to Moscow in July and August, and his installation as Cossack Ataman in Novocherkassk in October. The Moscow visit linked his personal appeal as heir who was born in Moscow with Russia's historical past. The Metropolitan Filaret emphasized this theme in the welcome speech he delivered upon Alexander's arrival, which was printed in *Severnaia Pchela*. Alexander, Filaret declared, had now reached Moscow, the resting place of his ancestors. "Here you will come even more into contact with the heart of Russia and its vital force, which is an inherited love for hereditary tsars, repelling in previous centuries so many enemy forces. You will see it in its free play, in those waves of people striving towards You, in those enraptured (*vostorzhennykh*) gazes and solemn cries." An inherited historical affection was the source of the ruler's authority. "May the love of Russians make your task easy, inspired by love for Russia."<sup>57</sup>

According to Nicholas's instructions, Alexander slept in the room where he was born and took historical tours of the city that identified his and the family's fate with Russia's past. Andrei Murav'ev, a specialist on religion and Muscovite antiquities, published an account of his excursions with Alexander to the sites of Moscow and its vicinity. Murav'ev described the young heir's visit to the relics and shrines of his ancestors. In the Novospasskii Monastery, Alexander proceeded slowly beneath a painting of his family tree, "as if attaining at the end of this long genealogical chain that bright link to which he was predestined," Murav'ev wrote.<sup>58</sup>

Another dramatic moment of Alexander's visit to Moscow was his meeting with his mother on August 3, after a separation of three months. An account of the reuniting of mother and son by the popular children's writer Prince Vladimir L'vov appeared in the September 27 issue of *Russkii Invalid*. L'vov described the scene of a moving embrace. The sun shone with bright rays. The empress and one of his sisters embraced him. "Let foreigners envy us!" L'vov wrote. "Let all Russia enjoy this spectacle and let it be repeated many, many times. Happy is the people whose ruling family gives such an example of love and friendship. Can the tears of joy and the cries of the suffering fail to strike a chord in their hearts?"<sup>59</sup>

<sup>56</sup> *Severnaia Pchela*, 172 (August 3, 1837): 685.

<sup>57</sup> A.N. Murav'ev, *Vospominaniia o poseshchenii sviatyni Moskovskoi Gosudarem Naslednikom* (St. Petersburg: n.p., 1838), 13.

<sup>58</sup> *Russkii Invalid*, September 27, 1837, 960.

The trip culminated with the meeting of father and son at Novocherkassk in the steppes of New Russia, at a new ceremony of initiation that expressed the allegiance of the elite of the Don host not only to the emperor, but to the heir, and the dynasty as a whole. Nicholas had anticipated this event when, in October 1827, he named Alexander, honorary "Ataman of all the Cossack Hosts" and "Chief of the Don Regiment." The position of honorary ataman was presented as a direct personal bond between the imperial family and the Cossacks that brought the Host into the single great family of those loyal to the tsar. The ceremony on October 21 cemented this bond. It likened the devotion of the Cossacks to the devotion of son to father, establishing a rite for all future heirs to throne.<sup>60</sup>

Emperor and heir rode in ceremonial procession into Novocherkassk, the administrative center of the Don Host. The Cossack leaders formed a circle around the cathedral; in the middle, the "appointed" (*nakaznyi*) Cossack ataman conferred the *pernach*, one of the maces constituting the Cossack insignia of power, on Nicholas, who then conferred it on Alexander. Nicholas explained the significance of the event. He declared that appointing his son ataman, he was giving a "most valuable pledge (*zalog*)" of his good will to them. "May this serve as proof of how close you are to my heart. When he replaces me, serve him as loyally as you served my ancestors and me. He will not forsake you." In his diary, Alexander described the ceremony and copied down his father's address. *Russkii Invalid* reported that "these words were impressed on the heart of each and every one of those present. General, but silent tenderness. (*umilenie*) This then passed into the joyous cries of pure enthusiasm (*vostorg*) from the people."<sup>61</sup> The next day, Alexander and Nicholas inspected a review of over 17,000 members of the Host and in the evening attended a ball where the heir took part in several dances.

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The domestic scenario introduced in the reign of Nicholas I represented far more than a romantic embellishment to the image of the tsar. It made the family a central symbol of the moral purity of Russian autocracy, which

<sup>59</sup> On the myth of "tsar and Cossack," see Robert H. McNeal, *Tsar and Cossack, 1855-1914* (Oxford: MacMillan, 1987), 1-5.

<sup>61</sup> *Russkii Invalid*, November 24, 1837, 1182-83; *Severnaia Pchela*, November 2, 1837, 989; Tatischev, *Imperator Aleksandr II*, 1: 89; "Dnevnik V. Kn. Aleksandra Nikolaevicha vo vremia poezdki po Rossii, May 1-December 12, 1837," 95-96.



purported to be the purest form of absolute monarchy. The association between domestic morality and autocratic government outlived Nicholas's reign and remained intrinsic to the image of the Russian monarch for the duration of the empire. To violate the principle of autocracy became tantamount to a biblical sin against the father, while violation of family morality would throw into doubt the moral foundations of autocratic rule. Nicholas introduced the forms of behavior, the ceremonies, the feeling of obligation that underlay the notion of Russian dynastic monarchy in the nineteenth century.

The family scenario served various functions in the adaptation of the monarchy to the political circumstances of nineteenth century Europe. The attachment between father and son and between husband and wife elevated the concept of dynastic inheritance to a moral plane and made so elusive a goal appear as part of the national concept of Russian monarchy. The sentimental outpourings of family feeling described by numerous Russian and European writers reaffirmed the common values that identified the Russian sovereign with his western counterparts. Finally, the display of family devotion became a model for the expression of political loyalty. The political bond was personalized. The allegiance to the monarch, no longer demonstrated in the mere witnessing of baroque allegories, now required shows of personal ardor, manifestations of the soul, such as rapture, tenderness, and profuse weeping—a public sharing of what purported to be the innermost feelings of the members of the imperial family.



Part III

**Narratives of Monarch  
and Nation**





## 6. The Invention of Tradition and the Representation of Russian Monarchy



At the conclusion of Paul Miliukov's lectures at the University of Chicago in 1903, he declared that Russia had no "real political tradition." The old political traditions had been destroyed by Peter the Great and "could not possibly be renewed." The existing system owed its solidity "not so much to any tradition as to the force of inertia, and to such multiform and numerous measures that the autocracy has been obliged to take in self-defense." Miliukov contrasted Russia's experience to Japan's, which he had learned of from the lectures of a Professor Ienaga at the same university. In Japan, Miliukov argued, the rapidity of change during the Meiji restoration had allowed old traditions to survive and "to enter into some degree of combination with the elements of the new life and culture."<sup>1</sup>

We now know, from the work of T. Fujitani and Carol Gluck, that these presumably old Japanese traditions had been ingeniously contrived by a modernizing elite in the second half of the nineteenth century. Indeed, Fujitani provides a systematic account of the creation of such imperial ceremonies, images, and forms of ritual behavior during the Meiji restoration.<sup>2</sup> Fujitani and Gluck have traced the process of "the invention of tradition" that Eric Hobsbawm memorably defined as an object of historical study and investigated in his path-breaking book by that name. Hobsbawm focused on the social and political contexts that prompt the invention of new traditions, which "where possible ... attempt to establish continuity with a suitable

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<sup>1</sup> Paul Miliukov, *Russia and Its Crisis* (New York: Collier Books, 1962), 400-03.

<sup>2</sup> T. Fujitani, *Splendid Monarchy: Power and Pageantry in Modern Japan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996); Carol Gluck, *Japan's Modern Myths*.

historic past.”<sup>3</sup> David Cannadine developed the concept in relationship to British monarchy by detailing the invention of a tradition of pomp and magnificence in the late Victorian era.<sup>4</sup>

But for invented traditions to take hold there must be an inclination to receive them—a belief in certain overarching fictions they sustain. The study of “the invention of tradition” often ignores the symbolic context of the continuities these traditions are supposed to establish. Thus, Hobsbawm and Cannadine discuss the adoption of the Gothic style in nineteenth-century England, but do not suggest why the Gothic style was chosen. The meaning of invented traditions can be understood only within the context of the mythical narratives that served as their referents. It is notable that in both the British and Japanese case, the monarch represents something more than a ruler: he or she is a symbol of national unity and grandeur that is not dependent on the exercise of political power. The invention of tradition proceeded in a symbolic context that presumed a separation of the act of ruling from the symbolic preeminence of the monarch.

British ceremonial innovation took place under a monarchy that had represented the popular focus of nation and empire at least since the eighteenth century.<sup>5</sup> Vernon Bogdanor wrote, “most of us surely have always understood in our bones, that we remain a profoundly monarchical nation.”<sup>6</sup> In Japan, the emperor had long represented the bearer of a symbolic supremacy untainted by the demeaning obligations of exercising power, fulfilled instead by high figures in the elite.<sup>7</sup> The Prussian and Hapsburg monarchs in the nineteenth century broadened their popular support by de-emphasizing but not eliminating the attributes of political power in their public image.

In Russia, the symbolic preeminence of the emperor had always been closely linked with the extent and efficacy of monarchical power. The sophis-

<sup>3</sup> *The Invention of Tradition*, ed. Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 1-2.

<sup>4</sup> David Cannadine, “The Context, Performance and Meaning of Ritual: The British Monarchy and the ‘Invention of Tradition,’ c. 1820-1977,” in Hobsbawm and Ranger, eds., *The Invention of Tradition*, 101-64.

<sup>5</sup> Linda Colley, “The Apotheosis of George III: Loyalty, Royalty and the British Nation 1760-1820,” *Past and Present*, No. 102 (February 1981): 94-129.

<sup>6</sup> Cited in *The New York Times*, June 5, 2002, 12.

<sup>7</sup> John Whitney Hall, “A Monarch for Modern Japan,” in Robert E. Ward, ed., *Political Development in Modern Japan* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973), 11-64.

ticated distinction between the “body-mortal,” and the “body-politic,” which was made to a greater or lesser degree in the absolute monarchies of the West, did not take hold in Russia.<sup>8</sup> Russian monarchs themselves had to display the transcendent features of the political order in performances constantly reaffirming the superhuman, heroic attributes attached to the state. Myth and ceremonies elevated the monarch above the population as a distant and legitimate sovereign. I have called the particular realizations of the governing myth by the successors to the throne “scenarios of power.” The scenarios cast each ruler as a mythic hero, transforming the myth to fit his or her personal views and tastes, as well as the cultural and political circumstances of the time. Rhetoric and iconography evoked a transcendent persona endowed with the features idealized in the scenario.

The representation of Russian monarchy appears as a succession of apparent ruptures, producing an illusion of constant renewal, prodigies of transformation effected by the irresistible power of the monarch’s will. The political threats posed by nineteenth-century revolutionary movements and increasing governmental role of bureaucratic institutions produced only more demonstrative affirmations of the ruler’s prerogatives. The godlike image carried a mystique of its own: the office of a Russian emperor without unlimited authority was unthinkable and intolerable for the individual ruler, regardless of expedience or principle.

The definition of power precluded political participation, even of the highest, most conservative layers of society. English monarchs preserved their symbolic preeminence while withdrawing from the exercise of political power. In Japan, the governmental elite fashioned a popular monarchy by introducing a representative system that comprised only 1.1 percent of the population. In Germany and the Hapsburg Empire a limited suffrage was the basis of parliamentary institutions that the emperor and his ministers could dominate. Russian emperors repeatedly rebuffed proposals to co-opt even the most conservative supporters of the political status quo and allow limited participation in government. While this intransigence is explained in part by the fear that concessions would begin the erosion of monarchical power observed in France, it had deeper roots in the culture of Russian monarchy. The authority of the emperor derived from his symbolic preeminence and distance

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<sup>8</sup> Ernst H. Kantorowicz, *The King’s Two Bodies*, 383-450; Michael Cherniavsky, *Tsar and People*, 86.

from his subjects and could founder if compromised. For example, Alexander II oversaw the emancipation of the Russian serfs and sweeping reforms of local government and the court system, which involved consultation with members of the nobility. However, though he received proposals for limited participation in government, he never relented in his belief that only the monarch could transcend the separate interests of the estates and direct the formulation of policies. In 1865, he refused to receive the address of the Moscow gentry calling for a popular assembly to consist of gentry representatives. He declared, “To none of [my subjects] is it allowed to give prior notice to MY incessant care for the well being of Russia, or to decide beforehand questions about the basic principles of her state institutions. No class has the right to speak in the name of other estates. No one is called to take it upon himself to petition me about the general good and the needs of state.”<sup>9</sup>

The myths of Russian monarchy set the ruler above the noble and imperial elites by evoking a power derived from God, but elevated by the foreign sources of his authority. His image was derived from beyond the seas, from the Vikings, from the Byzantine emperor, from Roman and western rulers—Ivan IV boasting of his descent from Rurik, the legendary founder of Russia, declared that he was no Russe. Tsar Alexei Mikhailovich in the seventeenth century presented himself in Byzantine robes and adopted ceremonies meant to follow those of the Byzantine emperor. With Peter the Great the image became Western, as he took on the Roman models of Western Europe and cast himself as *Imperator*.

My point here is not about the practice of borrowing, since borrowing of features and signs characterizes many if not all monarchies. Rather it is that in Russia the act of borrowing itself became an attribute of power. The appropriation of the attributes of foreign exemplars of sovereignty elevated the ruler and his servitors above the Russians and other subject peoples of the empire. A second, and for us particularly germane, characteristic was an imperative to demonstrate change from previous presentations or scenarios of power. Beginning with Peter the Great, the power to transform—to show himself unbound by traditions of the previous reign, but to eliminate its abuses, and reverse its failures—was a sign of his absolute power. Peter the Great, Georges Florovsky wrote, “was inclined to exaggerate everything new. He wanted

<sup>9</sup> Terence Emmons, *The Russian Landed Gentry and the Peasant Emancipation of 1861* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968), 411.

everything refurbished and altered until it passed beyond all recognition.”<sup>10</sup> It did not matter whether the changes represented true innovations or not; it was the appearance of change that was important, for the signs of renovation revealed the transformative powers of the Russian emperors and empresses.

Each scenario repeated the Petrine cadence, opening with energetic demonstrative change, a discrediting, explicit or implicit of the predecessor, a new vision of the creative perspective of the autocrat. Each reign, except the last, undertook a symbolic repudiation of the previous one, an assertion of the transcendent image of a ruler not limited by the examples or legacy of his or her predecessors. In the nineteenth centuries this dynamic of repudiation continued, though it was tempered with assertions of dynastic continuity and devotion to a national heritage. Leo Tolstoy observed this pattern early in the reign of Alexander II. He remarked, “Alexander II came to the throne and as always happens the new reign began to act in a spirit contrary to his predecessor [sic].”<sup>11</sup> The invention of tradition—making the new appear as if it were old—took place in Russia under the symbolic imperative that the old appear new. New traditions had to occasion a break with the past in order to create a different conception of the past more suited to the cultural and political needs of the contemporary monarchy. Miliukov, like most members of the liberal intelligentsia, regarded these traditions as flim-flam generated by a doomed monarchy. The traditions of Russian monarchy, it is true, failed to unite government and society, but they did provide rationales for the preservation of absolutism in Russia.

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In nineteenth-century Russia, the invention of traditions strove to make the monarchy appear national. The westernized monarchy, which since Peter’s reign was at pains to display its European character, now sought instead to display distinctive native traits that would ensure that it would not follow the fatal course of its counterparts. The emperors who succeeded the throne after the revolutionary threats of 1825 and 1881—Nicholas I and Alexander III—presented images that distanced themselves from the European goals, images, and policies that were associated with their predecessors. To this end, they

<sup>10</sup> Georges Florovsky, *Ways of Russian Theology* (Belmont, MA: Nordland, 1979) 1:114.

<sup>11</sup> Cited in Kathryn B. Feuer, *Tolstoy and the Genesis of War and Peace* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1996), 150.



sought to establish traditions that would link them with the Russian people, without, however jeopardizing the distance that ensured their symbolic preeminence.

The statements in the months following Nicholas I's accession explained the failure of the Decembrist uprising by the innate loyalty of the Russian people to their rulers. The manifesto on the sentencing of the Decembrist revolutionaries, issued on July 13, 1826, disclosed a new grounding for imperial authority. The Decembrists' design to introduce western constitutional institutions, the manifesto stated, was alien to the Russian people. "In a state where love for monarchs and devotion to the throne are based on the native characteristics of the people, where there are laws of the fatherland and firmness in administration, all efforts of the evil-intentioned will be in vain and insane."<sup>12</sup> The emperor no longer appeared as a remote and supernal figure, the philosopher king, whose authority was justified by the supreme reason he brought to bear on institutions for the benefit of his people. Rather, he was presented as the object of the people's devotion, making the monarchy appear grounded on a tacit popular mandate.

The love of the people thus justified the westernized monarch's power. In the first decade of Nicholas's reign, this relationship was consecrated, or reified, in an idea of absolute monarchy expressed in the word "autocracy" (*samoderzhavie*). The idea, projected into the past, became the dominant motif of official history. A lecture, delivered in 1832 in the presence of the then Assistant Minister of Education, Sergei Uvarov, by Mikhail Pogodin provided the regime's tale of origin: "The Varangians came to us, but *voluntarily chosen*, at least from the start, not like Western victors and conquerors—the first essential distinction in the kernel, the seed of the Russian State in comparison with other Europeans."<sup>13</sup> Uvarov's famous memorandum of 1833 provided an ideological formulation of these ideas, announcing the slogan—Orthodoxy, Autocracy, and Nationality. Autocracy was clearly the central element of Uvarov's triad. He wrote, "autocracy constitutes the main condition of the political existence of Russia.... The saving conviction that Russia lives and is protected by the spirit of strong, humane, and enlightened autocracy must permeate popular education and must develop with it."<sup>14</sup>

<sup>12</sup> N. K. Shil'der, *Imperator Nikolai Pervyi*, 1: 704-06.

<sup>13</sup> M. P. Pogodin, *Istoriko-kriticheskie otryvki* (Moscow: Semen, 1846), 6-8.

<sup>14</sup> Cited in Nicholas Riasanovsky, *Nicholas I and Official Nationality in Russia, 1825-1855* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1959), 74-75.

It was in this context that new traditions appeared showing the emperor's absolute power to be a historical expression of Russia's national heritage. Here I will discuss two of these invented traditions: new forms of presentation at the Russian coronation, and what was conceived as native styles of Russian church architecture. Both contributed to the performance of a national narrative that showed the common past uniting the emperors with their Russian subjects.

The coronation of Nicholas I in 1826 marked this change of the meaning of Russian imperial coronations. It consecrated both the idea of absolute monarchy and the ruling dynasty as expressions of the idea of nation. The most important innovation took place at the conclusion of the coronation ceremonies. After the recessional to the Archangel and Annunciation Cathedrals, Nicholas ascended the Red Staircase before the Palace of Facets, turned to the crowd, and bowed three times, to their thunderous Hoorahs! The triple bow showed the emperor's response to the people's acclaim. It was an unprecedented sign of a reciprocity of feeling, a signal expression of the ruler's bond with the people, marking a breach of the imagery of Olympian distance. It aroused the indignation of the tsar's younger brother, the Grand Duke Michael Pavlovich, who did not think it befitting of an emperor.<sup>15</sup> In subsequent decades, the triple bow from the Red Staircase became a central ceremony of Russian autocracy, whenever the emperor visited Moscow. (Figure 1) By the end of the century, it was customarily described as an "ancient tradition."<sup>16</sup>

The creation of a national style of church architecture expressed another theme of official nationality—the historic bond between the autocracy and the Russian Orthodox Church. Nicholas I and Alexander III looked to pre-Petrine models to build contemporary artifacts of a Russian national past. To meet their sovereigns' expectations, official architecture had to create a national architecture from multifarious Byzantine and indigenous styles. Constantine Thon, a young architect of German-Russian extraction, answered Nicholas's wish for a national architecture when his project for the St. Catherine's Church in St. Petersburg suggested the five-cupola form of the Vladimir and Moscow Assumption Cathedrals. A decree of March 25, 1841 ordained that "the taste of ancient Byzantine architecture should be preserved, by preference and as far as is possible" in the construction of Orthodox churches. "The drawings

<sup>15</sup> Cherniavsky, *Tsar and People*, 148-49.

<sup>16</sup> *Scenarios of Power*, 1: 290-92.



*Figure 1.*

Alexander III Bows to the People From the Red Staircase, July 17, 1881.  
Lithograph, *Vsemirnaia Illiustratsiia*, No. 656 (1881)

of Professor Constantine Thon composed for the construction of Orthodox churches may prove useful in this regard.”<sup>17</sup>

Thon’s architectural projects typify the nineteenth-century tendency to use architecture to present a historical narrative, in this case the adoption of Byzantine forms of monarchy and culture in early Rus’. Thon grafted the five-cupola form of the Assumption Cathedrals in the Moscow Kremlin and Vladimir onto a nineteenth-century neoclassical structure, expressing the eclectic spirit of Nicholas’s official-nationality doctrine, which, while claiming national distinctiveness, sought to defend the western cultural and institutional heritage.<sup>18</sup> Its most prominent example was the massive Cathedral of Christ the Redeemer in Moscow (1837-1882), built to commemorate Russia’s victory over Napoleon in 1812.<sup>19</sup> While the proportions, the arcades, and the structure of the cupolas of the cathedral were typically neoclassical, the exterior decorative elements asserted the building’s Russian character by recalling the architecture of the fifteenth century.<sup>20</sup> The Redeemer Cathedral set the pattern for similar churches that would provide specific visual references to both the national past of autocracy and the universalistic context of empire derived from Byzantium. Published explanations of the buildings spelled out these references, disclosing the meaning of Russia’s architectural heritage to all. The Redeemer Cathedral was regarded in the nineteenth century as cumbersome and something of an eyesore on the Moscow landscape. It was razed in 1931-1932, but it retained its national associations and has recently been reconstructed at its site in the center of Moscow.<sup>21</sup> (See Figure 1 in Article 8).

<sup>17</sup> *Svod zakonov rossiiskoi imperii*, (St. Petersburg: Tip. II Otd. Sobstvennoi E.I.V. Kantseliarii 1857), 12: 49. The provision is article 218 of the *Stroitel’nyi Ustav*.

<sup>18</sup> E. A. Borisova, *Russkaia arkhitektura vtoroi poloviny XIX veka* (Moscow: Nauka, 1979), 100, 101; Konstantin Ton, *Tserkvi, sochinennye arkhitektorom Ego Imperatorskogo Velichestva Professorom Arkhitektury Imperatorskoi Akademii Khudozhestv i chlenom raznykh akademii Konstantinom Tonom* (St. Petersburg: n.p., 1838).

<sup>19</sup> The most thorough treatment of the history of the building is E. Kirichenko, *Khram Khrista Spasitelia v Moskve* (Moscow: Planeta, 1997).

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 61-63; Borisova, *Russkaia arkhitektura*, 106-09.

<sup>21</sup> See the perceptive comments of Svetlana Boym, who sees the rebuilding as one episode in the “obliteration of memory” that proceeded after the collapse of the Soviet Union. She cites the words of “a middle aged man with wistful eyes” in a tourist advertisement, “Don’t divide Russian into past and present. Russia is one.” Svetlana Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia* (New York, Basic Books, 2001), 100-08.

The assassination of Alexander II occasioned an even sharper symbolic break—a blanket repudiation of the westernizing tradition of the autocracy and the adoption of a new historical myth. If the official nationality located the nation in the Russian people’s worship of their western overlords, the new myth presented the emperor as ethnically and religiously one with his people, as the most Russian of Russians. The program of Alexander III’s reign was set forth in the manifesto of April 29, 1881, written by Alexander III’s mentor and closest advisor, Constantine Pobedonostsev. Reaffirming the principle of autocracy, Pobedonostsev evoked a new founding period of the Russian empire in an idealized vision of seventeenth-century Muscovy. The words “*zemlia russkaia*,” Russian land, conjured a Slavophile picture of the unity of all estates in Russia, a single people, living in harmony with their tsar. The Russian land had been disgraced by vile sedition, but “hereditary tsarist power,” continued to enjoy the love of its subjects, and this power “in unbreakable ... union with Our land” had survived such troubles—*smuty*—in the past. The people displayed their devotion to the tsar through prayers in the Orthodox church. These prayers brought divine blessings on the sovereign.

Alexander III’s coronation in 1883, and that of Nicholas II only thirteen years later, expressed not the merger of the Western and Russian polarities of imperial culture, but a coming home: a denial of polarities and a celebration of the national character of the Russian emperor. The rhetoric of official and semi-official texts emphasized the organic and ethnic connections of the simple Russian people with their Russian tsar. The Pan-Slavist journalist and general Vissarion Komarov described the people of Moscow on May 15, the day of the coronation ceremonies, as “a vital force, concealing in itself the presence of God.” He evoked a physical sense of the merger of people and sovereign. His key words were “*splosh’*,” total, variants of the verb “*splotit’*” to fuse, etymologically connected with the word used to describe binding longitudinal sections of wood.<sup>22</sup>

The post-coronation festivities evoked the dynasty’s Muscovite past in art, poetry, and music, making a political idiom of *le style russe*. The seventeenth-century interior of the Hall of Facets, with murals of Semen Ushakov, was restored for the coronation banquet by artists brought from the Palekh shop of

<sup>22</sup> V. Komarov, *V pamiat’ sviashchennogo koronovaniia Gosudaria Imperatora Aleksandra III i Gosudaryni Imperatritsy Marii Fedorovny* (St. Petersburg: V. Komarov, 1883), 110.

icon painters. The banquet menu, designed by the painter Victor Vasnetsov, in old Russian style showed a scene of boyars bearing the tsar's regalia to the feast; the reverse depicted a priest and peasants bearing bread and salt, and a player of the ancient *gusliar'* singing praise to the tsar. An orchestra performed Tchaikovsky's cantata, "Moskva," composed especially for the occasion. The libretto by the pan-Slavist poet Apollon Maikov presented the tsar as the epic Russian folk hero, the *bogatyr'* representing the hopes of all Slavic nations. The gala performance at Alexander II's coronation celebrations in 1856 was of Donizetti's opera bouffe, "*L'Elisir d'Amore*;" now it was the first and last scenes of Glinka's "Life for the Tsar," about a simple Russian peasant's sacrifice to save the newly chosen Michael Romanov in 1613. A chorus of nearly 800 singers, accompanied by musicians playing old horns, sang the Glory (*Slav'sia*) chorus as row after row of soldiers marched in to bring the opera, and presumably the Troubles of the early 1880s, to a rousing close.<sup>23</sup>

In a letter to the empress Maria Fedorovna on the first anniversary of his coronation, Alexander III described it as a "great event for us. And it proved to a surprised and morally corrupt Europe that Russia is still the same holy, orthodox Russia as it was under the Moscow Tsars and, if God permits, as it will remain forever."<sup>24</sup> Alexander sought to display the Muscovite character of imperial Russia by building Orthodox Churches in what he believed was a true Muscovite style. The building announcing the new official national style was the Resurrection Cathedral erected on the site of Alexander II's assassination, in popular parlance, "the Savior on the Blood."<sup>25</sup>

Michael Flier's articles on the planning, architecture, and iconography of the Resurrection Cathedral provide a remarkable glimpse of the process of the invention of tradition.<sup>26</sup> The architects who participated in the initial competition did not understand the new scenario or its implications, and

<sup>23</sup> Borisova, *Ruskaia arkhitektura*, 307.

<sup>24</sup> GARF, 642-1-709, 24-25. Letter of May 16, 1884.

<sup>25</sup> For a more extended discussion of the revival churches see my article, "'The Russian Style' in Church Architecture as Imperial Symbol after 1881," in *Architectures of Russian Identity: 1500 to the Present*, ed. James Cracraft and Dan Rowland (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2003), 101-116; *Scenarios*, 2, 244-56.

<sup>26</sup> Michael S. Flier, "At Daggers Drawn: the Competition for the Church of the Savior on the Blood," in *For SK: In Celebration of the Life and Career of Simon Karlinsky*, ed. Michael S. Flier and Robert P. Hughes (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 97-115.

drafted their plans in Thon style. Alexander, not one to temper his opinions, rejected them all. He insisted that he wanted the church to be in “Russian style,” and “in the style of the time of the Muscovite tsars of the seventeenth century,”<sup>27</sup> without indicating precisely what he had in mind. The project that won the tsar’s approval was submitted by Father Ignatii, the abbot of the Trinity-Sergeev Hermitage at Peterhof. Ignatii, who had briefly studied at the Academy of Arts, drew the sketch of the church, he claimed, “almost automatically,” on the day of Annunciation. But he was not a professional architect, and his plans had to be completely revised by the architect Alfred Parland. The final form of the cathedral, Michael Flier has shown, was a *mélange* of the plans of many architects who were struggling to find a seventeenth-century national style that suited the emperor’s taste.<sup>28</sup> The decision to depart from the classical Moscow-Vladimir style was clearly the emperor’s. Although the church was built on the basis of public donations, the imperial family donated nearly one-quarter of the 4.6 million ruble cost. Alexander continued to watch over the completion of the cathedral and resisted proposals to economize.<sup>29</sup>

The example Alexander III had in mind was St. Basil’s cathedral on Red Square in Moscow, and the project designed by Alfred Parland, presumably on the basis of Ignatii’s sketches, recalled St. Basil’s cathedral (see Article 8, Figure 2). The flamboyant exterior decoration—the devices of *kokoshniki*, and *shirinki*, the tent roof, and onion cupolas—set the church apart from the Thon model and evoked a different historical narrative. However, Boris Kirikov has shown that the new church’s five-cupola cruciform structure, with a large central basilica-like hall, has little in common with the intricate warren of Vasilii the Blessed, and the decorative elements borrow from a great number of seventeenth century churches in the Moscow-Iaroslavl style.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>27</sup> In April, 1882, the mayor of St. Petersburg informed the City Duma that he had received notification from the St. Petersburg Governor that the Minister of the Interior had conveyed the tsar’s wish that the cathedral be built “in Russian style.” *Moskovskie Vedomosti*, April 9, 1882; A. A. Parland, *Khram Voskresenie Khristova sooruzhennyi na meste smertel’nogo poraneniia v Boze pochivshogo Imperatora Aleksandra II na ekaterinskoi kanale v Sankt-Peterburge* (St. Petersburg: n.p., 1909), 2.

<sup>28</sup> Michael S. Flier “At Daggers Drawn,” 109-11.

<sup>29</sup> Iu. V. Trubinov, *Khram Voskreseniia Khristova [Spas na Krovi]* (St. Petersburg: Beloe i Chernoe 1997), 33, 54, 94.

<sup>30</sup> B. M. Kirikov, “Khram Voskreseniia Khristova (k istorii russkogo stilia v Peterburge),” *Neuskii Arkhiv: istoriko-kraevedcheskii sbornik* 1 (1993): 230-33; I. Grabar’, *Istoriia Russkogo Iskusstva*, Vol. 9, Book 2 (Moscow: n.p., 1965): 269.

The theme of resurrection was central to Alexander III's scenario, which envisioned the rebirth of Russian monarchy after the troubled last years of his father's reign. Michael Flier has shown the predominance of the resurrection imagery in the church. The exterior mosaics depict the bearing of the cross, the Crucifixion, the Deposition, the Descent into Hell, and, on the Southern Pediment, Christ's Resurrection. He observed that the interior is modeled on the layout of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem, also named "The Resurrection of Christ." The new cathedral thus places Russia's beginning not at the Roman empire—as in the legends of Andrew the First-Called and Prus—or at Byzantium, as claimed in the legend of Monomakh, but at Golgotha itself, now with Christ's martyrdom transposed to Russia.<sup>31</sup> The mosaics thus established Jerusalem as a new point of beginning for the sacred narrative of Russian monarchy and define Russia as possessing a sacred history, distinct not only from the west, but also from Byzantium.

The Resurrection Cathedral built on the site of Alexander II's assassination on Catherine Canal is easily visible from Nevskii Prospect. There is nothing understated in its appearance; it is a declaration of contempt for the order and symmetry of the capital, producing what Louis Réau, the noted French student of Russian art history, described as "a troubling dissonance." A prominent building in Moscow style set in the middle of classical Petersburg was meant to express this rejection. It was, Flier writes, "old Muscovy plunged into the heart of European Petersburg."<sup>32</sup> Although the cathedral was not consecrated until 1907, its amalgam of the five-cupola form with pre-Petrine ornamentation became the dominant model for church design in the official Russian style, from 1881 to 1905. Pobedonostsev wrote in a report of the 1890s that Alexander himself reviewed projects for churches and "willingly approved those projects that reproduced the ancient tradition of Russian churches."<sup>33</sup> More than twenty official Russian style churches went up in St. Petersburg from 1881-1914. The Assumption Cathedral of the St. Petersburg branch of the Kiev Monastery of the Caves (1895-1900), looks out over the Neva from the

<sup>31</sup> Michael S. Flier: "The Church of the Savior on the Blood; Projection, Rejection, Resurrection," in *Christianity and the Eastern Slavs*, ed. Michael S. Flier and Robert P. Hughes (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 32-43.

<sup>32</sup> Louis Réau, *Saint Petersburg* (Paris: H. Laurens, 1913), 67-68; Flier, "The Church of the Savior on the Blood," 30.

<sup>33</sup> A. Iu. Polunov, *Pod vlast'iu ober-prokurora: gosudarstvo i tserkov' v epokhu Aleksandra III* (Moscow: AIRO-XX, 1996), 76.



Nikolaevskii embankment, a five-cupola church with elaborate seventeenth-century decoration. The Resurrection Cathedral on the Obvodnyi Canal (1904-08) within view of the Warsaw Railroad Station features a Byzantine central basilica, embellished with *kokoshniki* and a tent belfry characteristic of sixteenth and seventeenth century Russia. Nicholas Sultanov's Peter-Paul Cathedral at Peterhof, completed in the late 1890s, brought the images of the Resurrection Cathedral to the playground of the court. Set on a pond, it reproduced the tent forms and *kokoshniki* of the seventeenth century in brick, which Sultanov considered the building material most suitable for Russian churches. It was in stark contrast to the Rococo elegance of the Peterhof palaces.

Churches built in the provinces were also situated at prominent sites as means to edify or rebuke the population.<sup>34</sup> A fanciful single domed Church of the Savior covered with *kokoshniki* and other decorations accompanied by a tent shape bell-tower went up at Borki near Kharkov, the site of the wreck of the emperor's train in 1888, as a sign of miraculous salvation.<sup>35</sup> Churches built near factories promoted efforts by the government and church to awaken the religious faith of industrial workers. At the beginning of the 1890s, Leontii Benois designed a church for 2,000 people near the textile factory of the Hofmeister, N. K. Nechaev-Maltsov, in the town of Gusev, near Vladimir. This massive edifice was surmounted by a great tent roof and bell tower at one end, and by cupolas and *kokoshniki* in the Iaroslavl style at the other. The image of St. George, the patron saint of Moscow, placed over the portal was probably the work of Victor Vasnetsov, who executed the paintings on the interior walls. A drawing of this church, which has been destroyed since, recalls the tent and cupola forms of Vasilii the Blessed. Fedor Shekhtel's large Church of the Savior in the textile center at Ivanovo-Voznesensk, completed in 1898, was built in neo-Byzantine style.<sup>36</sup>

As the last example suggests, the appearance of new forms did not rule out churches built in the previous style. Under Nicholas II, churches in the Thon

<sup>34</sup> These edifices as well as others in the national style are discussed in V. G. Lisovskii, "Natsional'nyi Stil" v arkhitekture Rossii (Moscow: Sovpadenie, 2000), 197-211.

<sup>35</sup> *Niva*, 24 (1894): 569.

<sup>36</sup> *Zodchii* (1893): 8, Plates, 1, 2, 6, (1903), 30-31; William Craft Brumfield, *The Origins of Modernism in Russian Architecture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 129.

style arose along with those in the style of seventeenth century Muscovy. Competing traditions persisted, confusing the symbolic statement that the monarchy was strenuously trying to exert.<sup>37</sup> In late imperial Russia, we observe a process of symbolic fragmentation that corresponds to the social fragmentation described in Alfred Rieber's model of a "sedimentary society," in which "successive social forms accumulated, each constituting a layer that covered all or most of society without altering the older forms lying under the surface." The invention of tradition in Russia sustained a myth requiring dramatic reversals and sharp discontinuities in order to reinforce an image of supreme and irresistible power. In this context, invented traditions hardly contributed to a sense of a unified historical past. To the critical eye of Paul Miliukov, the plethora of traditions appeared as equivalent to no tradition at all.



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<sup>37</sup> Alfred Rieber, "The Sedimentary Society," in *Between Tsar and People: Educated Society and the Quest for Public Identity in Late Imperial Russia*, ed. Edith Clowes, Samuel D. Kassow, and James L. West (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), 361-63.

## 7. National Narratives in the Representation of Nineteenth-Century Russian Monarchy



It is a truism in the literature about Russian nationalism that a popular, democratic nationalism failed to appear in pre-revolutionary Russia. Russia diverged from the Western European model, exemplified by England, France, and Sweden, where a concept of nation evolved under the aegis of a monarchy providing continuity between pre-modern dynastic concepts of nation, and modern civic nationalism.<sup>1</sup> One reason that this transition did not occur in Russia was that the rulers preempted national appeals and endeavored to present themselves as the expression of the will of the Russian people. Russian monarchs utilized this foundation not only to bolster their authority, but also to preclude the possibility of civic nationalism and to show that democratic institutions were alien to Russia. Russian monarchs sought to make “nationality” (*narodnost'*) an attribute of imperial power, reflected in the past activity and identity of the monarchy—to find in the westernized court and monarchy a common past with the Russian people.

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<sup>1</sup> See Alain Guéry, “L’état monarchique et la construction de la nation française,” *Revue de la Bibliothèque Nationale*, No. 32 (Summer 1989): 6-17; Linda Colley, *Britons; Forging the Nation, 1707-1837* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992). This corresponds to the first type of nation building in Miroslav Hroch’s model: Miroslav Hroch, “From National Movement to the Fully-Formed Nation: The Nation Building Process in Europe,” in *Becoming National: A Reader*, ed. Geoff Eley and Ronald Grigor Suny (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 61; On Russia see Hans Rogger, “Nationalism and the State: A Russian Dilemma,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 4 (1961-1962): 253-56; Geoffrey Hosking, *Russia: People and Empire, 1552-1917*, xxiv, xxvi.

To demonstrate their national credentials, Russian monarchs of the nineteenth century elaborated mythical narratives that demonstrated their bond with the Russian people. Such narratives show the ancient character of nations, common origins evolving from the past. They evoke what Etienne Balabar called a “fictive ethnicity which makes it possible for the expression of a preexisting unity to be seen in the state, and continually to measure the state against its “historic mission” in the service of the nation, and, as a consequence to idealize politics.”<sup>2</sup> In Russia, the mythical “idealization of politics” first took the form of an effort to identify the Petrine heritage—the westernized Russian monarchy and multinational empire—with nationality, *narodnost’*, the term that gained currency and resonance in the first decades of the nineteenth century. The word *narodnost’* seems to have been first used by the poet Petr Viazemskii as a translation of the French *nationalité* in 1819. (*Nationalité* first appeared in a French dictionary in 1835). It denoted a distinctive native character or identity, but what that identity was and where it was to be found remained unclear. Whether nationality was located in a national literature, language, customs, institutions, people, or history, or some combination of the preceding, was the question intellectuals debated during successive decades. In any event, the search for a distinctive characteristic began under the influence of the French revolution and German idealistic philosophy, whether or not the word *narodnost’* was used.<sup>3</sup>

Russian monarchy sought to appropriate nationality for itself, denying a separate existence to the people, and trying to square the circle, to show that the westernized absolute monarchy was native in origin and spirit.<sup>4</sup> Here I argue that this appropriation of the idea of nation assumed two quite different symbolic forms in the nineteenth century—the doctrine of official

<sup>2</sup> Etienne Balabar, “The Nation Form: History and Ideology,” in *Becoming National: A Reader*, ed. Eley and Suny, 133, 140, 143-44.

<sup>3</sup> On the question of nationality see Nathaniel Knight, “Ethnicity, Nationality, and the Masses: Narodnost’ and Modernity in Imperial Russia,” in *Russian Modernity: Politics, Knowledge, Practices*, ed. David L. Hoffman and Yanni Kotsonis (Houndsmills: MacMillan, 2000), 41-64.

<sup>4</sup> This corresponds to the type of national myths imposed by authoritarian states, rather than those worked out through open processes of discussion. David Miller observes that the distortion of the truth in such cases may be blatant, particularly when it touches on the legitimacy of the ruler. David Miller, *On Nationality* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 39.

nationality, which defined the relations between tsar and people during the reigns of Nicholas I and Alexander II, and what I call the national myth, which was propagated during the reigns of Alexander III and Nicholas II. This formulation diverges from a widespread view that Alexander III's nationalism was merely a revival Nicholas I's. It represented, I contend, not only a different conception of the relationship between the monarch and Russian people, but a new conception of the state that played a crucial role in shaping the policies of the autocracy in the early twentieth century.

### OFFICIAL NATIONALITY

Nicholas I, following the pattern of his forebears, took on a concept prevalent in the West and incorporated it into imperial mythology. The word "nationality" suggested an idea or spirit distinctive to a people; Nicholas I and his advisors identified this spirit with the westernized Russian monarchy and its past. The central themes of official nationality were expressed in the manifesto announcing the sentencing of the Decembrists issued on July 13, 1826. The Decembrists' design to introduce western constitutional institutions was alien to the Russian people. "Neither in the characteristics nor the ways of the Russian is this design to be found.... The heart of Russia was and will be impervious to it." The manifesto went on, "In a state where love for monarchs and devotion to the throne are based on the native characteristics of the people, where there are laws of the fatherland and firmness in administration, all efforts of the evil-intentioned will be in vain and insane."<sup>5</sup> The failure of the Decembrist uprising was itself proof of the love of the people for the monarchy and its national character, which set Russia apart from European states that had come to rely on representative institutions.

The establishment of political authority was most successful in Russia because of the Russian people's love for those who had come from outside, or appeared to come from outside, to govern them. The Russian people set the model of obedience and loyalty for the other nationalities of the empire, who also accepted subordination to a multinational elite, sharing the western culture of the Petersburg court. The monarchy demonstrated the historic devotion of the Russian people to their conquerors and rulers, in ceremony, history, and church architecture. The first ceremonial demonstration took

<sup>5</sup> Shil'der, *Imperator Nikolai Pervyi*, 1: 704-06.

place a few months after that manifesto in the summer of 1826. After the coronation service in the Assumption Cathedral, Nicholas I made the traditional procession in full regalia stopping first at the Archangel, then the Annunciation Cathedrals. Then he ascended the Red Staircase before the Palace of Facets, turned to the crowd, and bowed three times, to their thunderous Hoorahs! The bow was an initial ceremony of recognition between the emperor and the Russian people, expressing an unspoken bond of devotion. It was a true “invented tradition,” which was repeated on future ceremonial visits of the emperors to Moscow and at all future coronations. Later in the century, the triple bow came to be hallowed as an “ancient tradition” distinctive to Russia, expressing the popular character of the monarchy.<sup>6</sup>

Historical narratives now incorporated the Russian people into the dominant Petrine myth, giving the monarchy a patina of democracy by showing it to be the choice of the nation. The founding legend for the myth was the summoning of Viking princes in 862 by the people of Novgorod with the words “Our land is great and rich, but there is no order in it. Come to rule and reign over us.” Nicholas Karamzin’s popular *History of the Russian State* (1818-1829) described this as “an astonishing and nearly unparalleled case in the chronicles.... Everywhere the sword of the powerful or the cunning of the ambitious introduced absolute monarchy [*samovlastie*] in Russia it was confirmed by the general agreement with the citizens... The Slavs voluntarily destroy their ancient popular government and demand sovereigns from the Varangians.”<sup>7</sup>

The historian Mikhail Pogodin asserted that the summoning of the Varangians revealed the paradigm of the historical development of Russia and the political order exemplified by Nicholaeian autocracy. In a lecture delivered in 1832 in the presence of the Assistant Minister of Education, Sergei Uvarov, Pogodin declared, “The Varangians came to us, but *voluntarily chosen*, at least from the start, not like Western victors and conquerors—the first essential distinction in the kernel, the seed of the Russian State.”<sup>8</sup> The Russian people had invited their rulers, had obeyed and loved them; autocracy had national roots. The acceptance and worship of the supreme foreign ruler had become

<sup>6</sup> See *Scenarios of Power*, 1: 290-92.

<sup>7</sup> Ol’ga Maiorova, “Bessmertnyi Riurik: Prazdnovanie ‘Tysiacheletii Rossii’ v 1862,” *Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie* 43, No. 3 (2000):137.

<sup>8</sup> M. P. Pogodin, *Istoriko-kriticheskie otryuki* (Moscow: A. Semen, 1846), 6-8.

the distinguishing mark of the Russian people. The invitation was enshrined as the official version of the foundation of the Russian state. In 1851, the first volume of Sergei Soloviev's *History of Russia* advanced the argument that the invitation took place in 852, rather than 862, and provoked angry responses from Pogodin, N. M. Ustrialov, and others. Pogodin declared Soloviev's contention a blasphemy against one of the "sacred dates" of Russian history. In 1852, Nicholas I issued an order to the Minister of Education insisting that higher educational institutions preserve the traditional date of 862.<sup>9</sup>

The ideological formulation of these themes was the work of the Minister of Education, Sergei Uvarov, who coined the slogan, "orthodoxy, autocracy, nationality." *pravoslavie, samoderzhavie, narodnost'*. Uvarov advanced eighteenth-century utilitarian justifications of autocracy as the institution that had created and saved the Russian state. He did not mention divine sanction; autocracy was "the necessary condition of the existence of the empire." Orthodoxy was presented not as a revealed truth, but as the "guarantee of social and family happiness." The Russian nation was defined not as an ethnic entity, but by the utter devotion of the Russian people to their rulers, which set them apart from western peoples, seduced by liberal ideas.<sup>10</sup> The principles of Uvarov's slogan were proclaimed and defended by a number of official writers, contributing to such state-subsidized journals as *Severnaia Pchela* and *Moskvitianin* and reflected the views of much of the educated public at the time.<sup>11</sup>

The subtext of the new version of the Petrine myth was that the institutions of the Russian state had been consecrated by its history: they were not to be judged by western ideas or the experience of western states. The history followed Karamzin's linear pattern, the passing of the tradition of autocracy from reign to reign, its culmination in the existing Russian state. The official nationality doctrine preserved and enhanced the Petrine identification of the emperor with the state. Mikhail Cherniavsky wrote that Peter's governmental institutions all were "executive extensions of Peter's personal will."<sup>12</sup> Much the

<sup>9</sup> Maiorova, "Bessmertnyi Riurik," 137-40.

<sup>10</sup> On the idealistic and utilitarian grounds of Uvarov's slogan see Andrei Zorin, "Ideologiia 'Pravoslaviia-Samoderzhavii-Narodnosti': Opyt rekonstruktsii," *Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie* 26 (1996): 86-87, 92-101.

<sup>11</sup> Nicholas Riasanovsky, *Nicholas I and Official Nationality in Russia, 1825-1855* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1959), *passim*.

<sup>12</sup> Michael Cherniavsky, *Tsar and People*, 86.

same can be said for the institutions of Nicholas's state. Although the Russian administration had attained massive dimensions by the end of his reign, Nicholas regarded the state as inseparable from his own personal authority. He took care to watch over his officials as closely as possible, either through the function of *nadzor*—administrative supervision—or through the Third Section of His Chancellery, which served, among other functions, as an organ of personal surveillance over the administration. Nicholas's person was omnipresent, and officials regarded him as the incarnation of the state. "He gives meaning and color to everything," Baron Modest Korf, a State Secretary of Nicholas, wrote. "All the radii of the many sided public activity converge on him." The imperial court in Nicholas's reign served as a display of the unity of the highest officials of the administration with the emperor and other members of the imperial family.<sup>13</sup>

Nicholas remained fully German in manner, temperament, and dress, and made known his admiration for Frederick the Great and Prussian monarchy. At the same time, he openly displayed his predilection for Russian culture and history. This took many forms: for example—preservation of artifacts of the Russian past, encouraging a national style in church architecture and Russian music, arranging ceremonial visits to Moscow. It was made clear that these were not mere instances of personal taste, but visual statements of the monarchy's identity and past. A new style in church architecture gave visual expression to Nicholas's conception of Russia's national past. Constantine Thon created an official national style, which in 1841 was established by decree. Breaking from the eighteenth-century classical models, Thon designed five-cupola churches on the model of the Vladimir and Moscow Assumption Cathedrals. His Moscow-Byzantine style is exemplified by the massive Christ the Redeemer Cathedral in Moscow, which has recently been rebuilt at its original site in the center of Moscow. The Cathedral identifies Russian Orthodoxy with the Byzantine imperial tradition, stating its distance from the Western monarchical tradition, which had proved weak and decadent. Neo-Byzantine decorative elements were grafted onto a massive western neo-classical structure, creating a fusion of Russian and Western motifs characteristic of the eclectic spirit of Nicholaeian culture.<sup>14</sup> (See Article 8, Figure 1).

<sup>13</sup> M. A. Korf, "Iz zapisok," *Russkaia Starina* 98 (1899): 373.

<sup>14</sup> E. A. Borisova, *Russkaia arkhitektura*, 106-09; E. Kirichenko, *Khram Khrista Spasitelia v Moskve* (Moscow: Planeta, 1997), 61-63.



Nicholas demonstrated the monarchy's attachment to the traditions of pre-Petrine Russia at ceremonial appearances in the Moscow Kremlin, where he repeated the triple bow he had performed in 1826. These trips assumed especial importance after the revolution of 1848, when ancient Rus' signified the religious national faith that preserved Russia from the dissension and upheavals that had afflicted the West. These displays of national affiliation confirmed rather than contradicted the authority of Nicholas's westernized elite. He called upon the traditions of ancient Moscow but without wishing to revive them.

Some of the more nationally inclined writers, like Pogodin and Stepan Shevyrev, on the other hand saw the emperor's presence as a sign of a return to Muscovite culture. The difference between their image of a national monarchy and the emperor's became clear during a visit to Moscow in 1849 to dedicate Thon's New Kremlin Palace. Pogodin wrote that Nicholas assumed a different persona when he left the setting of the palace. "Are the Russian Tsar and the European Emperor two persons? No, they are one! From the Vladimir Hall [of the new Kremlin Palace] it is only a few steps to the Hall of Facets and the Red Staircase. Once [Nicholas] opens the door to the people, or even opens the window of Tsar Alexei Mikhailovich, all of Moscow, and with her all of Russia will see and hear him and answer, 'The European Emperor is again the Russian Tsar!'" Pogodin's article, however, did not pass the censors.<sup>15</sup>

The efforts of the Slavophiles to recapture their conception of early Russian culture evoked a sharp response. When Alexei Khomiakov, Constantine Aksakov, and several other Slavophiles ventured to appear at court in beards and what they believed was the Russian clothing of early Russia, a swift rebuke came down from the Ministry of Interior. A circular of the Ministry of Interior to provincial marshals of the nobility, announced that "The tsar is displeased that Russian noblemen wear beards. Because for some time news has been received from all provinces that the number of beards has greatly increased." It went on to explain that in the west, beards were "a sign of a certain type of ideas. We do not have this here." The tsar, it concluded, "considers that beards will interfere with the nobleman's elective service."<sup>16</sup> In Nicholas's frame of mind, beards signified not Russians but Jews and radicals. The official view

<sup>15</sup> Nikolai Barsukov, *Zhizn' i trudy M. P. Pogodina* (St. Petersburg: M. M. Stasiulevich, 1898) 10: 234-35, 238.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 10: 250-51.

identified the nation with the ruling western elite, and the suggestion that there was another, contradictory measure of the nation in the peasantry or the past intimated rebellion. Nicholas's shows of national spirit were meant to preserve, not to narrow the distance between the autocratic-noble elite and the ruled: to dramatize obedience as a spiritual quality of the nation. Authenticity, truth, and other versions of the national past jeopardized the monologic universe of the imperial myth. The beard symbolized a coming together of elite and people in a national culture whose features were not defined by the autocratic power.<sup>17</sup>

The official nationality narrative also provided the grounding for a dynamic view of the monarch as the ruler of a reformed state leading a mission of building a dynamic and powerful Russian empire. Such figures as N. N. Murav'ev, A. P. Balasoglo, N. I. Nadezhdin, and other members of the Russian Geographical Society envisioned a revitalized Russian empire that would represent the Russian nation.<sup>18</sup> The presumption of the devotion of the Russian people to a monarch who embodied the state and empire underlay the rationale for the Great Reforms. The steps taken on behalf of the people by the monarchical state justified the love of the people to their sovereign. Reform had been a goal of Nicholas's enlightened despotism, though fear of disruption deterred all but a few efforts to introduce change. Alexander II's scenario adapted the ideas and images of official nationality to a program of reform. He appeared as the humane European monarch, conferring benefactions on a grateful and devoted people—the emancipation of the serfs, the establishment of reformed courts and organs of local self-government. The Great Reforms were presented as expressions of the love uniting sovereign and people, distinctive to Russia, which would enable Russia to reap the benefits

<sup>17</sup> On the meanings imputed to the wearing of beards among the Slavophiles, and the Slavophiles' responses, see N. N. Mazur, "Delo o borode: Iz arkhiva Khomiakova: pis'mo o zapreshchenii nosit' borodu i russkoe plat'e," *Novoe Literaturnoe Obozrenie*, No. 6 (1993-1994): 127-38.

<sup>18</sup> Mark Bassin, *Imperial Visions: Nationalist Imagination and Geographical Expansion in the Russian Far East, 1840-1865* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 12-13, 94-101; Nathaniel Knight, "Narodnost' and Modernity in Imperial Russia," 48-50; Nathaniel Knight, "Science, Empire, and Nationality: Ethnography in the Russian Geographic Society, 1844-1855," in *Imperial Russia: New Histories for the Empire*, ed. Jane Burbank and David L. Ransel (Bloomington: Indiana University Press 1998), 108-42.

of increased freedom and social development while avoiding the political upheavals of the West.

Following the promulgation of the emancipation manifesto in February 1861, demonstrations of gratitude and approval by the people showed the popular grounding of monarchical power fundamental to official-nationality thinking. The tsar remained the supreme westernized figure of godlike elegance, distant from his people and bestowing the benefits of progress and civilization upon them. Popular prints (*lubki*) issued in the era of emancipation present Alexander II standing above peasants and workers on their knees in prayer, displaying gratitude and adoration to the emperor, a figure from a higher realm.<sup>19</sup> The anniversary of the Millenium of Russia in Novgorod in 1862 celebrated the emblematic act of rapport between ruled and their rulers in 862. Alexander addressed the Novgorod nobility calling the celebration “a new sign of the indestructible bond of all the estates of the Russian land with the government with one goal, the happiness and well being of our dear fatherland.”<sup>20</sup>

### THE NATIONAL MYTH

The great divide in the history of the representation of the Russian emperor in the nineteenth century occurred not with the Crimean War and death of Nicholas I, but with the assassination of Alexander II in 1881. The assassination dealt the final blow to the Petrine myth, the notion that Russian monarchy embodied the ideal of the European absolute state, but surpassed its models in power, majesty, and virtue. If the official nationality doctrine accommodated the concept of nation to the Petrine myth, Alexander III’s scenario presented the emperor as the hero of a national myth that emphasized his ethnic character as the most Russian of Russians, who stood apart from the westernized Russian state.

The images and themes of the myth took form in the 1860s and 1870s among the members of the so-called “Russian party,” which consisted of officials and journalists, disaffected one way or another from the policies of Alexander II, such as Constantine Pobedonostsev, Mikhail Katkov, and Vladimir Meshcherskii. Their conceptions of the nation were vague and

<sup>19</sup> See *Scenarios of Power*, 2: 71-75.

<sup>20</sup> Tatishchev, *Imperator Aleksandr II*, 1: 404.

diverse, but they all opposed what they perceived as irresolute domestic foreign policies and a want of characteristically Russian traits. None of their views corresponded to the notion of civic nation, which they considered alien to Russia's culture and past.

The new national myth was elaborated in the manifesto of April 29, 1881. The manifesto, drafted by Pobedonostsev, brought to an end the discussions of governmental reform that had continued under Loris-Melikov's direction in the weeks after the assassination.<sup>21</sup> The manifesto made the autocratic, unlimited power of the tsar appear as both a divinely ordained obligation and the mandate of the Russian people. Revising the initial text, Pobedonostsev changed the words "the burden of supreme rule," "*bremia verkhovnogo pravleniia*" to "the holy duty of Autocratic rule," "*sviashchennyi dolg samoderzhavnogo pravleniia*."<sup>22</sup> This gave divine sanction to the tsar's absolute power—not only to the sources of imperial power, but also to the way it was exercised.

The people displayed their devotion to the monarchy not as they had under Alexander II, in demonstrations of gratitude for benefactions bestowed on them. Rather, they showed that the forms of national consent were religious, demonstrated through the institutions of the church, in prayer: "the fervent prayers of a pious people known throughout the entire world for their love and devotion to their sovereigns." These prayers brought divine blessing on their sovereign.

The manifesto replaced the early eighteenth century with a new founding period of Russian monarchy. Pobedonostsev wrote not of the Russian state or empire, but the "Russian land" "*zemlia russkaia*." The "Russian land" evoked a Slavophile picture of the unity of all estates in Russia, a single people, living in harmony with their tsar. The people in this way became inseparable from an image of an original, undifferentiated abstraction of the land, uncorrupted by the institutions of the Russian state. The Russian land now had been disgraced by vile sedition, but "hereditary tsarist power," continued to enjoy the love of its subjects, and this power "in unbreakable ... union with Our land" had survived such troubles—*smuty*—in the past. The historical paradigm now shifts from the legend of the calling of the Varangians to a picture of an

<sup>21</sup> PSZ, Sobranie 3, no. 118, April 29, 1881.

<sup>22</sup> O. Maiorova, "Mitropolit Moskovskii Filaret v obshchestvennom soznanii kontsa XIX veka," *Lotmanovskii Sbornik*, 2 (Moscow: O.G.I., 1997), 617.

idealized Muscovite state. The elevation and glorification of the monarch now took place by claiming to inhabit another time frame, when the tsar was in contact with the nation. The distance between the ruler and educated society was the distance between him and the manifestations of the fallen present that encumbered his power. After Alexander III's death in 1894, *Moskovskie Vedomosti* described him as the initiator of a new period in Russian history, "the Russian period"; he was the "great moral gatherer of Russian land," placing him among the princes of Moscow. He had restored "Russian autocracy," which had been realized in Muscovy when the idea of autocracy received from Byzantium had gained its distinctively Russian character. If the national myth sought to divest Russian autocracy of its western trappings, it also announced the separation from its Byzantine origins, which had been emphasized under Nicholas I.<sup>23</sup>

The synchronic mode characteristic of late nineteenth-century nationalist and racial ideologies replaces the linear development of the Petrine myth. The synchronic mode was profoundly anti-traditional, for it diminished the heritage of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and delegitimized the legalistic bureaucracy, the intelligentsia, and the dynamic of reform that had reached its culmination in the previous reign. It looked back to a timeless heritage, untouched by historical change. The Russian emperor might live in Western-style palaces, consort with Western royalty, and share European culture, but these superficial overlays concealed a national substratum (*ustoi*) that could be recovered through a restoration of the earlier political and spiritual order.

The image of tsar and people expressed the close cultural and even ethnic affinity that Alexander III claimed with his subjects. Again, the persona of the emperor was displayed early in his reign, and in public ceremonial form.<sup>24</sup> Alexander III was presented as "Russian tsar" in the first months of his reign. Despite his parentage, culture, and frequent trips to Denmark, he was elevated as the embodiment of the nation. Alexander's great size, his surly and uncouth manner, his impatience with the niceties of society made it possible to present him as one alien to the educated elite, whose character was close to the Russian *narod*. Most obviously, he was the first Russian monarch since the seventeenth

<sup>23</sup> S. Petrovskii, ed., *Pamiati Imperatora Aleksandra III* (Moscow: S. Petrovskii, 1894), 175, 286.

<sup>24</sup> See *Scenarios of Power*, 2: 204-06.

century to wear a beard. While wearing beards had become fashionable among the upper classes by the 1880s, a large red beard on the face of Russian monarch was a statement of association with pre-Petrine Russia. The image of his massive figure in a Russian hat and jackboots was the antithesis of the former sleek look of the guards' regiments. It evoked the image of the *bogatyř*, the burly epic heroes of early Russia, a reaffirmation of state power, coming from within, from Russia itself.

The change was displayed in a new look given to the military. Shortly after his accession, Alexander issued permission, which was taken as an order for guards' officers to wear beards. (Guardsmen previously had been allowed only a two finger-widths unshaven strip on their chins.) Soon nearly all guards' officers appeared with beards, though some thought that this gave them the look of peasants (*omuzhichanie*). New Russian-style uniforms were introduced, including the high Russian boots and fur hats. At the same time, the guards, the paragon of Petrine westernization, were surrounded by religious symbols of old Russia. For the first time, banners of the regiments were emblazoned with icons of their patron saints. Eight-pointed Orthodox crosses appeared at the top of the flagstaffs.<sup>25</sup> V. I. Gurko later wrote that this fusion of "military and religious ceremonies" produced a feeling of elation, as the monarch became the symbol of the people's might. Such ceremonies, he wrote, were a distinguishing feature of the Russian court, which reflected the spirit of "the ancient Muscovite empire' permeated with religious and secular powers which complemented each other and formed one whole."<sup>26</sup>

The representations of the monarchy now sought to detach the image of imperial Russia from St. Petersburg and locate it in a new image of Moscow. Symbolic Moscow did not encompass modern Moscow, the city of factories, the liberal intelligentsia and often fractious nobility. It was the Moscow of the Kremlin and Red Square, recalling an idealized past of spiritual unity between tsar and people and a devotion to the autocratic ruler unsullied by foreign doubts. In the summer of 1881, less than six months after his accession, Alexander unexpectedly announced his desire to travel to Moscow. In the Kremlin, he declared, "Moscow has always served as an example for all of Russia. I hope this

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 2, 244-56.

<sup>26</sup> V.I. Gurko, *Features and Figures of the Russian Past* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1939), 340.

will be true in the future. Moscow has attested and now attests that in Russia, Tsar and people compose one, concordant (*edinodushnoe*) strong whole.”<sup>27</sup> Then, after a religious service, he stepped out onto the Red Staircase to perform the triple bow and to receive the acclaim of the crowd. (See Article 8, Figure 1).

Alexander’s coronation in 1883 confirmed his belief that he was returning Russia to its Muscovite roots. In a letter to the empress on its first anniversary, he described the coronation as a “great event for us. And it proved to a surprised and morally corrupt Europe that Russia is still the same holy, orthodox Russia as it was under the Muscovite Tsars and, if God permits, as it will remain forever.”<sup>28</sup> The new prominence of the Orthodox Church showed the persistence of “holy, orthodox Russia.” Under Pobedonostsev’s direction, the church supplanted the state as the principal national institution of the monarchy. The Holy Synod encouraged the spread of religious literature, the building of church schools, and the expansion of church construction. It permitted the spread of pastoral movements among the secular clergy. The spirit of Russia’s religious past was recalled in great religious commemorations staged to show the autocracy’s debt to Orthodoxy and the national following commanded by the church.<sup>29</sup>

A new official national style of church architecture demonstrated a return to an original Russian spirit. The government gave proof of the vitality of early Russia by building Orthodox churches in Muscovite style. Alexander himself wanted the Cathedral of the Resurrection to be built on the site of his father’s assassination in “the Russian style.” Russian style meant for him not the Thon, Moscow-Byzantine style of the Redeemer Cathedral but “the style of the times of Moscow tsars of the seventeenth century.” By this Alexander meant the flamboyant forms of Vasilii the Blessed on Moscow’s Red Square. The external

<sup>27</sup> *Vsemirnaia Illiustratsiia* no. 656 (1881): 102.

<sup>28</sup> GARF, 642-1-709, 24-25. Letter of May 16, 1884.

<sup>29</sup> Seventeen jubilee celebrations marked great religious events of Russia’s past during Alexander’s reign. The five-hundredth anniversary of the Tikhvin Mother-of-God and the centenary of the death of Tikhon Zadonskii took place in 1883. The millennium of Cyril and Methodius followed in 1885, the nine-hundredth anniversary of the baptism of Rus’ in 1888, the fiftieth anniversary of the union with the Uniates of the Northwestern region and the five-hundredth anniversary of the death of Sergei of Radonezh in 1892. See A. Iu. Polunov, *Pod vlast’iu ober-prokurora: gosudarstvo i tserkov’ v epokhu Aleksandra III* (Moscow: AIR0-XX, 1996); *Scenarios of Power*, 2: 239-44.

devices—tent forms, the tracery, *kokoshniki*, and *shirinki*—borrowed from a great number of seventeenth century churches in the Moscow-Iaroslavl style—are in great contrast with the more reserved and symmetrical forms of the Redeemer Cathedral. Although the Resurrection Cathedral, usually called “the Savior on the Blood,” was not consecrated until 1907, it provided the model for church design in the official Russian style after 1881.<sup>30</sup> (See Article 8 Figure 2). A report Pobedonostsev wrote as Chief Procurator of the Synod in the 1890s asserted that Alexander himself reviewed projects for churches and “willingly approved those projects that reproduced the ancient tradition of Russian churches.”<sup>31</sup>

The evocation of Muscovy, couched in Slavophile rhetoric and images, distanced the person of the monarch not only from westernized educated society, but from the institutions of the absolute state, encumbered by forms of European legality and institutional autonomy. For Alexander III and his advisors, the monarchy could regain its lost authority only by a signal rejection of more recent governing traditions, which had enervated and constrained the exercise of autocratic power. The Russian tsar now embodied not the existing state, but the nation, existing from distant times, and it was his personal authority, wielded with diminished regard for legal and bureaucratic formalities, that could bring about the spiritual union between tsar and people.

The seventeenth century provided a paradigm for a state power of a different type, a government responsive to the monarch’s will that could reunite an administration divided by considerations of legality and institutional autonomy. The manifesto of April 29, 1881 associated the origins of the Russian nation with the restoration of monarchical authority after the breakdown of the Time of Troubles. The “Voice of God” (“Glas Bozhii”) had summoned the tsar “to turn vigorously to the task of Ruling, with hope in Divine Providence.” He would rule, he promised, “with faith in the force and truth of Autocratic power, which we have been summoned to confirm and preserve for the people’s welfare from all encroachments.” The word “vigorously,” (*bodro*) bespoke an assertion of energetic, ruthless authority, inspired by the faith in God and the prayers of the people.

<sup>30</sup> *Scenarios of Power*, 2: 244-56

<sup>31</sup> Polunov, *Pod vlast'iu ober-prokurora*, 76.



*Bodro* became a common term in the rhetoric of conservative periodicals in the call for reaffirmation of autocratic power. Alexander's stern and brooding mien, his brusqueness and crudity, presented him as a model of that era, an incarnation of unyielding will and determination. He sought to restore early Russian autocracy by making the spheres of government directly responsive to his wishes—police, finances, and foreign policy. These spheres would be directed by men completely loyal to him, those he regarded as truly Russian. The elite of Russian monarchy now narrowed to those sharing the tsar's national vision, who were endowed with energy and shared Alexander's arrogance of untrammelled power. Together, he and his servitors created an image of strength that exalted Russian monarchy when the empire's international standing had declined, its finances were in disorder, and many high officials cherished a sense of legality that challenged the totality of autocratic rule.

The anti-bureaucratic rhetoric that the Slavophiles had used to denounce the entire state administration now served to discredit those parts of the government resistant to the personal power of the monarch, especially the State Council and the court system. The contrast with Nicholas I's Official Nationality, which validated the perfection and reinforcement of the existing administrative system, is clear. An article in *Moskovskie Vedomosti* upon Alexander III's death remarked that the official nationality under Nicholas I remained some kind of "state patriotism," "*kazennyi patriotizm*" and "was not embodied in living phenomena." Nicholas I "was not yet conscious with full clarity of the complete separation between Russia and Europe by type, was not conscious of the complete distinction of Russian autocracy from Western European monarchism."<sup>32</sup>

The model for Alexander III's national state was set forth in the pages of *Russkii Vestnik* by Mikhail Katkov's protégé, the Simbirsk landlord, Alexander Pazukhin. Pazukhin evoked a seventeenth-century Russian state based on close cooperation between nobility and bureaucracy, where noblemen served as willing executors rather than as independent citizens. For Pazukhin, the seventeenth century was a period of administrative consolidation and growing state power in Russia. The "land" *zemlia* comprised for him not a community of the people, as it had for the Slavophiles, but the "state ranks" (*gosudarstvennye chiny*). "The estate organization in the mind of the old

<sup>32</sup> Petrovskii, ed., *Pamiati Imperatora Aleksandra III*, 288-89.

Russian person was the guarantee of order and tranquility in the country.” Peter was not the founder but the beneficiary of an estate system that he used to bring Russia closer to the West.<sup>33</sup>

The Slavophile picture of the seventeenth-century served to delegitimize the post-reform state with its striving for legality and autonomy. Pazukhin’s writings provided a historical paradigm for counter-reforms that aimed to extend the authority of the monarch, through administrative institutions of the Ministry of Interior, to the local landed nobility, reconstituting the personal bond between the monarch and the estates that had presumably existed in seventeenth-century Russia. The national myth also provided historical grounding for the enhancement of the role of Russian religion and language in the governing of subject nationalities. It announced a break with the old model of a multinational elite—a group united by service to their sovereign, and a common domination over subject nationalities, among whom the Russian people were exemplary in their devotion and subservience. Now, the non-Russian elites could no longer be trusted. The national autocracy identified loyalty and administrative effectiveness with Russian ethnicity and Russian domination of other nationalities. In the western provinces and Poland the new myth justified policies of Russification, while in Central Asia they provided a rationale for a Russian colonial administration ruling over subject nationalities.

To be sure, few of these goals were realized during Alexander III’s brief reign. Pobedonostsev’s schemes to reinvigorate the clergy as agents of national consciousness foundered on his policies of central administrative control of the activities of the church. The counter-reforms were resisted and in many ways emasculated in the State Council. The Petrine state asserted itself in the persons of the liberal bureaucrats and noblemen from the reform era, who continued to oppose changes in government particularly in the State Council and the Senate. Efforts at Russification in most areas encountered practical obstacles in the local nobilities and administration and fell short of their

<sup>33</sup> A. D. Pazukhin, “Sovremennoe sostoianie Rossii i soslovnyi vopros,” *Russkii Vestnik* (January 1885): 41-47. Alfred Rieber has suggested that Pazukhin’s text may date from as early as 1881. This would indicate that his rhetoric and historical imagery was rooted in Alexander’s scenario as it was presented in the first years of the reign. See *Merchants and Entrepreneurs in Imperial Russia* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1982), 95n.

original goals. In many areas, they awakened the national consciousness and stimulated opposition among the subject nationalities.

The national myth continued to define the goals and to represent the symbolic reality of autocratic Russia after Alexander's death in 1894. Nicholas II saw himself not as heroic westernized ruler, asserting his power through the Petrine state, but as exemplar of the nation, and unlike his father he did not envision a new administration or officials in the image of Pobedonostsev's ideal officials. Nicholas's distrust of governmental officials was visceral—more profound, all-encompassing, and undifferentiated than his father's. In the first years of the twentieth century, the imperial Russian state came under challenge both from a growing opposition movement demanding constitutional reform, and a no less insurgent monarch, determined to create a form of personal rule that would express his direct bonds with the Russian people, the peasants.<sup>34</sup>

Russian monarchical nationalism presented appeals to counter democratic ideologies, seeking to thwart the transition from dynastic to civic nationalism that had taken place in the West. National narratives first evoked a past that presented the westernized autocracy as the object of the Russian people's desire for strong authority imposed from above. Later, they emphasized the Russian character of the tsar, who restored strong autocratic rule based on an original unity between tsar and people that had been destroyed by western thought and culture. The image of national monarch sustained the mythical aura of the emperor. It helped preserve forms of mythical thinking that precluded any hint of dissent or politics that might mar the epic unity and silence of the myth by admitting negotiation and compromise.

Monarchical nationalism in Russia proved a potent factor impeding the rise of a democratic nationalism that might unite state and society. This became clear after the revolution of 1905, when efforts to work within the conservative framework of the Third and Fourth Dumas encountered Nicholas II's stubborn distrust and resistance. The great historical celebrations that took place between 1909 and 1913, and especially the Tercentenary celebrations of 1913, he believed, showed that the people were devoted to him and not to elective institutions. Civic or even ethnic concepts of the unity of the Russian nation could not be reconciled with a narrative that emphasized the historical bonds of the people with the

<sup>34</sup> See *Scenarios of Power*, 2, Chapter 11.

monarch. The popular, conservative Russian nationalism that began to spread through moderate society after the revolution of 1905 appeared to Nicholas II as merely another threat to the unity of tsar and people contributing to division and strife in Russian society. On the other hand, liberal thinkers and political leaders found it difficult to disengage concepts of nationality from the institution that represented a backward and oppressive order. The various groups in Russian society could find little grounds for unity on the eve of a massive war that demanded the common efforts of a united nation.



## 8. Moscow and Petersburg: The Problem of Political Center in Tsarist Russia, *1881-1914*



Edward Shils's and Clifford Geertz's concept of political center raises interesting questions when applied to societies containing diverse and even conflicting symbolic traditions. In such cases, ceremonial activity defining the political center may clash with the expectations and beliefs of parts of society and cast doubt on the sacredness of the existing political system. The last decades of the Russian autocracy reveal such a situation of symbolic uncertainty, which both reflected and influenced the political strife of the era. A change in the values and traditions the autocracy celebrated made the nature and location of the political center problematic. The definition of symbolic political center inevitably affected the prestige of the capital, the administrative and political center of the empire. The tsar, by depriving the capital of his personal aura, gave sanction to a historical and symbolic tradition that in many respects was at odds with the government through which he ruled. His ceremonial activity gave visual expression to the old problem of the two capitals—Moscow and St. Petersburg—and created uncertainties about the very nature of Russian autocracy.

“St. Petersburg is the fundamental symbol of imperial Russia,” Vladimir Veidlé wrote.<sup>1</sup> Peter the Great had bestowed the overwhelming force of his personality on his city, and his successors continued to reside in the capital, and lead its ceremonies and celebrations. St. Petersburg was the residence of the emperor, and the ceremonial life of the capital centered on his person. As absolute monarch, he represented the incarnation of secular power engaged in the strengthening and advancement of the nation. At the great occasions of the

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<sup>1</sup> V. Veidlé, *Zadacha Rossii* (New York: Chekhov Publishing House, 1956), 213.

capital, he appeared in pomp and splendor, the exemplar of the values of the social and political elite.

The imperial court was the ceremonial center of the administration. Those who had achieved high rank witnessed or participated in the ritual life of the imperial family in the Winter Palace. The principal ceremonies—the imperial processions, the New Year and Easter functions, the Blessing of the Waters—were visible expressions of the shared concerns and the bonds of personal fealty that united the tsar with his officialdom.

The parade fields were the ceremonial center of the military. There the tsar bestowed his attention upon his troops and gave them inspiring gestures of supreme approval. They in turn gave him rousing exclamations of loyalty, and performed virtuoso displays of posture, marching, and riding. The officers who stood or rode by his side felt a common lot and shared military ethos with the emperor. The tsar knew all personally and usually addressed them with the familiar *ty*, encompassing them in the charmed circle of his associates. “For all of us,” a guards officer living in the provinces wrote, “Petersburg was the enchanting residence of the Tsar. And everyone who traveled to Petersburg was considered one of the elect, who could expect the happiness of being close to the Tsar.”<sup>2</sup>

Imperial ceremonies had a secular emphasis: They celebrated the tsar’s worldly preeminence. Even when the occasions were religious, attention focused on the celebration rather than the occasion, on the imperial figures rather than the religious services performed on that day. It was the procession from the imperial chambers to the palace church that displayed the tsar and his family on their way to worship. At Easter, the greetings in the Winter Palace and the great balls provided the moments of imperial grandeur, not the services themselves. The emperor worshiped in a relatively modest setting. Then he reigned like a demigod over the festivities.

St. Petersburg was the emperor’s city and the emperor was a visible presence in its streets. Nicholas I and Alexander II walked or rode through the capital without a convoy until 1879, when revolutionary terrorism put Alexander’s life in danger. The security and inviolability of the emperor in his city were signs of his preeminence. Invulnerable among his subjects, he could openly confront them. The mythology of autocracy extolled the emperor’s accessibility. The tsar, strolling through the capital or in the gardens of the capital, met an unfortunate and set his grievances right.

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<sup>2</sup> Col. Paul Brunelli, “Moia letopis’,” Manuscript, Hoover Archive, 14.

The coronation remained the principal ceremony of Moscow. Since Peter the Great, it expressed the continuity between the old and new capitals. It enacted what Geertz describes as the ruler's taking possession of his land; the all-Russian emperor took possession of his Muscovite heritage. Though the church ritual remained faithful to the Muscovite original, the trappings—the regalia, clothing, and festive events—were those of Petersburg, unveiled in their greatest splendor to dazzle the old capital. The coronation marked the old capital's recognition of the preeminence of the new.

Nonetheless, Moscow retained the image of national capital. Both cities were called “capitals” and Moscow the first or original capital (*pervoprestol'naia stolitsa*), where the throne had been initially located. The emperors and empresses paid homage to Moscow on gala visits, when the court revealed its sumptuous panoply in the cathedrals and palaces of the old capital. These visits were also reassertions of Petersburg's primacy. The social and religious events expressed the autocrat's connections with the national heritage. The court's departure left feelings of emptiness and abandonment that confirmed Moscow's secondary position. Prince Mikhail Shcherbatov captured this sense when he personified Moscow as a forsaken widow. Her sovereigns' presence only expressed their displeasure. “No sooner do they arrive in the city which is the ancient capital of their forefathers than they hasten to leave it, in order to return merrily to the shores of the Neva.”<sup>3</sup>

After the Napoleonic invasion, Moscow became the center of patriotic and romantic sentiment. The rebuilding of the old capital and its intellectual development accompanied a new national pride reflected in all aspects of Russian culture and thought. The existence of two capitals troubled the awakened national consciousness. “Two capitals cannot flourish equally in one and the same state just as two hearts cannot exist in the human body,” Pushkin wrote.<sup>4</sup>

During the 1840s and the 1850s, the question of Russia's capital became the subject of extended debate between the Slavophiles and Westernizers. The Slavophiles defended Moscow as the true capital. “Moscow is the capital of the Russian people,” Constantine Aksakov declared. “Petersburg is only

<sup>3</sup> Mikhail M. Shcherbatov, “Petition of the City of Moscow on Being Relegated to Oblivion,” in Marc Raeff, ed., *Russian Intellectual History: An Anthology* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1966), 53.

<sup>4</sup> Quoted in M. Perkal', *Gertsen v Peterburge* (Leningrad: Lenizdat, 1971), 158.

the residence of the emperor,” suggesting that in Russia, the presence of the ruler was not sufficient to establish the political center.<sup>5</sup> They emphasized St. Petersburg’s alien spirit and impermanence. Ivan Aksakov called it “the negative moment of history,” which “cannot create anything *positive* in the Russian sense.” A return to the positive was possible only through “the negation of Petersburg as a political principle.”<sup>6</sup> Alexander Herzen, before he fell under Belinskii’s influence, felt similar misgivings. For him, St. Petersburg was a city that “had neither a history nor a future,” that each autumn awaited “the squall that would submerge it,” a reference to the legend that St. Petersburg was doomed to sink into the swamp from which it had arisen.<sup>7</sup> Conservative intellectuals like Vasilii Zhukovskii and Mikhail Pogodin frequently expressed their preference for the old capital, which they thought represented the true center of the nation.<sup>8</sup> Moscow was the “heart of Russia.”

The emperors also showed recognition of Moscow’s national character. In the eighteenth century, Peter the Great and Catherine the Great often visited Moscow to celebrate victories. Nicholas I’s trips to Moscow were occasions for displays of national sentiment. Nicholas’s appearances at the Kremlin cathedrals and other shrines were described at length and extolled in the official press. But the recognition was fleeting, and the visits served as much to display the western character of the Moscow elite as the national sentiments of the court. Thus in 1849, Nicholas decided to spend Easter week in Moscow—the only occasion of an imperial visit for the holiday in the nineteenth century. But the principal reason for the emperor’s presence was the dedication of the new, neoclassical Kremlin palace. And the principal event, in the eyes of all except nationalist writers like Pogodin and Shevryev, was the great masquerade at the palace of

<sup>5</sup> Aleksandr Gertsen, *Byloe i dumy* (Moscow: Gos. Izd. Khudozhestvennoi Literatury, 1962) 1:470; on the evolution of the Petersburg myth in general, see N. Antsyferov, *Dusha Peterburga* (Paris: YMCA Press, 1978); See also “Petersburg and Moscow as Cultural Symbols,” in Theophanis George Stavrou, ed. Sidney Monas, *Art and Architecture in Nineteenth-Century Russia* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1983), 26-39.

<sup>6</sup> Nicholas V. Riasanovsky, *Russia and the West in the Teaching of the Slavophiles* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1965), 66.

<sup>7</sup> A. I. Gertsen, *Sobranie sochinenii* (Moscow: Ak. Nauk, SSSR, 1954), 2:34.

<sup>8</sup> See for example M. Pogodin, *Istoriko-kriticheskie otryvki*, 131-59; V. A. Zhukovskii, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii* (St. Petersburg: Marks, 1902), 12:155.



Governor-General Zakrevskii. Indeed, Nicholas showed his contempt for the unguarded expressions of national taste that accompanied his visit. He remained true to the western institutional and military values that centered in St. Petersburg.<sup>9</sup>

During the reform era, political conflict began to disturb the quiet of St. Petersburg. Emperor Alexander II and Empress Maria Aleksandrovna increasingly regarded the city with distaste and preferred the solitude of their rural palaces. In 1858, Alexander wrote to his mother of his wish to get away from the capital, “whose atmosphere is more or less gangrened.” In 1861, he referred to “the gangrened population of the capital” in a letter to his sister. The empress warned her son, Grand Duke Vladimir, of “the bad influences of idle and dissolute youth, which swarm in Petersburg.”<sup>10</sup> At the same time, conservative nationalist writers depicted St. Petersburg as the symbol of all destructive western influence. Constantine Leontiev, writing of the decomposition of “Petrine models,” asserted that the “sooner Petersburg becomes something in the nature of a Baltic Sevastopol or a Baltic Odessa, the better it will be, I maintain, not only for us but probably also for so-called humanity.”<sup>11</sup> Leontiev dreamt of Constantinople as capital. Alexander III’s tutor, Constantine Pobedonostsev, felt uncomfortable in Petersburg and expressed his preferences for Moscow. As tsarevich, Alexander III associated with the “Russian party” in Moscow and supported its nationalist and protectionist program. He also felt ill at ease in the court life of the capital. He wrote to Pobedonostsev in 1880 of his longing “to be far from all the vileness of city life and especially Petersburg.”<sup>12</sup>

But until the beginning of the 1880s, these sentiments remained private and did not affect the ceremonial activity of the members of the imperial family. They continued to appear at reviews, balls, and receptions and

<sup>9</sup> N.P. Barsukov, *Zhizn' i trudy M. P. Pogodina*, vol. 10 (St. Petersburg: A. Semen, 1896), 220-53.

<sup>10</sup> Alexander II to Alexandra Fedorovna, April 20, 1857, GARF, 728-1-2496, p. 65; Alexander II to Olga Nikolaevna, October 8, 1861, GARF, 728-1-26123, p. 4; Mariia Aleksandrovna to Vladimir Aleksandrovich, November 16, 1871, Houghton Library, BMS Russian, pp. 26, 35.

<sup>11</sup> Konstantin Leontiev, *Against the Current* (New York: Weybright and Talley, 1969), 208-09.

<sup>12</sup> “Pis'mo Tsesarevicha Aleksandra Aleksandovicha k K.P. Pobedonostsevy,” *Starina i Novizna* (1902), 5:1.

remained visible in the streets of the capital. Only in the last two decades of the nineteenth century did the emperor begin to withdraw his presence from the city. At this point, Petersburg, which had never enjoyed the reputation of national capital, began to lose the aura that attached to it as residence of the tsar as well. There took place a shifting of allegiance, as the emperor, appearing as Russian tsar, increasingly associated himself with the old capital and the national feelings it evoked.

The turning point in this respect was the assassination of Alexander II at the Catherine Canal in Petersburg on 1 March 1881. The murder of the tsar as he rode to his weekly review of the guards of the capital destroyed the image of St. Petersburg as the emperor's own city. No longer could he appear in its streets as if in an Olympian enclave. With the assassination, the sense of the tsar's inviolability died as well, much as it had in France with the execution of Louis XVI.<sup>13</sup> The emperor was no longer visible or accessible in his capital. Alexander III retreated to the suburban palace of Gatchina, which, surrounded by cordons of guards, became the imperial residence. The tsar came to be known as "the prisoner" (*uznik*).

But more than the tsar's security was jeopardized. The act represented a profanation of the imperial city. St. Petersburg became in the eyes of some "a defiled, disgraced and indecent place for the residence of the Sovereign." There were suggestions, especially in the Moscow press, that the capital be moved to Moscow.<sup>14</sup> But they were hardly taken seriously in official spheres. St. Petersburg remained the capital, but it was St. Petersburg without the signs of its preeminence, divested of its charisma. The ceremonial acts and events that distinguished the capital lapsed or lost their symbolic force. The tsar became increasingly suspicious of the administration, regarding bureaucrats with their legalistic and practical preoccupations as threats to his authority. The capital ceased to appear as the political center even as the administration became larger, more assertive, and unyielding. The blocks of massive government edifices were deprived of their sacred aura once the imperial favor

<sup>13</sup> Michael Walzer, *Regicide and Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974), 5, 13-14, 35-42.

<sup>14</sup> V. V. Voikov, "Poslednie dni Imperatora Aleksandra II i votsarenie Imperatora Aleksandra III," *Izvestiia Tambovskoi Uchenoi Arkhivnoi Komissii*, Vyp. 54 (Tambov, 1911), 102; F. A. Wellesley, *With the Russians in Peace and War* (London: E. Nash, 1905), 90-91.

became ambiguous. Then St. Petersburg began to lose its reason for existence. It became a phantasmic presence in the world of the symbolists, a signifier without a signified.

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Alexander III preferred a simple life of solitude in the country. The descriptions of him, chopping wood early in the morning at Gatchina, wearing a checked Russian shirt and Russian boots, playing with animals and children, presented the tsar as “of the same rough texture as the great majority of his subjects.”<sup>15</sup> Like Peter the Great, he broke with the established culture of the elite and, by taking on features of the common man, withdrew his support from its pretensions. His open impatience with the amenities and trappings of court functions was a public repudiation of the capital and its values. “Not loving external glitter, superfluous luxury, and blinding splendor, the late sovereign did not live in the Great Winter Palace,” a columnist of *Moskovskie Vedomosti* wrote after his death.<sup>16</sup> But Alexander III did not follow Peter’s example and impose his own cultural mode. Rather he withdrew into his solitary, simple, private life, and participated, albeit half-heartedly, in the social and ceremonial functions of the capital.

Alexander III conscientiously resumed the events of the social season after the years of revolutionary crisis. But it was the empress who was the spirit of these occasions. A charming and convivial hostess, Maria Fedorovna loved to dance and socialize, while the emperor preferred to withdraw to a game of cards. Alexander was an awkward and forbidding presence, who intimidated his intimates and did not seek their affection or admiration. “His manner is cold, constrained, abrupt, and so suggestive of churlishness as often to deprive spontaneous favors of the honey of friendship for the sake of which they are accorded,” the London Times correspondent Charles Lowe wrote.<sup>17</sup> He immediately curtailed the military ceremonials in St. Petersburg that had remained prominent events during his father’s reign. He discontinued the popular Sunday reviews of the guards in the Manege and the spring parades.

<sup>15</sup> Charles Lowe, *Alexander III of Russia* (New York: MacMillan, 1895), 322.

<sup>16</sup> S. Petrovskii, ed., *Pamiati Imperatora Aleksandra III* (Moscow: S. Petrovskii, 1894), 318-19.

<sup>17</sup> Lowe, *Alexander III*, 330; Vera Galitzine, *Reminiscences d’une émigrée* (Paris: n.p., 1925), 70-71.

Occasions for drill became increasingly infrequent, and owing to the new, drab, Russian style uniforms that he introduced, proved uninspiring.<sup>18</sup>

Nicholas II also made no secret of his dislike of St. Petersburg. He longed to move the capital, though he had the Crimea and not Moscow in mind.<sup>19</sup> In the first years of his reign, he endeavored to live at the Winter Palace and carry on the traditional social obligations of emperor. But he too felt ill at ease in public, and the Empress Alexandra abhorred public occasions and had none of her mother-in-law's social grace or charm. She immediately discontinued the empress's small dinners for members of the court, which had kept the imperial family in touch with court society.<sup>20</sup> The imperial family spent increasingly prolonged periods at Tsarskoe Selo.

Nicholas II, unlike his father, loved the parade grounds and felt in his element among the officers' corps. He resumed the spring parades and replaced the simple Russian style uniforms of his father's reign with new imposing ones reminiscent of earlier splendor. But his association with the military was, for the most part, not visible in the capital. He joined the officers in their regimental breakfasts and dinners. The center of military ceremony shifted from the capital to the camp at Krasnoe Selo, where maneuvers and parades united the tsar with his elite troupes in a holy ceremony, followed by brilliant social occasions.<sup>21</sup> But even when military exercises and celebrations took place in the capital, the mood had changed. The *champs de mars*, the scene of the great parades and popular entertainments, now had a mortuary atmosphere about it. "It is surrounded by objects calculated to bring back recollections of the saddest nature," the English military attaché noted.<sup>22</sup> A hundred yards from the northeast corner was the votive chapel on the site of Karakozov's attempt on Alexander II's life. To the southeast was the Engineering Castle, where Emperor Paul, the father of two nineteenth-century emperors, had been murdered. To the southwest, a chapel and later a cathedral was erected on the spot of Alexander's assassination, worshiped as a sacred shrine to his

<sup>18</sup> B. V. Gerua, *Vospominaniia o moei zhizni* (Paris: Tanais, 1969), 1:81.

<sup>19</sup> A. A. Mosolov, *Pri dvore Poslednego Rossiiskogo Imperatora* (Moscow: Ankor, 1993), 27.

<sup>20</sup> Carl Graf Moy, *Als Diplomat am Zarenhof* (Munich: Prestel, 1971), 208.

<sup>21</sup> Allan K. Wildman, *The End of the Russian Imperial Army: The Old Army and the Soldiers' Revolt (March-April 1917)* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980) 6-7; P. N. Krasnov, *Pavloniy* (Paris: Izd. Glav. pravleniē zarubezhnago soiuza russkikh voennykh invalidov, 1943), 51-73.

<sup>22</sup> Wellesley, *With the Russians*, 32-33.

martyrdom. Petersburg had become the scene of the emperors' mortality not their immortality, recalling their tragedies rather than their triumphs.

Moscow, "the holy city," represented the traditional religious values that the ideologists of autocracy now extolled. Constantine Pobedonostsev, chief procurator of the Holy Synod, emphasized the role of the Russian Orthodox Church in the preservation of the authority and prestige of autocratic government. He named the principal statement of his political views *Moscow Collection* (*Moskovskii Sbornik*—the English translation is entitled *Reflections of a Russian Statesman*). After the assassination, attempts were made to give St. Petersburg something of the appearance of Moscow. Alien, western influences were to be dispelled; the capital was to be sanctified by making it more like Moscow, by Muscovitizing St. Petersburg. The first expression of this tendency was the cathedral built to consecrate the site of Alexander II's assassination on the Catherine Canal. The official announcement for the architectural competition specified that it was to be in the "national" style. The architects submitting projects followed the earlier official definition of "national," decreed by Nicholas I; that is the neo-Byzantine manner of the Assumption Cathedral in the Kremlin (see Figure 1). Alexander III was displeased and declared that the temple should be built in the "style of the time of the Moscow tsars of the seventeenth century."<sup>23</sup>

The architect, Alfred Parland, unlike the others in the competition, understood what Alexander meant—the flamboyant national architecture of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, or, more specifically, Vasilii the Blessed. Assisted by Father Ignatii, the abbot of the Trinity-Sergeev Hermitage at Peterhof, Parland drew up plans for the Temple of the Resurrection of Christ or, as it came to be called, the Savior on the Blood, as a copy of Vasilii the Blessed. Its multicolored intricate decorations and mosaics introduced a strange contrast to the other great cathedrals of the capital—the Kazan Cathedral and St. Isaacs, both replicas of St. Peter's Basilica in Rome. The effect in the neoclassical city was less than felicitous, creating what one authority described as "a troubling dissonance"<sup>24</sup> (see Figure 2).

<sup>23</sup> *Moskovskie Vedomosti*, April 9, 1882.

<sup>24</sup> *Khram Voskreseniia Khristova sooruzhennyi na meste smertel'nogo poraneniia v boze pochivshogo Imperatora Aleksandra II na ekaterinskom kanale v S-Petersburge* (St. Petersburg: R. Golike and S. Vil'borg, n.p., 1907), 2; Louis Réau, *Saint Petersburg*, 67-68.



*Figure 1.*  
Imperial Procession of Alexander III  
and Maria Fedorovna from the Assumption Cathedral, July 17, 1881.  
Lithograph, *Vsemirnaia Illiustratsiia*, No. 658 (1881)

The interior itself was a strange cultural amalgam. The design followed not the warren of Vasilii the Blessed, but the traditional open cruciform space of the Byzantine cathedral. The walls were covered by frescoes, among them works of Victor Vasnetsov and Mikhail Nesterov. The pavement stained with the emperor's blood was kept under a flamboyant canopy in seventeenth-century style. The enormous donations allowed no expense to be spared for a temple which "surpasses all the churches of Petersburg in its sumptuousness." It was illuminated by 1,589 electric lights and even equipped with steam heat.<sup>25</sup>

Nicholas II shared his father's taste for a national style in architecture and introduced more Muscovite motifs into the Petersburg landscape. He had the new neoclassical building of the School Council of the Holy Synod remodeled into the Alexander Nevskii Temple-Monument in memory of Alexander III. The architect, Alexander Pomerantsev, made over the right side of the building in imitation of an Old Russian church at Borisoglebsk. The neoclassical lines and symmetrical disposition of windows were now decorated with an old-Russian portal, mosaic frescoes, and tracery. Five onion-form cupolas and a tent-style steeple rose above the flat rectangular roof. Inside, paintings with "a religious-moral meaning" depicted the lives of Nevskii, St. Sergei, and other princes and saints of old Russia.<sup>26</sup> The Tercentenary Cathedral, dedicated in 1914, was an explicit and exact copy of Rostov church architecture of the seventeenth century. At Tsarskoe Selo, Nicholas had the Fedorov Cathedral built for the empress in imitation of the Annunciation Cathedral in the Kremlin, though with seventeenth-century elements to give it a more national appearance.<sup>27</sup>

Nicholas also tried to bring Moscow into his own life and the life of the Petersburg court. If his father's national persona was the peasant-tsar, Nicholas's was the Muscovite tsar wearing the vestments and performing the Byzantine ceremonies of the seventeenth century. Like his father, he enjoyed reading about Russia's early history. But lacking Alexander's practical disposition, he was given to imagining himself in roles and situations of the past, especially

<sup>25</sup> *Khram Voskreseniia Khristova*, passim; Réau, *Saint Petersburg*, 68; Grigorii Moskvich, *Petrograd i ego okrestnosti* (Petrograd: Izd. G. Moskvich, 1915), 103.

<sup>26</sup> K. Korol'kov, *Tsar' mirotvorets, Imperator Aleksandr III* (Kiev: n.p., 1904), 57-60; *Niva* no. 13 (1901): 259.

<sup>27</sup> *Niva* no. 5 (1914): 97; Alexandre Spiridovitch, *Les dernières années de la cour de Tsarskoe selo* (Paris: Payot, 1928-29), 2:253-62; "The Feodoroff Imperial Cathedral in Zarskoe Selo," typescript in New York Public Library, Slavonic Division, 135.

when political difficulties began to multiply. Muscovite autocracy came to represent for him the ideal polity that existed in harmony with all classes of the population. It was a fantasy of government free from conflict, the ruler obeyed and loved by his subjects.<sup>28</sup>

For his model, Nicholas looked to Tsar Alexei Mikhailovich, the most tranquil tsar, who could rely on his own judgments without struggling against the heads of administrative institutions or challenges from political movements. He appropriately chose the name Alexei for his son. The Minister of Interior, Sipiagin, artfully played upon and encouraged Nicholas's predilections. He had the minister's chambers in the neoclassical building of the ministry redesigned to resemble the Hall of Facets in the Kremlin and longed to receive the tsar with Muscovite ritual and hospitality. When Nicholas accepted his invitation, he ordered an elaborate Russian feast with a gypsy orchestra from Moscow. The day before the event was to take place, Sipiagin was felled by an assassin's bullet.<sup>29</sup>

The most spectacular recreation of the seventeenth century was the gala costume ball of 1903. Nicholas viewed this as no mere masquerade, but as a first step toward restoring Muscovite court ritual and dress. Seventeenth-century attire was mandatory. Museums were searched for pictures, artists and couturiers were hired to make costumes at enormous cost. Courtiers came as boiars, *okol'nichie*, and other service ranks of Muscovy. The ladies wore seventeenth-century gowns studded with their ancestral jewels. The officers of the guards were dressed as *strel'tsy*, the musketeers of old Russia. Nicholas wore a brocaded processional robe and crown of Alexei, Alexandra a gown brocaded in silver, a miter, and a huge emerald pendant surrounded with diamonds.<sup>30</sup>

"The court looked very pretty filled with ancient Russian people," Nicholas wrote in his diary. The event was so huge a success that it was repeated for the dowager, who had been abroad, and members of the diplomatic corps, who attended in their usual evening dress. A deluxe two-volume album was

<sup>28</sup> L. G. Zakharova, "Krizis samoderzhaviiia nakanune revoliutsii 1905 goda," *Voprosy Istorii*, no. 8 (1978): 130-32; A. A. Polovtsov, "Dnevnik," *Krasnyi Arkhiv*, no. 3 (1923): 99-100; Alexandre Iswolsky, *Mémoires* (Paris: Payot, 1923), 271-72.

<sup>29</sup> Zakharova, "Krizis," 130-32; S. E. Kryzhanovskii, *Vospominaniia* (Berlin: Petropolis, n.d.), 192-93, 206-8.

<sup>30</sup> Grand Duchess Maria Georgievna, "Memoirs," manuscript in personal collection of David Chavchavadze, 129-32; V. N. Voikov, *S tsarem i bez tsaria* (Helsinki: n.p., 1936), 38-39.



published with photographs of all the guests in their costumes, identified with their twentieth- and seventeenth-century ranks. But the court regarded the ball as little more than an enchanting diversion, and the forbidding expense of adopting Muscovite dress discouraged further experiments of this type. Soon after, the Russo-Japanese War and then the revolution of 1905 brought a halt to all social and ceremonial life in the capital.<sup>31</sup>

St. Petersburg remained impervious to Muscovite influence. To express their attachment to Moscow, Alexander III and Nicholas II visited the old capital. There they sought to enter communion (*obshchenie*) with what they viewed as the faithful masses of the Russian people. Alexander III first envisaged a Zemskii Sobor, an assembly of 3,000 to 4,000 deputies, most of them peasants, which was to meet with the tsar in the Church of the Redeemer in Moscow. Pobedonostsev and other advisers, however, quickly discouraged this scheme. Instead, the communion was to be expressed in ceremonial form. The tsar, visiting the shrines of the Kremlin, received the adulation of the faithful, which replaced institutional expressions of support for autocracy.<sup>32</sup>

The first of these visits took place only a few months after Alexander III's accession. In July 1881, during the maneuvers at Krasnoe Selo, the tsar abruptly announced his intention to travel to Moscow. At the Kremlin, where he bowed to the people and received the traditional greetings of the estates, he demonstrated his unity (*edinenie*) with the first capital. (Figure 1 and Article 6, Figure 1.) He declared, "The Late Little? Father (*batiushka*) expressed his gratitude many times to Moscow for her devotion. Moscow has always served as an example for all of Russia. I hope this will be true in the future. Moscow has attested and now attests that in Russia, Tsar and people comprise one, concordant [*edinodushnoe*] whole."<sup>33</sup> (See Figure 1.)

The gratitude to Moscow for its devotion contrasted with the disdain Alexander had shown toward St. Petersburg. The acclaim he received in the Kremlin on this and subsequent visits was taken by the devotees of autocracy as a national mandate. On the steps of the "red porch" in the Kremlin, the

<sup>31</sup> Zakharova, "Krizis," 131; Maria Georgievna, "Memoirs," 132; V. N. Voeikov, *S tsarem*, 39; *Al'bom kostiumirovannogo bala v Zimnem Dvortse v fevrale 1903 g.* (St. Petersburg, [publisher] 1904); Mosolov, *Pri dvore Imperatora*, 18.

<sup>32</sup> P. A. Zaionchkovskii, *Krizis samoderzhaviiia na rubezhe 1870-kh—1880kh godov* (Moscow: Moscow University, 1964), 450-60.

<sup>33</sup> *Vsemirnaia Illiustratsiia*, no. 656 (1881): 102.



Figure 2.

The Cathedral of the Resurrection of Christ "on the Blood."

A. A. Parland, *Khram Voskreseniia Khristova* (St. Petersburg: n.p. 1907)

Lithograph, *Vsemirnaia Illiustratsiia*, No. 658 (1881)

tsar heard thunderous hoorahs, the ringing of bells, a salute. He bowed in acknowledgment. Voeikov, an officer of the Uhlans, indicated the great significance of the gesture. “This is a custom unique to the world—the autocratic tsar bows to his faithful subject people. This custom is the sacrament of the communion of the tsar with his people.” Such rhapsodic accounts as well as prints of the highlights of the tsar’s visit appeared in popular periodicals. The cover page of *Vsemirnaia Iliustratsiia* showed Alexander and the empress receiving the acclaim of the crowd before the Assumption Cathedral in the Kremlin.<sup>34</sup> (See Article 6, Figure 1.)

From Moscow, Alexander traveled through the old towns along the Volga “from the most ancient times consecrated by devotion to Russia, where after the great troubles of the XVII century, true Russian people elected the Romanov house to the throne.” The tsar now sought to renew the original mandate of 1613, to root his rule in the feelings of the people of the Russian heartland. He followed the itinerary that he had taken three times as tsarevich. He visited Nizhnii-Novgorod, the gathering point of the militia of 1612, and Kostroma, the location of the Romanov votchina where Michael and mother were in hiding in 1613. The jubilation, Voeikov wrote, provided the tsar with a sense of popular, national support. “He drew from these outpourings of the people, these historical shrines alive with their past, the necessary strength and faith to pacify and uplift the Russian State, preserved and given to him by God.”<sup>35</sup>

Alexander on this and subsequent trips was no longer the sovereign proceeding through his land to take possession of it by displays of grandeur and majesty. Rather, he returned to the historical center in order to reveal his bond with the old monuments and symbols, once the new had become treacherous and threatening. He was expressing his sense of belonging to the Muscovite origins of the Russian empire and distancing himself from its St. Petersburg phase. St. Petersburg, the symbol of rational power containing the disorderly elements of Russia, had lost its force as a source of authority. The tsar rather found justification for his rule in the elemental devotion of the simple people of Russia to their sovereign and to the order and might that he represented.

The coronation of the tsar, taking place in Moscow, now became an event, declaring the new national, religious sense of authority to Russia and

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> V. V. Voeikov, “Poslednie,” 151-54.

the world. The official accounts of Alexander III's coronation in 1883 stressed the national and popular character of the celebration. They presented it as far more than the traditional conferral of God's blessings on the tsar's rule. The Church now represented the Russian people. The official album described the coronation as "an all-national event which expressed the historical union of the Sovereign with his State, his vow to the Church, that is to the soul and conscience of his people, and finally the union of the Tsar and people with the Tsar of tsars in whose hands rests the fate of both tsars and peoples." The people's attitude toward the tsar had remained unchanged since the sixteenth century, it emphasized. "The people saw and see in him the bearer of its moral consciousness, its conscience and faith."<sup>36</sup>

The events surrounding the coronation emphasized the new importance of Russia's Muscovite heritage. For the occasion, Tchaikovsky composed a cantata, *Moscow*, based on the romantic historical poetry of Apollon Maikov. The work, which has not found a place in the symphonic repertory, was performed during the Coronation Banquet in the Hall of Facets. It sung the glory of the Muscovite princes and tsars who had united *Rus'* and overcome the Tatars. The *bogatyry*, symbolizing Russia, was addressed by "people of God of all countries, of eastern countries."

For all eastern countries, you, now,  
 Are like the rising star of Bethlehem,  
 A prophesy about Moscow, Your Moscow  
 Two Romes Fell,  
 The Third Stands  
 There will be no fourth.<sup>37</sup>

The gala performance at the Bolshoi Theater included the first and last acts of Glinka's *Life for the Tsar*, the latter showing Tsar Michael's entry into Moscow in 1613. At Alexander II's coronation, it had been *L'Elisir d'Amore*.

Alexander III's coronation received massive publicity both in Russia and abroad. For the first time, foreign correspondents were admitted to the

<sup>36</sup> *Opisanie sviashchennogo koronovaniia ikh Imperatorskikh Velichestv Gosudaria Imperatora Aleksandra III i Gosudaryni Imperatritsy Marii Fedorovny* (St. Petersburg and Ekspeditsia Zagotovleniia Gosudarstvennykh Bumag, 1883), 2-3.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 27.

coronation services in the Assumption Cathedral. They described the grandeur and excitement of the ceremony to an international audience. Charles Lowe wrote, “The solemn strains of the national anthem, the joyful pealing of the bells, the thunder of the swiftly served cannon, the surging sea of spectators, and the loud and continued cheers, all produced a scene that can never be forgotten by those who witnessed it.” At night, “the city went almost mad with Monarchical joy.” The correspondent for the *Standard* sensed the meaning of the event. “Peter’s town may rule for a time, but Moscow still remains the center of national life and some day may with greater right become the capital of the Russian tsars.”<sup>38</sup>

In subsequent years, conservative publicists in Moscow stressed Moscow’s contribution to the evolution of the Russian state. For them, Moscow’s feminine character, rather than the masculine ruthlessness of St. Petersburg, represented the source of the state spirit. Moscow’s self-abnegating love assured the tsar’s complete obedience. “Surrounding their cradles with tender care, caressing their childhood and days of youth, Moscow conveyed from clan to clan the love for the generations of its tsars, transferred from clan to clan the harmonious ideas of the state principle [*gosudarstvennost’*], the precepts of her wise first-service.”<sup>39</sup>

The final and most spectacular visit of Alexander III to Moscow took place after his death, when his coffin was borne along its streets on the way from Yalta to Petersburg. The elaborate and emotional celebration appealed to the national taste for mourning. Lowe wrote, “If a poetic or artistic genius depicted the incarnation of death on earth, he could create nothing more artistic or harmonious than what was presented in the days of mourning.”<sup>40</sup> Throngs watched in grief and awe as the funeral procession passed through Moscow to the tolling of its many bells, beating of drums, and the strains of the funeral march. The whole people, like a single person, bared their heads as the holy dust of the deceased Emperor approached,” the *Vsemirnaia Illiustratsiia* correspondent wrote. “The picture was majestic. From all sides one heard sobbing and weeping.”

<sup>38</sup> Lowe, *Alexander III*, 70, 74-75; V. S. Krivenko, ed., *Koronatsionnyi sbornik* (St. Petersburg: Ekspeditsiia Zagotovleniia Gosudarstvennykh Bumag, 1899), 151.

<sup>39</sup> E. Poselianin, *Iasnye dni; 17 oktiabria; 29 apreliia, 28 oktiabria* (Moscow: Obshchestvo rasprostraneniia poleznykh knig, 1892), 18.

<sup>40</sup> Lowe, *Alexander III*, 247-49.

Most significant was the presence of the tsar's body in the old capital. He lay in state, not in the Winter Palace, as had his predecessors, but in the Archangel Cathedral near the princes and tsars of Moscow. Courtiers and common people filed by and paid their last respects to the tsar, whose coffin was held in a "gorgeous catafalque all glittering with gold." The conservative and official accounts emphasized the national character of the devotion of all classes of the population to their tsar. "And in this mixing of tears, shed over the grave of the deceased tsar, the great mysterious unity of the Russian people was consummated with its great beloved tsar, which is inaccessible to the ordinary mind."<sup>41</sup>

Constantine Pobedonostsev, not usually given to emotional transports, was inspired by the sight of the tsar close to his pre-Petrine forebears. The coffin lay "in the heart of Russia" near "the early leaders of the Russian land." The "orphaned people" mourned them all. They also mourned "the most tranquil tsar, Alexei." Pobedonostsev took the comparison further with his last respects to his pupil. "Farewell, Pious, Kind to the people, most tranquil, Tsar Alexander Aleksandrovich!"<sup>42</sup>

The body of the tsar had to be removed to Petersburg for burial. It was done with some haste, for the embalming had been performed poorly and decomposition had begun. By the time it had reached Petersburg, the body had been covered with powder, making the tsar's face almost unrecognizable. The stench became so acute that the guards at the Peter-Paul Cathedral had difficulty completing their duty.<sup>43</sup>

The St. Petersburg procession, though joined by an impressive array of notables and members of the imperial family, lacked the spirit of Moscow's. Few people appeared on the street and the procession moved fitfully and irregularly.<sup>44</sup> The gloomy Petersburg October day depressed feelings: "a line of route lugubrious with the hangings of undertakers' woe, and dismal with slush and mud, and a drizzle from a sullen, leaden-hued sky." A correspondent from Moscow took the murky weather as a sign of Petersburgs "rotteness," borne on a western wind. The onlookers, respectful and reverent, did not display

<sup>41</sup> Petrovskii, *Pamiati*, 86-88.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 88-89.

<sup>43</sup> A. V. Bogdanovich, *Tri poslednikh samodorzhtsa* (Moscow-Petrograd: L. D. Frenkel', 1924), 182-83.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*

the feelings of devotion evident in Moscow. Uncertainties about the shift of superiors under the new tsar made official concerns paramount and diminished the effect of the bereavement.<sup>45</sup>

The Petersburg ceremonies featured the westernized elite of the court and European royalty. Alexander III was laid to rest amidst the neoclassical magnificence of the capital, mourned by the imperial family, the highest officers and officials of St. Petersburg, foreign princes, and heads of state. Lowe described the effect. “A thousand glimmering candles were reflected in the silver wreaths, the majestic brocade of the canopy, and the star-spangled breasts of the uniforms, producing a scene of such splendor as is seldom witnessed.” After Nicholas and the dowager, Maria Fedorovna, paid their last respects, the cathedral was filled with sobbing. “Many gray-bearded heads bent in silent grief, in many eyes unaccustomed to tears, great tears glistened. Many knees were bent and many of those praying, in the uniforms of the highest ranks, covered their faces with their hands so that their neighbors would not be witnesses to their grief.”<sup>46</sup> Played to a foreign audience, the final obsequies blessed the all-Russian emperor, the representative of international royalty, the tsar’s European self. The French lavished attention on their new ally, sending more than 5,000 memorial wreaths, many of them in silver. The French delegation brought 10,000 bouquets of artificial flowers, tied with the tricolor, affixed to which were pictures of Alexander III and President Carnot with the legend, “united in sentiments and death.”<sup>47</sup>

Moscow was to be the site for a monument to Alexander built from donations from the population. “Of course, only the heart of the Russian land is the place for an *all-national* [*vsenarodnyi*] monument. In the focal point of Russia should stand the monument to the One Who in his ideal image tied our past with the future, Who resurrected the ancient precepts of the Moscow gatherers and organizers of *Sacred Rus*’.” Moscow contained the shrines of the great tsars of the past. “Where but among them should the monument of the greatest of their descendants and successors stand resplendent—a monument that should become a new symbol of Holy Russia, a new Russian shrine?”<sup>48</sup>

<sup>45</sup> F. Dukhovetskii, *Dve nedeli v Peterburge; Vospominaniia torzhestva pereneseniia i pogrebeniia tela Imperatora Aleksandra III i svetlogo dnia brakosochetaniia* (Moscow: n.p., 1894), 6, 23-24, 60; Lowe, *Alexander III*, 296-98.

<sup>46</sup> Lowe, *Alexander III*, 301; Dukhovetskii, *Dve nedeli*, 38-39.

<sup>47</sup> Lowe, *Alexander III*, 300 n; Korol'kov, *Tsar' mirotvorets*, 57.

<sup>48</sup> Petrovskii, *Alexander III*, 375.

The statue, finally placed before the Redeemer Cathedral in 1909, showed Alexander III, huge and austere, on his coronation throne, wearing a crown and holding orb and scepter. It was the only statue of a Russian emperor as the anointed of God.

\* \* \*

For Nicholas II, Moscow symbolized pure autocracy, free from the constraints that had accompanied the development of a bureaucracy and educated public opinion. It represented, in his mind, a historical alternative to the institutions and officials that thwarted his will in the capital. It was medieval Moscow that he envisioned, the Moscow of churches, monasteries, tolling bells, and religious processions. Modern Moscow of course would intrude on these images: the strike movement in Moscow, The Khodynskoe field disaster after the coronation, the gruesome assassination of his uncle, Grand Duke Sergei, governor-general of Moscow, provided menacing reminders of the present. But in Moscow, he could appear as religious leader of his people, performing the sacraments that consecrated his authority. Nicholas's visits to Moscow were frequent during the first years of his reign. Interrupted by the revolution of 1905, they were resumed once he and his advisers regained confidence in the stability of society in the years preceding the First World War.

To emphasize his religious mission, Nicholas began to visit Moscow for Easter, the major holiday in the Orthodox calendar. In March 1900 he traveled to Moscow to observe Easter, the first imperial visit during Easter since Nicholas I's in 1849. The celebration was surrounded by considerable publicity. Besides the usual newspaper reports, the government published an account that was sent free of charge to the 110,000 subscribers of *Sel'skii Vestnik*, the organ of the Ministry of Interior. The volume drew explicit connections with seventeenth-century Muscovy. Nicholas had come to Moscow "by sacred precept of our native ancient times" to spend Easter "in close union with the faithful orthodox people, as if in sacred communion with the distant past . . . with that past when Moscow was 'the capital town,' when the tsar and Moscow Patriarch lived there, when the life of the first capital was an uninterrupted and undeviating observance of the Church Statutes, and the example of such a life was the Moscow Tsar himself."<sup>49</sup>

<sup>49</sup> *Tsarskoe prebyvanie v Moskve v aprele 1900 goda* (St. Petersburg: Panteleev brothers, 1900), 23-24.



The official account described the ceremonies and processions of the Lenten and Easter seasons in old Moscow, along with the emperor's and empress's part in the services. The climax was the great Easter night procession to the Church of the Savior. At midnight, the emperor, in the uniform of the Preobrazhenskii Regiment, and the empress, in a white Russian dress and *kokoshnik* studded with gems and pearls, followed the leading court ranks from the Kremlin Palace to the church. Behind them were members of the tsar's suite, other members of the court, and the ladies of leading Moscow families. The city was brilliantly lit. Worshipers crowded into the Kremlin cathedrals. The clock on the Savior Gate struck midnight. A cannon salvo burst from Tainitskii Tower. The Ivan the Great tower began to ring, and its sounds were echoed by all the "forty times forty" bells of Moscow.<sup>50</sup>

In a rescript to the governor-general of Moscow, his uncle Sergei Aleksandrovich, Nicholas spoke of the realization of his "intense wish" (*goriachee zhelanie*) to spend Holy Week and Easter in Moscow, "among the greatest national shrines, under the canopy of the centuries-old Kremlin." Here, Nicholas declared, he had found his communion with his people, "with the true children of our beloved Church, pouring into the temples" and a "quiet joy" filled his soul. Sharing the Easter holiday with the worshipers gave him a spiritual mandate. "In the unity in prayer with My people, I draw new strength for serving Russia, for her well-being and glory."<sup>51</sup>

These sentiments were not feigned. He announced loudly that he felt at home in Moscow, calm and confident. In a letter to his mother he described his joy preparing for Holy Communion in the Kremlin cathedrals. He and Alexandra had spent their days visiting them and reading about Muscovite history. "I never knew I was able to reach such heights of religious ecstasy as this Lent has brought me to. This feeling is now much stronger than it was in 1896, which is only natural. I am so calm and happy now, and everything here makes for prayer and peace of the spirit."<sup>52</sup>

Nicholas observed Easter in Moscow again in 1903. *Moskovskie Vedomosti*, the conservative nationalist daily, extolled the visit as a demonstration of the unity of the people with the tsar, in contrast with the divisiveness it

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 53-55.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., 55-56.

<sup>52</sup> Zakharova, "Krizis," 131; Edward J. Bing, ed., *The Secret Letters of the Last Tsar* (New York, Nicholson and Watson, 1938), 137.

described in Petersburg. An editorial asserted that the tsar encountered not the destructive spirit, but the constructive force, “with which Moscow created Russia.” The Kremlin recalled Moscow’s mission. “Here, among the national shrines of the Kremlin, one’s lips involuntarily whisper, ‘This is the Third Rome. There will be no fourth.’”<sup>53</sup>

In the midst of worker unrest, the newspaper printed reports of the workers’ spontaneous enthusiasm for the tsar, which were reprinted in a pamphlet published in 1909. A series of articles by the worker F. Slepov related what were purportedly his and his comrades’ feelings. The workers, Slepov wrote, brought Nicholas bread and salt. They were so happy that “they felt like flying.” When the tsar passed them along the boulevard, they went delirious with joy. “The land, it seemed, shook with joyous enthusiasm. And, as if unwilling, a rapturous cry escaped from the heart. Like an electric current, it ran through all. Tears wetted many eyes. Many people crossed themselves.”<sup>54</sup>

Moscow was the tsar’s true home. As the crowd dispersed, Slepov overheard such remarks. “Look how close by he passed. Why doesn’t he stay longer and live in Moscow? What is Petersburg? Moscow is better.” Most Muscovites felt the same way. “Moscow is the heart of Russia and therefore dreams that the Tsar will bestow upon her the joy of as long a stay as possible in the Kremlin, with its Russian shrines so revered by the people.” The tsar also was happy, like a “father, finding himself among his children, seeing them after a long absence.”<sup>55</sup>

Not surprisingly, the editors of *Moskovskie Vedomosti* drew the same conclusions. They expressed regret that “our old Moscow cannot, as it did in ancient times, surround the tsar on days of his imperial labors, as at the times of holiday meetings.” St. Petersburg could not provide “the tranquil, clear, national setting for governmental work that exists here in old Moscow, within the walls of the sacred Kremlin, in the center of native Russia, which can conceive only of age-old Russian foundations [*ustoi*].”<sup>56</sup> The conservative

<sup>53</sup> *Moskovskie Vedomosti*, March 30, 1903, 1.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*; *Moskovskie Vedomosti*, March 29, 1903, 1; April 1, 1903, 2-3; *Russkii tsar’ s tsaritseiu na poklonenii Moskovskim sviatyniam* (St. Petersburg: R. Golike and A. Vil’borg, 1909), 25.

<sup>55</sup> *Moskovskie Vedomosti*, April 1, 1903, 2-3; *Russkii tsar’* . . . 26.

<sup>56</sup> *Moskovskie Vedomosti*, April 16, 1903, 1.

St. Petersburg daily *Novoe Vremia* contemptuously dismissed these claims as another futile appeal to “reduce the work of Peter the Great to nothing.” The author of the column confidently observed that “the Petersburg period of Russian history has already lasted for two-hundred years.”<sup>57</sup>

The Russo-Japanese War and the revolution of 1905 terminated the tsar’s Easter visits to Moscow. The bloody events in Moscow, especially the December insurrection, made the old capital as forbidding a place for the tsar as the new. However, in Moscow the revolutionary events did not have the symbolic impact they did in St. Petersburg. The Moscow insurrections left the holy places untouched. Moscow might be physically threatening for the tsar, but its shrines remained inviolate. The events in St. Petersburg, on the other hand, discredited and dishonored the sacred space of the autocracy, particularly the Winter Palace. The first episode took place at the ceremony of the annual Blessing of the Waters on January 6, 1905. The tsar, joined by members of his suite, courtiers, and high-ranking officials, went out to the Neva to watch the Metropolitan perform the ceremonies. The ladies were watching, as was the custom, at the windows of the Winter Palace, when a shot shattered several of the panes. An investigation failed to reveal foul play, but the mishap remained a mystery and served as an ill omen.

Three days later, a crowd of workers approaching the palace peacefully, to ask the tsar for peaceful rectification of their grievances, were massacred. “Bloody Sunday” made the official residence of the tsar a symbol of brutal inhumanity and exploitation, a sign not of the refinement but the barbarism of Russian autocracy. Finally, the reception of the members of the First Duma in the Winter Palace, in April 1906, became a spectacle of mutual incomprehension and rebuff. The tsar appeared in a stiff formal imperial procession, organized, it was said, by the empress herself. The deputies of the Duma wore everyday clothes to emphasize their distance from the monarchy. The speech from the throne outraged the deputies. The political struggle had conquered the ceremonial center of the Russian Empire.

After the revolution, the emperor and empress resided at Tsarskoe Selo under heavy guard and did not venture into the capital. Their aloofness from the social life of Petersburg rankled in high society, Alexandra’s continued refusal to give debutant parties arousing especial ill-will. The failure to perform the Blessing of the Waters caused consternation among the common people

<sup>57</sup> *Novoe Vremia*, April 18, 1903, 3.

of the capital, who believed that the prayers purified the water. They blamed the outbreaks of cholera occurring from 1908 to 1910 on the suspension of the ceremony. The blessing was resumed in 1911, the same year Nicholas and Alexandra made their first appearance at the Mariinskii Theater since the revolution.<sup>58</sup>

Nicholas, to be sure, also remained wary of Moscow, which had been a center of the liberal and revolutionary movement in 1905. Only in April 1912 did he venture into the city, for the unveiling of the monument to Alexander III and the opening of the Alexander III Art Museum. The mood was tense. Expecting trouble, the authorities tightened security measures and increased arrests. The police interrogated the entire consular corps about foreigners in the capital. The guard regiments entering the capital were met with cries of “butchers, Praetorians, tsarists,” in reference to their bloody suppression of the Moscow insurrections. The tsar stopped the procession to pray at the spot where his uncle, the hated Grand Duke Sergei, had been blown to bits. Moscow society was hostile to the empress, who, worried about the heir’s health, remained particularly inaccessible, and failed to appear at the opening of the museum. Even the meeting with peasant elders, which Nicholas usually performed well, was uneasy and strained. A right-wing journal contrasted the visit to Nicholas’s joyous reception in 1903.<sup>59</sup>

But the atmosphere in Moscow changed quickly. Once the conservative monarchical forces rallied to his support, Moscow again became the center of displays of dedication to the sovereign. It was there that the spiritual bond that he sought reappeared. That very summer, in August 1912, Nicholas entered Moscow to tumultuous ovations, after the festivities commemorating Borodino. Nicholas himself was inspired by the religious services on Red Square. Then, the Moscow nobility staged a ceremony of devotion, where they, and provincial marshals of the nobility, presented the tsar a patriotic banner. A. D. Samarin, the Moscow marshal, read an impassioned declaration pledging to defend him as the nobility had defended Alexander

<sup>58</sup> V. N. Voelikov, *S tsarem*, 40; *Russian Court Memoirs, 1914-1916* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1916), 41; Meriel Buchanan, *The Dissolution of an Empire* (London: J. Murray, 1932), 27-29; Sergei Zavalishin, ed., *Gosudar' Imperator Nikolai II Aleksandrovich* (New York: Vseslavianskoe, 1968), 229-30.

<sup>59</sup> Spiridovitch, *Les dernières*, 2:230-31; R. H. Bruce Lockhart, *British Agent* (New York: G. P. Putnam, 1933), 73; Bogdanovich, *Tri poslednikh samodorzhtsa*, 501.

I one hundred years before. The declaration addressed Nicholas as “absolute” monarch. The mood in the hall was elated and adoring. The empress was moved to tears.<sup>60</sup>

The Borodino celebrations and other displays of support in the provinces confirmed Nicholas’s sense that the Russian people persisted in their devotion to him. As the Duma became increasingly assertive, despite its conservative composition, and his ministers lost his trust, the image of a national autocracy became compelling. From 1905, his official statements frequently used the word *Rus’* instead of *Rossia*. Official literature began to present the seventeenth century as the most important period of the foundation of Russian autocracy, diminishing the role assigned to Peter the Great. It depicted the seventeenth century as an era of national unity, when tsar and people shared common goals, and autocracy appeared in its ideal form, of personal spiritual leadership of the nation. The authors often suggested the seductive parallels between the two centuries: both began with social and political troubles, and those of the twentieth, like the seventeenth, would be resolved by a renewed, popular autocracy. Moscow became the symbol as well as the monument of this image of the past—an example of Mikhail Bakhtin’s notion of “chronotope,” as Katerina Clark has characterized the Soviet period.<sup>61</sup>

This theme ran through the celebrations of the three-hundredth anniversary of the Romanov dynasty in 1913. The tercentenary, the first commemoration of the dynasty’s beginning in 1613, acknowledged its Muscovite sources of political legitimacy. The celebrations themselves cast significant doubts upon the symbolic role of Petersburg. The first event of the celebrations, marking the election of Michael Romanov, by an Assembly of the Land (*Zemskii Sobor*) took place there in February. It was an incongruous setting indeed. A historical celebration meant to affirm continuity took place in a city symbolizing discontinuity. The rectilinear plan of the capital exemplified European symmetry and rationality. The rather sparse decorations, provided by the Petersburg city government, were Venetian in inspiration and clashed with the religious, national tenor of the celebration. The monarchist press

<sup>60</sup> Spiridovitch, *Les dernières*, 2: 264-67; Bing, ed., *Secret Letters*, 272-73; Lockhart, *British Agent*, 74.

<sup>61</sup> Katerina Clark, “Political History and Literary Chronotope: Some Soviet Case Studies,” in *Literature and History: Theoretical Problems and Russian Case Studies*, ed. Gary Saul Morson (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1986), 230-46.

made caustic comments about the everyday look of the capital, the unrelieved impression of its severe barrack style. "We were promised a spectacle, but we got only sadness." The appearance of the city should have been transformed. It should have taken on a "fantastic, legendary garb. Then the people would be in a gay mood, would, for a while, shed their everyday cares and feast on spectacle, which in our dull time is needed more than ever."<sup>62</sup>

Nicholas and Alexandra's unconcealed aversion to the capital and its elite revealed how little it represented the center of political life for the monarch himself. Nicholas remained perfunctory and aloof from the capital elite and the estate representatives visiting from the provinces. There were few crowds cheering political support, only the somber figures of members of the Union of Russian People and the Union of the Archangel Michael, organizations that had lost most of their popular backing. Many of those devoted to the monarchy left the celebrations disappointed and disgruntled.<sup>63</sup>

If the February events revealed the capital's loss of political charisma, the second part of the celebration taking place during May in the Volga region and Moscow, revealed the tsar in his own element. Following the route of Michael's journey from Kostroma to Moscow in the spring of 1613, Nicholas received an enthusiastic response. The Moscow celebrations, commemorating Michael's entry into the city, took place at the site of the events, and evoked visions of the past. A Russian observer wrote, "Places sanctified by centuries, the golden cupolas of the Kremlin, near which the imperial cortege stopped, the harmonious tolling of the Moscow bells and the triumphal meeting of the crowned Romanovs at the gates of the Assumption Cathedral amidst the glittering vestments of the clergy—everything gave special meaning to the celebration I saw and deepened the general impression."<sup>64</sup> In the Kremlin cathedrals and on the Red Porch, Nicholas again joined in the rituals and paid homage to the symbols of Muscovite autocracy. He visited the tombs of the early Romanovs. At their graves, and before the icons of the Mother-of-God, he sought the sources of his authority in the divine grace and popularity of the Muscovite tsars, rather than in the spirit of power and transformation that had animated Peter and his successors.

<sup>62</sup> *Novoe Vremia*, February 23, 1913, 14; *Moskovskie Vedomosti*, February 24, 1913, 2.

<sup>63</sup> Spiridovitch, *Les dernières*, 2: 317; A. N. Naumov, *Iz utselevshikh vospominanii 1868-1917* (New York: A. K. Naumova i O. A. Kusevitskaia, 1955), 2: 234.

<sup>64</sup> Naumov, *Iz utselevshikh vospominanii*, 2: 236-37.

The acclaim of the population contrasted to the apathy of Petersburg. "The mass emotion this visit engendered was overwhelming," Bruce Lockhart recalled.<sup>65</sup> Some observers found the response less spontaneous than that along the Volga, but one thought it "deeper and stronger." It was a "wonderful hymn of mutual love," which showed that "not she, not the citizens of the white-stone city were guilty of the disorders of 1905." The receptions, balls, and dinners radiated a warm, cordial spirit. "There is good reason," he concluded, "for Moscow to be called the heart of Russia."<sup>66</sup>

Most important, Nicholas and Alexandra were impressed with the reception they received during the May celebrations. They believed that the enthusiasm was genuine and that the Russian people persisted in their religious devotion to the throne. It confirmed that, despite the passage of time and the appearances of change, Russia remained attached to the political principles of the seventeenth century. Emboldened by such a vision, Nicholas contemplated and proposed a curtailment of the Duma's prerogatives, in effect an abrogation of the October Manifesto. But even the reactionary cabinet that he had appointed refused to consider such a step.<sup>67</sup>

Nicholas's final and perhaps most moving display of attachment to Moscow took place in the summer of 1914 as Russia was preparing to embark upon war. Both capitals gave the tsar fervent demonstrations of support. But the sense of the ceremonies, as well as the nature of the sentiments evoked, differed markedly. Nicholas's appearance at the Winter Palace in St. Petersburg on July 20 lasted a few hours. He arrived along the Neva and was rushed through the crowds to the palace. At the religious service, he repeated Alexander I's famous vow that he would not make peace as long as one of the enemy was on the soil of the fatherland. It was a highly formal occasion, limited to important officials, officers, and court ranks. After a priest read the manifesto, Nicholas addressed the assembled officers as "the whole army, united in nation and spirit, strong as a granite wall," and received a wild roar of approval. Then he and the empress went out onto the balcony to meet the crowds filling the vast palace square. The

<sup>65</sup> R. H. Bruce Lockhart, "Preface," in Bing, ed., *Secret Letters*, 10.

<sup>66</sup> E. E. Bogdanovich, *Istoricheskoe palomnichestvo nashego tsaria v 1913 godu* (St. Petersburg: R. Golike and A. Vil'borg, 1914), 163.

<sup>67</sup> Geoffrey A. Hosking, *The Russian Constitutional Experiment* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1973), 201-2; A. Ia. Avrekh, *Tsarizm i IV Duma* (Moscow: Nauka, 1981), 114-15.

throng fell to their knees and sang the national anthem. The emperor crossed himself and wept.<sup>68</sup>

The St. Petersburg ceremony, though stirring, was brief and fastidious. Nicholas visited the city, held a court ceremony, blessed the army, and confronted the people. Then he returned to Tsarskoe Selo. In Moscow the visit was extended and the ceremonies were more inclusive. He entered the city on the traditional route along Tver Boulevard, riding in an open carriage to popular acclaim. In the Kremlin Palace, he received not only high officials but representatives of the estates. He addressed not the army but the nation. "In your persons, the people of the first capital, Moscow, I greet the Russian people, loyal to me. I greet them everywhere, in the provinces, the State Duma, the State Council, unanimously responding, to rise amicably and cast aside discord for the defense of the native land and Slavdom."<sup>69</sup>

The scene of Nicholas bowing from the Red Porch to the frenzied crowd on the Kremlin Square impressed the foreign visitors with the power of Russian national sentiment. The English ambassador wrote that "the heart of Russia voiced the feelings of the whole nation." His daughter felt that she was no longer in the twentieth century. "This was the old Moscow of the Tsars. Little Mother (*matiushka*) Moscow, threatened and besieged over and over again, and yet always miraculously emerging from her smoking ruins!" The French ambassador also felt himself transported back beyond the eighteenth century and admired "the frantic enthusiasm of the Muscovite people for their Tsar." The tsarevich's tutor, Pierre Gilliard, thought that the people of Moscow were "so anxious to keep the tsar as long as possible that they mean to hold him here by manifest proofs of their affection."<sup>70</sup>

On subsequent days, the tsar visited the shrines of Moscow, hospitals, and the stores of medical materials provided by the Merchant's Bureau and the *zemstvo*. He met the assembled mayors of major towns. Finally, he visited the Trinity Monastery, where he was blessed by the Miracle Icon of the Visitation of the Virgin, which had accompanied Russian campaigns since 1654.<sup>71</sup>

<sup>68</sup> Maurice Paléologue, *An Ambassador's Memoirs* (New York: George Doran, 1925), 1:50-52; *Novoe Vremia*, July 21, 1914, 4; Spiridovich, *Les dernières*, 2: 482-83.

<sup>69</sup> *Moskovskie Vedomosti*, August 6, 1914, 1-2; V. N. Voeikov, *S tsarem*, 104-5.

<sup>70</sup> Sir George Buchanan, *My Mission to Russia* (Boston: Little Brown, 1923), 1: 214-15; Meriel Buchanan, *Dissolution*, 103; Paléologue, *Mémoires*, 1:93, 95; Pierre Gilliard, *Thirteen Years at the Russian Court* (New York: G. H. Doran, 1970), 114.

<sup>71</sup> *Moskovskie Vedomosti*, August 9, 1914, 2; V. N. Voeikov, *S tsarem*, 106.



Nicholas returned from Moscow inspired by the fervor of the reception. He felt a new confidence and closeness to his people. He believed that the country had united behind him and submerged their political differences.<sup>72</sup> His vision confirmed, he was less likely than ever to bow to political compromise. But the quest for legitimacy in the religious culture of Muscovy could hardly bolster his political position. Nicholas remained the all-Russian emperor reigning over institutions centered in Petersburg. He remained a product of Petersburg culture, one who was most at ease in guards' uniform and among the elite regiments of the capital.

The two traditions coexisted, integrated neither in ideology nor in ceremony, epitomized in their chronotopes, two capitals, each impugning the symbolic appeal of the other. St. Petersburg, "the basic symbol" of imperial Russia, had lost the favor of the tsar, and with it, its aura of preeminence. Moscow radiated the charisma of the political heritage cherished by the tsar, but had no tsar. The very glorification of Moscow had insurgent implications, casting doubt on the institutions in Petersburg that governed the empire. Many leading officials felt Nicholas betraying the interests of state for mystical delusions that could be exploited by men like Rasputin.<sup>73</sup> Upholding values and pursuing goals at variance with those of his ruling elite, the tsar himself became a force for disorder in the final years of political crisis. His vision of the past precluded a unified effort by monarchists and conservatives to preserve the old regime, leaving the field to the opponents of autocracy.

In a monarchy, the locus of the monarch is the political center. In early twentieth-century Russia, there were two such loci, betraying the autocrat's own ambivalence about the heritage, nature, and goals of the state. If symbolic forms can confer the aura of the absolute and command reverence, then symbolic confusion can just as well dispel the sacred spirit that surrounds power for its loyal adherents. By 1914, not only did the autocracy face widespread and vocal political opposition: in the course of the previous decades it had become increasingly ambiguous what exactly Russian autocracy meant.



<sup>72</sup> Gilliard, *Thirteen Years*, 122.

<sup>73</sup> See for example V. N. Kokovtsov, *Iz moego proshlogo* (The Hague: Paris, Mouton, 1969), 2:154-56, 170-72; Iswolsky, *Mémoires*, 284-98; Spiridovich, *Les dernières*, 2:356-57, 401-2.

## 9. Nicholas II and the Revolution of 1905



Most accounts of 1905 place Nicholas II at the periphery of the revolution, as a figure buffeted by events, reacting in a defensive, inconsistent manner and exacerbating critical situations by vacillating between indecisiveness and obstinacy. Undoubtedly, Nicholas was a weak authority figure who was nonplussed by the turmoil that confronted him. Recent research has shown, however, that the characterization of him as a passive defender of the status quo, a ruler reacting unwittingly to social and political developments beyond his control, does not reflect his true role in the unfolding of the revolution and its ultimate defeat. This article aims to clarify this role, to show how Nicholas II understood the future of Russian society within the framework of a myth that both legitimized and exalted his authority, even as it was subject to its greatest challenge.

Nicholas II viewed the world through the prism of a myth that presented him as a national ruler who would restore a regime of personal patriarchal rule. The national myth justifying Russian autocracy arose in the 1880s to counter the western principles of legality and openness that had been used to justify reform policies during the reign of Alexander II. Alexander III held westernized educated society and reformist officials in the state administration responsible for the laxity that had allowed the revolutionary movement to flourish and culminated with the assassination of Alexander II in 1881. As I have argued in *Scenarios of Power*, the national myth heralded a break with the entire Petrine tradition of emulating the West.<sup>1</sup> In the manifestoes and ceremonies that followed the accession of Alexander III in 1881, the national

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<sup>1</sup> See *Scenarios of Power*, 2: 196-234.

myth evoked a religious and ethnic bond between the tsar and the Russian people, who had, presumably, withstood the processes of westernization and safeguarded the basic foundations of the Russian monarchy and state. The Russian tsar now strove to embody not the existing state, contaminated by westernized accretions, the reformed courts, and the *zemstva*, but an idealized vision of pre-Petrine Russian institutions as an organic union of tsar and people, like that evoked in the writings of the Slavophiles.

The reign of Alexander III marks the beginning of an effort to separate the image of the monarch from that of the institutions of the existing state structure and to identify him more closely with the Orthodox Church and the Russian people, the *narod*, or, more specifically, the Russian peasantry. The ideal autocratic national state was evoked as an extension of the monarch's personal power, which was centered in the Ministry of Interior, obedient to his will and unencumbered by rule and law. For Alexander, as for his mentor and advisor, Constantine Pobedonostsev, "a true Russian" (*istinnyi russkii chelovek*) meant a person who believed in a strong centralized authority capable of enforcing the union between tsar and people. "Russian" (*russkii*) as an adjective justified both the counter reforms and the Russification campaigns of Alexander III's reign. Neither policy achieved its goal of fundamentally transforming the government, but the myth introduced a vision of change, prompting further efforts to strengthen monarchical authority and to delegitimize the post-reform state with its concerns for legality and autonomy.

The ideological turn of the 1880s held great significance for the Jewish population of the empire. From the reign of Peter the Great, the Russian monarchs had presented themselves as European in culture, ideology, and political institutions, which I have described as the European myth. The Jews had been treated as one of the subordinate nationalities of the empire governed by their own communities and laws, or later, and under Nicholas I and Alexander II, the government sought to assimilate them into a Russian culture that was European in its values and manners. Under the national myth, the Jews represented an alien element, scattered among Russian populations and intruding on the union of tsar and people. The Jews lacked their own territory. They had taken advantage of the liberal measures of the reform era to move to cities like Moscow and Petersburg, attend the universities, and gain admittance to the Russian bar. The national myth's appeal to ethnic identity and its rejection of the western character of the

autocracy encouraged an exclusionist image of the Jew not only as alien, but an enemy of the Russian nation. The pogroms of 1881, though not encouraged by the government, were taken as signs of an antagonism shared by the Russian people. The government sought to reverse the effects of the reforms, introducing limits on Jewish residence and restricting admissions to the universities and the bar.<sup>2</sup> The monarchy endeavored to cleanse Moscow, the symbolic center of the national autocracy, of Jews.<sup>3</sup> When Grand Duke Sergei Aleksandrovich assumed the office of governor-general of Moscow in 1891, he requested, with the tsar's support, that Jews be removed, leading to brutal expulsions of two-thirds of the city's thirty thousand Jewish residents, many of whom were living in the city legally. Sergei was the uncle whose views Nicholas II found most congenial.

Nicholas accepted the pre-Petrine imagery of the myth and the belief that the Orthodox religion and the Russian people's adherence to it expressed the true national spirit of Russia. His attitudes toward the state apparatus and his religious faith were quite different from his father's. He distrusted government officials, bound by formality and administrative rule, in general, and he was especially wary of those who were dynamic and gifted, as threatening to his personal authority. He did not surround himself with a group of like-minded officials or friends who could give him counsel. He believed that the national sanction for his power entitled him to exert authority as he wished, blinding him to constraints, both of institutions and reality. Likewise, he distrusted the Orthodox hierarchy. His religious faith was personal, not the mediated religion of the Orthodox Church, ministered through prayer and sacrament, but a direct, unmediated bond with God, which he and Alexandra felt they shared with holy men of the people. He envisioned his rule in terms of a neo-Slavophile image of a patriarchal tsar, ruling through ministers like his Minister of Interior, Dmitrii Sipiagin, who believed that Russia should be governed by landlords advancing the well-being of the peasantry. Sipiagin also proposed the introduction of a new system of petitioning the tsar as a way of overcoming the obstructions of the administration and establishing a patriarchal form of justice.

<sup>2</sup> On the "selective integration" of Jews in the second half of the nineteenth century and the setbacks during the 1880s, see Benjamin Nathans, *Beyond the Pale*.

<sup>3</sup> On the shift from Petersburg to Moscow as the symbolic center of empire, see Article 8 of this volume.

Nicholas felt a powerful emotional bond with the Russian people that he described in his decrees, diary, and personal correspondence. He wrote about his feelings during his coronation in 1896 and the trips he made to Moscow to celebrate Easter in 1900 and 1903: he was the first Russian emperor to celebrate Easter in Moscow since Nicholas I in 1849. In 1900, Nicholas issued a rescript to Grand Duke Sergei, declaring the attainment of his “intense wish,” to spend Holy Week in Moscow, “among the greatest national shrines, under the canopy of the centuries-old Kremlin.” He declared that he had found his communion with his people, “with the true children of our beloved Church, pouring into the temples,” and a “quiet joy” filled his soul. Sharing the Easter holiday with the worshipers gave him a spiritual mandate. “In the unity in prayer with My people, I draw new strength for serving Russia, for her well-being and glory.” He wrote to his mother, the dowager Maria Fedorovna, after the services, “I never knew that I was able to attain such *religious ecstasy* as I experienced during this Passion Week. This feeling is now much stronger than it was in 1896.... This time my soul is so calm, everything here makes for the peace of prayer and the spirit.”<sup>4</sup>

The peasant uprisings of the first years of the twentieth century, rather than shaking Nicholas’s trust in the unity of people with the tsar, prompted him to find confirmation of it in public meetings with peasants and in visions of a resurrected Muscovite assembly of the land. Encouraged by the Minister of Interior, Viacheslav Plehve, he visited Kursk, which was near the unrest, and held meetings with peasant elders from Kursk and six other provinces. When Nicholas arrived, a delegation of eighty-seven *volost’* elders greeted him with bread and salt. With Plehve at his side, the tsar threatened punishment for those who disobeyed but promised his own attention to the peasants’ well-being.<sup>5</sup> Nicholas understood these meetings in terms of his scenario, as expressions of his particular personal and spiritual bond with the peasants. In a letter to Alexandra of September 1, 1902, he wrote that the speech to the peasants went off well “because it is much easier to talk to simple people.” On October 20, he wrote to Prince Vladimir Meshcherskii that he had returned from Kursk “in a very elevated and cheerful frame of mind.” “We ourselves have

<sup>4</sup> *Tsarskoe prebyvanie v Moskve v aprele 1900 goda* (St. Petersburg: Pantelev brothers, 1900), 56; “Pis'ma im. Nikolaia II im. Marii Fedorovne, 23 ianv. 1899-22 dekabria 1900,” GARF, 642-1-2326, 56-57.

<sup>5</sup> Francis William Wcislo, *Reforming Rural Russia*, 145-46.

constantly wanted to go to the interior of our Native Land but circumstances have prevented it. In the future, I hope that such trips will follow one after another.”<sup>6</sup>

Nicholas’s sense of his national-religious mission grew stronger during the next year. In April of 1903, he made another Easter visit to Moscow, where he again felt a great spiritual uplift. In July, he traveled to Sarov for the highly publicized canonization of Serafim of Sarov. Serafim, the abbot of the Monastery at Sarov in Tambov Province, was an early nineteenth-century elder (*starets*), known for his holy life, his visions, and his powers of curing and prophecy. Thousands of worshipers gathered for the event. Nicholas and the grand dukes carried the remains of Serafim around the Assumption Cathedral before a large crowd of worshipers. “During the entire procession,” Nicholas wrote in his diary, “we carried the coffin on a stretcher. It created a tremendous impression to see how the people, and especially sick cripples and the unfortunate, regarded the procession of the cross. The moment when the beatification began and then the kissing of the remains were most solemn.” The next day he wrote, “How touching (*umilitelen*) the procession of the cross was yesterday, but with the coffin open. The elevation of the spirit (*pod’em dukha*) was enormous...”<sup>7</sup>

After Sarov, A. A. Mosolov recalled, the words “tsar” and “people” followed each other directly in many of the tsar’s statements, and Nicholas increasingly looked upon them as “half-grown youths.” He felt a desire to come close to them, to “show physical affection to the people he loved,” but he was prevented by the size of the crowds and fears of another Khodynka, the tragic massacre that followed his coronation.<sup>8</sup> Nicholas regarded the relationship between him and the peasantry as a spiritual bonding between likes, rather than an attraction of opposites. The mutual veneration of Serafim exemplified a shared faith.

Instead of rehearsing the complex discussions, concessions and repressions that ensued during the revolution itself, I shall focus on Nicholas’s views of the new system and how he reconciled it with his conception of autocracy.

<sup>6</sup> Igor Vinogradoff, “Some Russian Imperial Letters to Prince V. Meshcherskii, (1839-1914),” *Oxford Slavonic Studies*, no. 11 (1962): 134.

<sup>7</sup> “Dnevnik Nikolaia II,” (May 19-December 31, 1903), GARF, 601-1-246, 42-47;

<sup>8</sup> A. A. Mosolov, *Pri dvore poslednego Rossiiskago Imperatora* (Moscow: Ankor, 1993), 119-21.

Throughout the revolution he clearly demonstrated his belief that he had not forsaken his office as sovereign. This was evident in the pre-Petrine imagery that he and his advisors invoked that derived sovereignty from God and the wishes of the Russian people. It was also manifest in his close watch over his ministers, who fulfilled his dictates, even while they shielded him from open responsibility. The myth defied and excluded contradictory evidence. Neither military defeat nor almost universal opposition could shake his conviction; quite the contrary. He attributed the widespread violence and demands for social and political change to the influence of foreigners, revolutionaries, and the Jews. The *ustoi*, the foundations of Russia remained impermeable and needed only ruthless retribution to be saved.

In his first meeting with the tsar on August 25, 1904, Petr Sviatopolk-Mirskii aptly described the situation: "The condition of things has become so aggravated that one may consider the government to be in a state of enmity with Russia. It is necessary to make peace." Mirskii accepted the position of minister of interior on condition that the tsar announce a program of reforms, including civil liberties and a limited degree of participation in the enactment of legislation. He argued for the need to win the support of society (*obshchestvo*). He tried to show that the participation of elective representatives from the *zemstva* and major city dumas in governmental decisions was compatible with autocracy. The tsar would retain the right to change the administrative order. The representatives would help the government formulate plans to increase legality in the Senate and other state institutions and to reform and democratize the *zemstva*.<sup>9</sup>

Nicholas promised him full support, but he conceived political reform in the context of his vision of seventeenth-century Rus'. He proposed an Assembly of the Land, which could express his direct bond with the people and circumvent "society." This remained Nicholas's *idée fixe* during and after 1905. The image of a *Zemskii Sobor* allowed him to retain absolute power while presumably heeding the wishes of the people. He would remain sovereign regardless of institutional changes.<sup>10</sup>

Under the blows of Bloody Sunday, the concern about foreign loans, and the lack of confidence in the loyalty of the army, Nicholas relented once more, accepted the principle of popular participation, but cast in the form of an assembly of the land. This would be a national assembly that represented the

<sup>9</sup> Andrew M. Verner, *Crisis of Russian Autocracy*, 124-29.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 132.

people without imposing institutional limitations or elevating the leaders of society. On January 31, the Minister of Agriculture, Alexei Ermolov, presented a report, written in early Russian rhetoric, calling for a *Zemskii Sobor*. Nicholas had to hearken to the people's voice "before Rus' loses faith in its God-given Tsar, in his force and his might." He would summon elective representatives, "from all estates of the Russian land."<sup>11</sup>

In a rescript of February 18, 1905 to the new Minister of Interior, Aleksandr Bulygin, who replaced Sviatopolk-Mirskii, announced his wish to assemble "the worthiest people" to head a commission to draft plans for a representative institution. He declared his views before a delegation of fourteen *zemstvo* workers that he received at Peterhof on June 6. Nicholas declared, "Let there be, as there was of old, that unity between Tsar and all Rus', the meeting between me and the people of the land that forms the basis of the system resting on unique [*samobytnnye*] Russian principles."<sup>12</sup> In the complex formulation of an election law, Nicholas, the Grand Duke Vladimir, and even Pobedonostsev worked to ensure a substantial representation of the peasantry. The conference introduced a provision guaranteeing the peasants at least fifty-one deputies. For the same reason, another provision eliminated a literacy requirement for Duma deputies. This part of the Bulygin project would be carried over to the law of December 11, 1905, which would govern elections to the State Duma. Most of the urban population, including the entire working class, was left without franchise. Furthermore, the Duma would have only a consultative voice: It would pass on all legislation, but the government could issue laws without its approval if it gained the consent of the State Council, which remained an entirely appointive body.

Nicholas considered that the new institutions, which would make known the needs of the people, did not conflict with the principle of autocratic power. In the manifesto of August 3, 1905, Nicholas expressed the hope that the deputies would justify his confidence and that they would "render to Us useful and zealous assistance in Our toils for the sake of Our common Mother Russia, to uphold the unity, security, and greatness of the State as well as national order and prosperity."<sup>13</sup> He clearly felt confident that the project did not jeopardize his absolute power. When several officers of the Preobrazhenskii Guards asked

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 70-73.

<sup>12</sup> *Polnoe sobranie rechei Imperatora Nikolaia II* (St. Petersburg: Drug Naroda, 1906), 57-58; Verner, *Crisis of Russian Autocracy*, 195-96.

<sup>13</sup> Verner, *Crisis of Russian Autocracy*, 213-14.



whether military men could serve as deputies, Nicholas replied, "Military men, members of the Duma? On the contrary, they must dissolve the Duma if this is required."<sup>14</sup>

The plan convinced the leaders of the Liberation Movement that they could no longer count on major reforms by personal appeals to the tsar. They increasingly sought democratic support among the urban workers and the peasants. The strike movement continued, culminating in the great general strike of October 1905. On October 17, 1905, Nicholas II issued the October Manifesto, drafted under the guidance of Sergei Witte, which promised the establishment of a State Duma elected by all classes of the population without whose agreement no law could take effect. The manifesto also granted the basic civil liberties, personal inviolability, and freedom of religion, speech, assembly and association. On the same day, Nicholas appointed a cabinet headed by Witte, Russia's first Prime Minister, who would be accountable to the tsar.

The manifesto brought general rejoicing at what society regarded as the end of absolute monarchy. It brought a loosening of previous restrictions on Jews, who again began to flow into the universities and again were admitted to the bar in significant numbers. It is clear, however, that Nicholas believed that the very issuing of the manifesto was a confirmation of autocratic authority. His reasoning came out in a disagreement over the form the announcement of the concessions would take. Witte had urged Nicholas merely to declare that he had asked him as prime minister to formulate the projects for the new institutions and to leave the details for him to work out. In this way, he argued, the tsar would not bind himself with promises. However, Andrew Verner has persuasively argued, such a measure would make it seem that the reform came from state officials, representing a break from the old system of personal rule of the tsar. Nicholas insisted on a Manifesto, which made it clear that the reform was the tsar's grant for the benefit of the people. In this way, he denied a break between the autocracy and the new order. He appeared as the founder of the new system, and having founded it, clearly felt himself entitled to change it when he saw fit.<sup>15</sup>

In April 1906, shortly before the elections, deliberations began on new Fundamental Laws to formalize the reforms in the state system introduced since October. The question arose in terms of the definition of the monarch's

<sup>14</sup> N. A. Epanchin, *Na sluzhbe trekh imeratorov* (Moscow: Nashe Nasledie, 1996), 324-25.

<sup>15</sup> Verner, *Crisis of Russian Autocracy*, 239-41.

power in Article One of the Fundamental Laws as “autocratic and unlimited” (*samoderzhavnyi i neogranichennyi*). Both adjectives had been removed in the draft of the Duma charter of February 20, 1906, but Nicholas insisted on retention of the word “autocratic.” By the April conference, Nicholas wanted the word “unlimited” restored as well. He had been convinced by the ebbing of the revolution and the campaign of letters and telegrams organized by those opposed to the October manifesto in the government and the far right parties. He described “the touching feelings of loyal subjects, together with the plea not to limit My power.” Reproach, Nicholas declared at the conference, would come from “the so-called educated element, the proletarians, the third element (the professionals who staffed the administration of the *zemstva*, the local institutions of self-government). But I am certain that 80 percent of the Russian people will be with me.”<sup>16</sup>

Nicholas found additional confirmation for this belief in the ardent entreaties of members of the Union of Russian People, who presented him and the tsarevich with membership badges. At the presentation, Nicholas accepted the badges with thanks then declared, “The burden of power placed on Me in the Moscow Kremlin I will bear Myself, and I am certain that the Russian people will help Me. I will be accountable for My authority before God.” A member delivered a speech declaring that the tsar should not trust those men put forward by Masons and others “who depend on aliens.” The Russian word was “*inorodtsy*,” the legal category for Jews at the time. The Russian people had crossed themselves before the tsar, and the tsar should rely on “Russian people.” “No gates of hell will overcome the Russian Tsar, surrounded by his people.” The tsar replied, “Yes, I believe that with your help, I and the Russian people will succeed in defeating the enemies of Russia.”<sup>17</sup>

Nicholas insisted on the old definition of “unlimited and autocratic” because he believed that the new representative institutions in no way constrained his right to dispense with them if he so wished. The officials at the special conference thought otherwise, observing that the new institutions did limit the tsar’s power in some ways. Nicholas relented on the term “unlimited,” but “autocratic” remained in the Fundamental Laws issued on April 23, 1906. However, “autocratic” had one meaning for the leading state officials, another for the tsar. For them, it meant that the tsar received his power from

<sup>16</sup> Verner, *Crisis of Russian Autocracy*, 299-300.

<sup>17</sup> *Moskovskie vedomosti*, January 15, 1906, 2.

God and his forebears. For him it meant that he remained sovereign, that he retained the primary legislative authority that allowed him to issue the October Manifesto, that he was the creator of the new institutions, and that he alone could change them.<sup>18</sup> The Fundamental Laws of 1906 tried to ensure that the acts of the new state institutions would be governed by law. But the contradiction between autocratic and representative government persisted, and liberal jurists agreed that the new institutions left the basic principle of autocracy untouched. The Fundamental Laws could be changed only at the tsar's initiative; laws would be enacted by the tsar with the participation of the Duma. In this sense the tsar remained sovereign, and the new Fundamental Laws sustained Nicholas's belief in his autocratic power, while seeming to introduce a limited principle of rule of law.<sup>19</sup>

The election law of December 11, 1905, worked out by Witte and Sergei Kryzhanovskii, an official in the Ministry of Interior, extended the systems of curiae, proposed for the Bulygin Duma, to the workers and urban population. The workers received their own curia, but no minimum of seats; the peasants received a curia as well as the minimum of seats guaranteed in the August rules.<sup>20</sup> Although the peasants were underrepresented in terms of their numerical weight in the population, their deputies would determine the mood of the next Duma. Many officials, including Witte himself, and those close to Nicholas, thought this a good thing, because they believed that the peasants remained devoted to the tsar. The Grand Duke Constantine Konstantinovich also placed his hopes in the peasants. He wrote in his diary on October 26, 1905, "My companions and I all maintain our support for autocratic government and nurture the hope that if many peasant deputies are elected to the State Duma, then it may be possible to return to the autocratic model of government, which undoubtedly has the support of our peasant masses."<sup>21</sup> In February 1906, a new State Council was created, half-elective from estates and institutions, half-appointed by the emperor to act as a counterweight to the Duma.

<sup>18</sup> Verner, *Crisis of Russian Autocracy*, 299.

<sup>19</sup> For a valuable discussion of the juridical principles involved in these changes, see Hiroshi Oda, "The Emergence of Pravovoe Gosudarstvo (Rechtsstaat) in Russia," *Review of Central and East European Law* 25, no. 3 (1999): 395-97.

<sup>20</sup> For the rules for the Duma elections, see Terence Emmons, *Formation of Political Parties and the First National Elections in Russia* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982), 12-14.

<sup>21</sup> "Dnevnik v. kn. Konstantina Konstantinovicha, 10/8/05-11/6/06," GARF, 660-1-55, 90.

But the results of the elections to the first State Duma immediately dispelled the illusions of a conservative, monarchist peasantry. The peasants voted heavily for the opposition parties—the Constitutional Democrats or Kadets and the Laborer (*Trudoviki*) Party, which promised expropriation of the nobles' estates. Nicholas took advantage of the official reception of Duma deputies to make clear that he remained the sovereign and autocrat. His moderate advisors urged him to appear at the Tauride Palace, in the precinct of the Duma as a gesture of conciliation. He chose instead to follow the German example for the opening of the Reichstag, that is, to address the deputies in sovereign precincts amidst the symbols of imperial sovereignty. The reception took place at the throne room of the Winter Palace.

The ceremony impressed the deputies and the world with the distance between the autocracy—comprising the emperor, the imperial family, the members of the court and the officials in the State Council—and the elected deputies of the Duma. On the right side of the hall stood the members of the State Council, courtiers, generals wearing braided uniforms decorated with medals, and the ladies of the court in the décolleté, “Russian dress” and *kokoshnik* tiaras worn at the highest state occasions. Assistant Minister of Interior, V. I. Gurko, wrote, “Naively believing that the people’s representatives, many of whom were peasants, would be awed by the splendor of the Imperial court, the women of the imperial family were bedecked in jewels.”<sup>22</sup>

While the right side was harmonious in its uniformity, the Duma deputies standing on the left presented a motley picture of the political and national diversity of the empire. Some of the liberal deputies dressed simply to make clear their identification with the common people. The English journalist, Henry Nevinson, described a microcosm of the empire,

Sturdy peasants in homespun cloth, one Little Russian in brilliant purple with broad blue breeches, one Lithuanian Catholic bishop in violet robes, three Tatar Mullahs with turbans and long grey cassocks, a Balkan peasant in white embroidered coat, four Orthodox monks with shaggy hair, a few ordinary gentlemen in evening dress, and the vast body of the elected in the clothes of every day.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>22</sup> Abraham Ascher, *The Revolution of 1905: Authority Restored* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992), 83-84.

<sup>23</sup> Henry W. Nevinson, *The Dawn in Russia: Or Scenes in the Russian Revolution* (New York: Harper Brothers, 1906), 322.

The tsar set himself apart from both groups by entering in a formal imperial procession, to the strains of “God Save the Tsar.” Masters of Ceremony led with their maces; behind them court officials carried the imperial regalia. Following them came twelve Palace Grenadiers, then the emperor, flanked by the two empresses and followed by the members of the imperial family. After entering, the tsar kissed the Metropolitan of St. Petersburg, who then held a brief prayer service. He ascended the steps and sat upon the throne, which had been draped with the imperial mantle, it was said by the empress herself, in artistic folds. The imperial crown and other items of regalia were visible on stools at his side. The scene was caught in photographs published in newspapers and leading periodicals and a large painting that was publicly exhibited.

The reception was staged to place the regalia at the focal point of the hall. Brought from Moscow for the occasion, the regalia confirmed the sacred sources of the tsar’s authority. Nicholas’s speech to the Duma expressed his conviction that the assembly was an extension of the autocratic will and that its deputies were obliged to earn his confidence. Speaking down to the Duma representatives from the steps of the throne, he declared that Providence had moved him “to summon elected deputies from the people to help in legislation.” He expressed his trust in them both to clarify the needs of the peasantry and to advance the education and prosperity of the people. He admonished them that for these goals, “not only freedom is necessary, but also order on the basis of law is necessary.” He declared his “intense desire to see My people happy and to bequeath my son a legacy of a strong, well-ordered and enlightened State.” He called upon God to bless his labors, “in union with the State Council and State Duma,” and asked that the day mark “the renewal of the moral make-up of the Russian Land, the day of the rebirth of its best forces.” Nicholas concluded by exhorting the deputies to turn to their work with “reverence” (*blagogovenie*) and asked them to justify the trust of tsar and people.<sup>24</sup>

The speech received loud applause from the right of the hall and hostile silence from the left. Not only had Nicholas continued to speak of “his” people, but also he had failed to make a gesture of conciliation by issuing an amnesty for political prisoners. The deputies returned to the Tauride Palace, where they drafted an indignant response. Later that day Nicholas wrote in his diary that he had worked for a long time, “but with a light heart after the successful completion of the ceremony.”<sup>25</sup>

<sup>24</sup> *Novoe Vremia*, April 28, 1906, 1.

<sup>25</sup> *Dnevnik Imperatora Nikolaia II* (Moscow: Orbita, 1991), 312.

Meanwhile, Nicholas made sure that the ministers took brutal and effective measures of retribution. Under his close supervision, the Minister of Interior, Petr Durnovo, reorganized the local administration and sent out governors-general to respond to the insurrections. The tsar exulted at the obliteration of insurgent groups and the execution of insurrectionary workers. In a letter to his mother about the bloody suppression of the Bolshevik armed uprising in December 1905, Nicholas expressed his relief and his expectation that the same tactic would be used elsewhere. "Terror must be answered by terror. Now, Witte himself has realized this." He instructed commanders not to negotiate or make concessions but to retaliate and punish, that is, to annihilate on the spot.

At the same time, he remained convinced that the majority of the people remained personally loyal to him. Although he played no role in sponsoring the pogroms against the Jews, he regarded them approvingly as demonstrations that he and the common people shared the same antipathy. He wrote to his mother on October 25, 1905 that "nine-tenths of the trouble makers are Jews," and that the people had turned against them violently for that reason. "But not only the kikes (*zhidy*) suffered; so did the Russian agitators, engineers, lawyers, and all kinds of other bad people."<sup>26</sup> For him, the pogroms represented another sign of the unity of tsar and people. He sympathized with the extreme right wing antisemitic organization, The Union of Russian People, which had helped to foment the pogroms, and he approved all petitions for pardon submitted by members convicted for participation in these disturbances.<sup>27</sup>

Nicholas also pressed Prime Minister Petr Stolypin to take the most ruthless and least legal expedients against the oppositional movements. Abraham Ascher has shown the tsar's dominant role in the establishment of the field court-martials, and the coup d'état of June 3, 1907, both of which have carried Stolypin's name. On August 12, 1906, a bomb went off in Stolypin's suburban villa, leaving twenty-five dead and Stolypin's son and daughter seriously injured. Nicholas instructed the prime minister to find ways to realize his "inexorable desire to eradicate sedition and restore order." Fearing that the tsar might choose to establish a dictatorship, Stolypin submitted a proposal for field court-martials to counter terrorism. It was issued on August 19, 1906, as an emergency decree, under Article 87 of the Fundamental Laws.

<sup>26</sup> Verner, *Crisis of Russian Autocracy*, 260.

<sup>27</sup> A. S. Tager, *Tsarskaia Rossiia i delo Beilisa* (Moscow: Ogiz, 1934), 39-40.

The “Stolypin court-martials” were in fact an effort to satisfy the tsar’s demand for violent retribution.

The decree assigned governor-generals the power to bring revolutionaries before military courts that could issue summary sentences, including death. While court-martials had been included in the emergency provisions governing most of Russia during the revolution, those tribunals did not forego rules of legal procedure and could be appealed. The law of August 19, 1906 dispensed even with an investigation, when guilt was “so obvious” that one was not necessary. Only Stolypin and the Minister of Justice, Ivan Shcheglovitov, opposed it. The decree turned the countryside into a battlefield. Between 1906-09, the field court-martials sentenced nearly 2,700 people to execution. In those three years, more people lost their lives for political crimes than during the entire nineteenth century. In addition, over 22,000 were sent into administrative exile.

While Stolypin defended and supported the field court-martials, his goal was the creation of a new political nation made up of property owners who would have a stake in defending the state and the monarchy. This grew out of the view embraced by Witte and others in the bureaucracy that the government could lead society. It also involved a transformation of the peasantry by dissolving the commune and creating a new class of independent peasant proprietors. Provinces with communal land tenure were the sites of the most frequent and violent insurrections, convincing many officials and noblemen that the commune, rather than a bulwark of order, had become a hotbed of peasant rage. The landed nobility supported Stolypin’s program of the protection of property and the dissolution of the peasant commune, while calling for a narrowing of the electorate for the Duma.

In November 1906, under Article 87, Stolypin began issuing the laws that would permit the breakup of peasant communes and the establishment of separate farms, which would be held with individual property rights. Article 87 required confirmation of the decrees by the Duma when the next assembly resumed sessions. The elections to the second Duma, which convened in March 1907, increased the strength of the left. The majority of deputies continued to demand expropriation of land and refused to approve the laws. On June 3, 1907, Nicholas issued a manifesto announcing the dissolution of the Second Duma. A new electoral law was introduced under Article 87. This violated the Fundamental Laws, which specifically barred the use of the emergency provisions to change the electoral law.

The manifesto of June 3, 1907 is usually termed the Stolypin "coup d'état." But, as Ascher has made clear, the prime minister once more had acted only under the insistent prodding of the emperor. On June 2, when Nicholas signed the law, he wrote to Stolypin that delay in dissolving the Duma was "intolerable." "It is necessary to display decisiveness and firmness to Russia.... There must be no delay, not one minute of hesitation! God favors the bold!" In the decree of June 3, announcing the dissolution of the Duma, Nicholas declared that he would continue to honor the rights granted by the October manifesto but would change only "the means of summoning deputies from the people" to the Duma. He insisted that the Duma, "created for the strengthening of the Russian State (*Gosudarstvo Rossiiskoe*), must be Russian (*russkii*) in spirit as well," and whereas other nationalities should have deputies, they should not be allowed to decide "purely Russian" questions. These problems could not be decided by legislative means but only by the authority giving the first law, "the historical Power of the Russian Tsar." He emphasized, "It is from the Lord, God, that imperial power over our people is entrusted to us. Before his throne we shall answer for the fate of the Russian state."<sup>28</sup>

The call for a legislature that was "Russian in spirit" meant in practice the sharp reduction in the representation of other nationalities such as Poles, Tatars, and Armenians and the exclusion of deputies from eastern borderlands such as the steppe and Turkestan regions. The change also gave substance to a central thrust of the national myth—identifying all those who resisted the monarch's power as not truly Russian, as enemies of the state. Nicholas's telegram to the Union of Russian People, which had campaigned for the Duma's dissolution and for a restoration of true autocracy, gives a sense of the future reality he envisioned for Russia. "I am confident that now all the truly faithful and affectionate sons of the Russian homeland will unite still more closely, and as they continually increase their numbers, they will assist Me in bringing about a peaceful renewal of our great and holy Russia and in improving the goodly way of life of her people."<sup>29</sup>

Stolypin also desired a legislature "Russian in spirit," but his concept of the Russian nation differed sharply from Nicholas's belief in a unity

<sup>28</sup> Ascher, *The Revolution of 1905*, 351; PSZ, Sobranie 3, no. 29240, June 3, 1907.

<sup>29</sup> The telegram was immediately printed in the party newspaper, *Russkoe Znamia* (Ascher, *The Revolution of 1905*, 357-58).



between tsar and people. Stolypin strove to make the state the focus of national unity. The state would unite landholders of all classes, including peasant proprietors, and merchant and industrial capitalists. Property would ensure a stake in the regime and break down estate barriers; it would inspire a state spirit, *gosudarstvennost'*, among all groups in Russia that would find in it a champion of Russian domination in the empire and abroad.

The new electoral law attained Stolypin's goal of strengthening the conservative and nationalist forces in the Third Duma, which served its full term from 1907 to 1912. The Octobrist party, the party of landholders and industrialists, held a plurality, and at least for a while the prime minister was able to develop a working relationship with their leader, the Old Believer industrialist, Alexander Guchkov. The Duma approved of Stolypin's land laws providing for the dissolution of the peasant commune. The Octobrist leadership cooperated with Stolypin to introduce reforms of the army and navy and laws for the development of universal primary education.

Stolypin was hobbled by the loss of the support of the tsar, whose trust in him diminished as the revolutionary threat passed. Stolypin's state nationalism presumed the development of a cultural and historical sense that united a nation apart from the tsar, a view that could hardly win the tsar's sympathy. Nicholas's bonds with the people were personal, displayed in fervent expressions of spiritual kinship and mutual devotion, giving him almost mystical feelings of exaltation. His family life at Tsarskoe Selo became the principal site of his communion with the people. There he gathered around him those who shared his views, his symbolic elite, now shrunk to those hostile to the institutions of state. Nicholas felt closest to the heads of his security corps, the guards officers he knew—the Minister of the Court, Count Fredericks, the Palace Commandants, Vladimir Dediulin and Vladimir Voeikov, the chief of the Palace Administration, Mikhail Putiatin—men who avoided expressing opinions that might contradict the emperor's.

The one person who enjoyed Nicholas's complete trust was the empress. Mark Steinberg has made clear that Alexandra's political views were identical to her husband's on all significant issues—the importance of the assertion of autocratic power, its divine source, and the devotion of the people to the throne. Alexandra brought the Victorian concept

of the wife as strong and supportive helpmeet into the Russian imperial household. Her impassioned advocacy of these views before the tsar reinforced his beliefs and gave him the reassurance that he sought among all he trusted.<sup>30</sup>

Nicholas and Alexandra found further support for their views among the “men of God” who congregated in their chambers at Tsarskoe Selo. They met Grigorii Rasputin shortly after the issuing of the October Manifesto on November 1, 1905 and considered him a man of the people absolutely devoted to his tsar. In addition to his seemingly miraculous power to stop the tsarevich’s bleeding, Rasputin shared their distrust of educated and aristocratic society. He described both the emperor and empress as defenders of the people and religion against the enemies of God. Rasputin addressed Alexandra almost as a saint. She wrote in her notebook a remark that he uttered in 1907, “She is an ascetic (*podvizhnitsa*), who with experience and intelligence struggles skillfully in a holy manner.”<sup>31</sup>

Nicholas was also impressed by Rasputin. His concern for the tsarevich was as great as Alexandra’s and grew as he began to present his son as the hope for Russia’s future. He wrote to Stolypin in October, 1906, “He made a remarkably strong impression both on her Majesty and myself, so that instead of five minutes, our conversation went on for more than an hour.” He told General Dediulin that Rasputin was “just a good, religious, simple-minded Russian. When in trouble or assailed by doubts, I like to have a talk with him and invariably feel at peace with myself afterwards.” His diaries mention numerous long conversations with Rasputin, without, however, suggesting their content. Stolypin warned Nicholas about keeping Rasputin close to him and, in 1911, banished him from the capital. This step only confirmed Nicholas’s beliefs. That same year he sent Rasputin as a personal emissary to Nizhnii-Novgorod to determine the qualifications of the governor of the province, A. N. Khvostov, to serve as Stolypin’s

<sup>30</sup> For a convincing analysis of Alexandra’s ideas and their relationship to Nicholas’s, see Mark Steinberg, “Nicholas and Alexandra: An Intellectual Portrait,” in *The Fall of the Romanovs: Political Dreams and Personal Struggles in a Time of Revolution*, ed. Mark Steinberg and Vladimir M. Khrustalev (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 34-36.

<sup>31</sup> “Zapisnaia knizhka im. Aleksandry Fedorovny s vyskazyvaniiami Grigoriia Rasputina (1907-1916) s darstvennoi nadpis’iu Rasutina,” GARF, 640-1-309, 38-39, 52-54.

replacement as minister of interior when the prime minister asked to be relieved of that post.<sup>32</sup>

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The revolution of 1905 did not shake the tsar's confidence in his vision of a renewed personal autocracy in Russia. Rather, the defeat of the revolution proved to him that the Russian monarchy could triumph over adversity; that it was his destiny to lead Russia out of a time of troubles, like the first Romanov, Tsar Michael Fedorovich, and create a restored and powerful absolute monarchy supported by the masses of the Russian people. After 1907, Nicholas showed the resolve to take whatever steps were necessary to realize this vision. The Jews, viewed as menacing this archaic vision of Russia, soon felt its repercussions—the return of the restrictions on Jews' matriculating in the universities and on admission to the bar.<sup>33</sup> It was during 1911 and 1912 that the central government, with Nicholas's tacit approval, became involved in the ritual murder case of Mendel Beilis in Kiev. The case had been pressed by the Kiev organization of the Union of Russian People, and right-wing deputies of the Duma, when the Duma had begun consideration of proposals to eliminate the Pale of Settlement and to extend equal rights to Jews. Despite the absence of evidence of ritual murder in the autopsy, or any proofs, local authorities supported by the Minister of Justice, Ivan Shcheglovitov decided to prosecute Beilis. While there is no indication that Nicholas played a role in the case, he received numerous reports on its progress, and clearly believed in the possibility of ritual murder.<sup>34</sup>

The Beilis case made clear the depth of Nicholas's belief in the survival of early Rus' and his personal identification with the monarchist peasantry. As far back as 1817, Alexander I had decreed that ritual murder could not be the basis of criminal charges in the empire, "in view of the fact that such accusations

<sup>32</sup> Andrei Maylunas and Sergei Mironenko, *A Lifelong Passion: Nicholas and Alexandra, Their Own Story* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1996), 296-97, 314, 320-22, 328-30, 341, 343, 350-74, 376; M. V. Rodzianko, *The Reign of Rasputin: An Empire's Collapse* (London: Frederick A. Stokes, 1927), 11; Sir Bernard Pares, *The Fall of the Russian Monarchy* (New York: Vintage Books, 1961), 143; A. Ia. Avrekh, *Tsarizm i IV Duma* (Moscow: Nauka, 1981), 255.

<sup>33</sup> Nathans, *Beyond the Pale*, 296-301, 366.

<sup>34</sup> Hans Rogger, "The Beilis Case: Anti-Semitism and Politics in the Reign of Nicholas II," *Slavic Review* 25, no. 4 (December 1966): 615-29.

have previously been refuted by impartial investigations and royal charters.”<sup>35</sup> But Nicholas regarded the legal experience of the west, which Alexander I had followed, as alien to the feelings of the Russian people. The belief in ritual murder was one that Nicholas could share with the masses, who he believed remained devoted to him. Nicholas saw all the reports of the prosecution from the tsar, and let the trial go forward. The members of the Union of Russian People who concocted the charges and the government officials who encouraged them were among those he trusted as true Russians. The belief or non-belief in ritual murder drew a clear line between those who shared his views and those who hoped to set Russian monarchy on a western course.<sup>36</sup> The subversion of the court system, the most successful product of the great reforms, was a first step towards a reaffirmation of personal power.

Broad coverage of the trial in the press opened the government to widespread ridicule and condemnation. Reports and articles about the trial appeared in newspapers nearly every day in the fall of 1913. Nicholas’s critics branded the trial a return to medieval justice based on prejudice and superstition. Vladimir Korolenko, in *Russkoe Bogatstvo*, wrote that the reader first looked for the news about the trial.

Evidently, Russian citizens have understood finally, the Jewish question is a Russian question, that wrong and evil exposed at the Beilis trial, are a Russian wrong and evil. They understood that one cannot be an indifferent spectator, that Russian nationalism is a threat to the entire Russian spirit. They understood what kind of arbitrary, savage, dark Russia is being created by nationalism for the Russians...<sup>37</sup>

The Beilis trial was the subject causing the greatest number of government actions against the press in 1913, resulting in 102 penalties including the arrest of three editors and the closing of three newspapers. Abroad the press characterized the trial as another example of the backwardness and barbarism of Russian autocracy. Appeals to end the trial came from Germany, France, England, and the United States. Even the anti-Semitic monarchist and editor of *Kievlianin*, Vasilii Shul’gin, wrote an outraged condemnation of the trial.<sup>38</sup>

<sup>35</sup> A. S. Tager, *Tsarskaia Rossiia i delo Beilisa* (Moscow: Ogiz, 1933), 17.

<sup>36</sup> Rogger, “The Beilis Case,” 623-26.

<sup>37</sup> Tager, *Tsarskaia Rossiia i delo Beilisa*, 197-99.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 201, 205-07; Maurice Samuel, *Blood Accusation: The Strange History of the Beilis Case* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1966), 164-65.

The Minister of Justice, Shcheglovitov, crudely meddled in the trial, ensuring that the majority of the jurors would be peasants and none would be intellectuals. “It is the fate of the simple Russian peasant to show the entire world the truth in this case,” declared the Kiev monarchist newspaper, *Dvuglavyi Orel*. But the jury voted to acquit. An officer of the police called the case a “police Tsushima, which never will be forgiven.” Yet neither Nicholas nor the far right gave indication that they believed the trial a mistake. The presiding judge, F. A. Boldyrev, who gave a summation strongly biased in favor of the prosecution, received a gold watch and a secret bonus and was promoted to the position of Chairman of the Kiev Judicial Chamber—the chief of the magistracy of the entire Southwestern Region. The prosecutor, G. G. Chaplinskii, who had been named procurator of the Kiev Judicial Chamber two days after the murder, was appointed to the Senate on January 1, 1914. Nicholas’s faith in his vision hardly faltered. He and the Minister of Interior, Nicholas Maklakov, asserted that although Beilis was innocent, ritual murder had taken place, and the government took steps to make the prosecution of ritual murder a government policy, supporting his scenario as national tsar. A book, prepared under the auspices of the Ministry of Interior, endeavored to demonstrate that government had sufficient evidence of the ritual murder of the victim, Iushchinskii. A portrait of Shcheglovitov was the frontispiece for the book, which appeared in 1917. On the eve of the war, the government was preparing another ritual murder trial.<sup>39</sup>

The violent confrontations of the early twentieth century must be conceived not as the unsuccessful assault of revolutionary groups against a beleaguered and obsolete autocracy, but as a collision of two fiercely opposed insurgent forces, a Russia awakening politically and demanding to be heard and a monarch seeking to create a pure autocracy drawing personal authority from God and the people, unencumbered by institutions of the state or the critical opinion of educated society.



<sup>39</sup> Tager, *Tsarskaia Rossiia i delo Beilisa*, 221-23, 272; Rogger, “The Beilis Case,” 628.

Part IV

Russian Monarchy  
and the Imperial State





## 10. The Russian Empire and Russian Monarchy: The Problem of Russian Nationalism<sup>1</sup>



The consideration of Russian nationalism and nationality has been obscured both by the vagueness of the concepts and the distinctive character of Russian expressions of nation. On one hand, aspects of nationalism—national pride, patriotism, a sense of national interests—are prominent features throughout Russian history and frequently remarked upon by foreign observers. But it has been a common theme in the scholarly literature that a popular Russian nationalism failed to appear in Russia. The monarchy's aversion to representative institutions, Hans Rogger wrote, prevented the development of "a nationalism that was capable of reconciling important segments of Russian society to one another and to the state."<sup>2</sup> The monarchical nationalism that evolved in the nineteenth century has been regarded with some disdain, giving rise to vivid and even comic metaphors such as "Slavophile window dressing" according to Hans Rogger, or Benedict Anderson's "a certain inventive legerdemain" that "was required to permit the empire to appear attractive in national drag."<sup>3</sup>

During the nineteenth century, nationalism came to mean the aspiration of peoples to assume sovereignty over the state, popular sovereignty, through

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<sup>1</sup> This is a revised version of the article "Natsionalizm, narodnost' i rossiiskoe gosudarstvo," *Neprikosnovennyi zapas* 17, No. 3 (2001): 100-105.

<sup>2</sup> Hans Rogger, "Nationalism and the State: A Russian Dilemma," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 4, (1961-1962): 253-56.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 261; Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1996), 86-87.



participatory institutions. Russia did not follow the models of the emergence of modern nationalism, such as those advanced by Miroslav Hroch.<sup>4</sup> The evolution of a nation-state in France, England, and Sweden saw a consciousness of nation emerge under the aegis of a monarchy and a monarchical elite, permitting a continuity between earlier and later forms of national consciousness. Hroch's second model describes the emergence of a national movement in opposition to foreign rule, imperial or colonial, a situation that also does not pertain to Russia. In both models, a people takes control of a state that comes to be considered an expression of the nation.<sup>5</sup>

The most cogent and compelling explanation for the weakness of popular nationalism in Russia belongs to Geoffrey Hosking.<sup>6</sup> Hosking attributed the absence of this type of nationalism to the existence of the empire, which thwarted the formation of a nation-state in Russia. Russian autocracy "was generated by the needs of empire, and had to be reinforced as that empire came increasingly into conflict with nation-building." His thesis is that "in Russia state-building obstructed nation-building," and autocracy and backwardness "were symptoms and not causes: both were generated by the way the building of the empire obstructed the formation of a nation."<sup>7</sup>

Hosking's thesis effectively highlights the conflict between imperial and national designs, but omits the agency that apprehended and evaluated "the needs of empire" and that pursued the policies that generated that conflict. Presumably the vast expanses of Eurasia accompanied by a long power vacuum thrust upon Russia an imperial destiny. My study of Russian monarchy has led me to a different thesis: it was the rulers of Russia who determined to build and rule an empire and who gave rise to a political culture governed by the imagery and designs of empire. From the reign of Ivan III, who in 1489 refused the title of king from the Holy Roman Emperor with the declaration that he "had never wanted to be made king by anyone," the rulers of Russia

<sup>4</sup> Miroslav Hroch, "From National Movement to the Fully-Formed Nation: The Nation Building Process in Europe," in Geoff Eley and Ronald Grigor Suny, eds., *Becoming National*, 61-62.

<sup>5</sup> This is emphasized in John Breuilly, *Nationalism and the State* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982).

<sup>6</sup> Geoffrey Hosking, *Russia: People and Empire, 1552-1917*, xxiv, xxvi, xvii.

<sup>7</sup> This is the point of view set forth by Geoffrey Hosking, *Russia: People and Empire, 1552-1917*, xxiv, xxvi.

conceived monarchical sovereignty as imperial sovereignty.<sup>8</sup> The word “empire” carried several connotations. First, empire signified dominion or supreme power unencumbered by other authority. Second, it implied imperial expansion, extensive conquests, encompassing non-Russian lands. Third, it created equivalents to other empires, the Roman, and the Byzantine, the latter as the Christian empire, the defender of Orthodoxy. These meanings were conflated and served to reinforce each other. The expansion of empire confirmed the image of supreme power, justified the unlimited authority of the Russian emperors, and endowed the Russian ruler with standing equal to or superior to the rulers of the West. In the development of the Russian state, it was the supremacy and centrality of the monarchical will that proved the principal determinant of state policies and the acquisition and defense of the empire numbered among the attributes demonstrating the force and extent of its sway.

The expansion of Russia in the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries brought non-Russian territories under the authority of the Russian tsars, emperors, and empresses, leading them to evoke comparisons with the empires of antiquity. In the period when Western European kings adopted “the imperial idea” and the attendant imagery and ceremonies to consolidate their power over their separate realms, the rulers of Russia, unencumbered by internal religious wars and feudal rights, promoted the goals and policies of an expanding empire centered in the Russian capital.<sup>9</sup> As suggested in the Introduction, they elevated their authority by assuming the images of western ideals of rule, Peter the Great, the absolutism of Louis XIV, Catherine the Great, the persona of philosopher king, Alexander I, an enlightenment ideal of centralized egalitarian government.

By the same token, the national narratives and symbols adopted by the monarchy represented more than “window-dressing” or “drag.” Rather, they expressed new conceptions of the role and destiny of Russian monarchy as a symbol of the nation, counterpoised to the popular nationalism of the west,

<sup>8</sup> Dmitrii Stremoukhov, “Moscow the Third Rome: Sources of the Doctrine,” in *The Structure of Russian History: Interpretive Essays*, ed. Michael Cherniavsky (New York: Random House, 1970), 132.

<sup>9</sup> On the French and English kings’ use of the imperial idea and symbols to advance their particular goals, see Frances A. Yates, *Astraea: The Imperial Theme in the Sixteenth Century* (London: ARK, 1985).

conceptions that were shared by many educated Russians and members of the elite. Nationalism became a field of contestation between the monarchy and educated society, each claiming to represent the people, in its struggle to control the state. The weakness of democratic nationalism owed not to the presence and needs of empire, and not only to their aversion to constitutional government, but to the determination of Russian monarchy to assume the mantle of nation, and to resist and eliminate challenges to this prerogative.

The monarchy elaborated its own national narratives.<sup>10</sup> After the failure of the Decembrist revolt, which presumably demonstrated the Russian people's antipathy to western ideas of liberalism and revolution, the monarchy appropriated the principle of nationality, presenting the obedience and devotion of the people as a tacit mandate from the Russian people. To counter the slogan, "liberty, fraternity, equality," the regime adopted the triad "Orthodoxy, Autocracy, Nationality."<sup>11</sup> The official nationality narrative and later the Muscovite narrative of the nationalist myth preempted the concept of nation for the autocracy: nationality (*narodnost'*) was an attribute of supreme authority, ruling out a representative government that could constitute a Russian nation. As for the empire, official writers imagined imperial Russia as a nation united in obedience to the Russian emperor. Mikhail Pogodin wrote in 1832, "Occupying an expanse that no other monarchy on earth has ever occupied, neither the Macedonian, nor the Roman, Arabic, the Frankish or the Mongol, [Russia] is settled principally by tribes who speak one language, have, consequently, one form of thought (*obraz mysli*), practice one Faith, and like an electronic circuit, quaver at a single contact."<sup>12</sup> The empire thus figured as a simulacrum of the monarchical nation, absorbed into it as a byproduct of the ruler's hold on his Russian subjects.

The presumption of the Great Reforms, on the part of the monarchy, was that the changes in the government would strengthen the bond of the nation with the tsar. In the first years of his reign, Alexander II identified the monarchy with the reforms of the 1860s—the emancipation, the court and

<sup>10</sup> See Article 7.

<sup>11</sup> On the idealistic and utilitarian grounds of Uvarov's slogan, see Andrei Zorin, "Ideologiya 'Pravoslaviia-Samoderzhaviiia-Narodnosti': Opyt rekonstruktsii," *Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie* 26 (1996): 86-87, 92-101.

<sup>12</sup> M. P. Pogodin, *Istoriko-kriticheskie otryvki*, 2. See Article 7 for a discussion of the autocracy's national narratives.

*zemstvo* reforms—which were promoted by government officials. In Novgorod, at the Millennium celebrations of the Russian state, Alexander addressed the local nobility, calling the celebration “a new sign of the indestructible bond of all the estates of the Russian land with the government, with one goal, the happiness and well-being of our dear fatherland.”<sup>13</sup> The effort to identify monarch and reformed government led to the emergence of a variety of monarchical nationalism, seeking a unity between monarch and nation, in a reformed and dynamic Russian imperial state.

Alexander II refused to accept even limited public participation in government, alienating much of educated society and creating the conditions for an insistent revolutionary movement. The result was a wedge driven between the autocrat and those who believed that only representative institutions could express the needs of a Russian nation. The newspaper, *Golos*, expressed such views in an editorial on the celebration of Peter’s bicentenary in 1872. The *Golos* columnist condemned the monarchy as an abstract state that did not have the capacity “to fuse the population into a single people.” It was the “abstract state, isolated from the soil of the people,” that had been crushed at Sevastopol. Instead, the author advanced his view of a nation-state, the nation as civic entity: “A state assimilates tribes only by relying on the strength of a basic nationality (*narodnost’*), but a nationality can announce its strength only in conditions of public independent action.” Not the powerful leader, but an independent people strengthened the state. Russia would become powerful when it became a “Russian state, i. e. when it will rest on the strength of a Russian people, acting independently.”<sup>14</sup> The Russian monarchy purporting to embody the state and the nation, allowed little room for “a Russian people, acting independently.”

The accession of Alexander III brought the introduction of a national myth, which evoked a religious and ethnic bond with the Russian people, who had presumably survived the processes of Westernization and provided the basic foundations of Russian monarchy and state. In the rhetoric of the regime, the empire was replaced by “Russian land” (*russkaia zemlia*) evoking the seventeenth century and implying that it was, as least in potential, ethnically Russian. The official accounts of Alexander III’s trip through the Ukraine and the Caucasus in 1888 cast his visits as demonstration of the extent of the

<sup>13</sup> S. S. Tatishchev, *Imperator Aleksandr II*, 1: 404.

<sup>14</sup> *Golos*, June 6, 1872, 1-2.

Russian land. The newspaper *Pravitel'stvennyi Vestnik* concluded, "There is no doubt that the visit of His Imperial Majesty to the Caucasus will fuse into one all the nationalities living there in general love and devotion to the Tsar and to stand for Him and for the whole land, the Russian Land." The Russian Land defined the new, national character of the Russian empire. The subjugation of other nationalities elevated Russia to the level of an imperial nation and justified the colorful exploits of the Russian forces.<sup>15</sup>

Monarchical narratives dominated the thinking of many tsarist functionaries and conservative writers. In the last decade of Nicholas I's reign, a group of officials and officers, including N. N. Murav'ev, A. P. Balasoglo, and P. P. Semenov, working within the framework of Official Nationality, sought to identify the empire with the national goals by expanding the empire in the Far East as a national project—a form of national imperialism.<sup>16</sup> In the 1860s, tsarist officials in the Western Provinces, Mikhail Dolbilov has shown, sought to impose a notion of "Russianness," presuming that these lands, dominated by a Roman Catholic Polish nobility, were primordial Russian territory.<sup>17</sup> Writers such as Iurii Samarin and Nicholas Danilevskii emphasized the leading role of Russian nationality both within the empire and supporting the cause of Slavdom in Eastern Europe. Mikhail Katkov developed the idea of multi-national empire one with the Russian nation, a "political nation" that included other nationalities in belonging to a tsarist state.<sup>18</sup>

The incorporation of nation into the regime's representations compelled officials and writers to seek often visionary embodiments of the national spirit that did not intrude on the presentations of the dominant narrative. Leading Slavophiles, like Ivan Aksakov, took their inspiration from an idealized

<sup>15</sup> Cited in *Moskovskie Vedomosti*, October 18, 1888, 3.

<sup>16</sup> Mark Bassin, *Imperial Visions: Nationalist Imagination and Geographical Expansion in the Russian Far East, 1840-1865* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 12-13, 94-101. However, Bassin's notion that this was a liberal project in opposition to Nicholas I and the Official Nationality doctrine is unconvincing, considering that it developed very much with encouragement of the emperor.

<sup>17</sup> Mikhail Dolbilov, "Russian Nationalism and the Nineteenth-Century Policy of Russification in the Russian Empire's Western Region," in *Imperiology: From Empirical Knowledge to Discussing the Russian Empire*, ed. Kimitaka Matsuzato (Sapporo: Slavic Research Center, Hokkaido University), 141-58.

<sup>18</sup> Andreas Renner, "Defining a Russian Nation: Mikhail Katkov and the 'Invention' of National Politics," *The Slavic and East European Review* 81, No. 4 (October 1983): 676-77, 681.

image of seventeenth century Rus' when, they believed, a Russian tsar ruled in harmony with a Russian land, embodied in an Assembly of the Land (*Zemskii Sobor*) consisting of all estates of the realm. Many writers sought manifestations of the nation in the core lands of the Russian center, what Alexei Miller described as “the nationalist appropriation of space.”<sup>19</sup> At the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century, some nurtured dreams of the expansion of the lands occupied by ethnic Russians through colonization, envisioning Russians migrating across the empire, occupying the “empty lands” of Eastern nationalities, and turning the empire into a Russian national domain. In 1892, the eminent explorer-geographer P. P. Semenov, described Russia’s mission as “part of the great colonizing movement of the European race,” comparable to the overseas colonization of Spain, France, and England.<sup>20</sup> In his popular *Course of Russian History*, Vasilii Kliuchevskii wrote that colonization was “the basic fact of Russian history” and that “the history of Russia is the history of country that colonizes itself.”<sup>21</sup> In their imagination, these territories occupied by Russians would make the empire national—a utopian surrogate for a political nation.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>19</sup> Alexei Miller, *The Romanov Empire and Nationalism: Essays in the Methodology of Historical Research* (Budapest-New York: Central European University Press, 2008), 161-80. Miller means by “the nationalist appropriation of space,” “a symbolic, imagined geography. The subject is a complex web of discursive practices that included ideological motivation, symbolic, toponymic, artistic familiarization with and appropriation of a particular space in such a way as to make the public conscience aware of this space as part of its ‘own’ ‘national’ territory,” 167; for Russians writers’ conceptions of “interior Russia,” see Leonid Gorizontov, “The ‘Great Circle’ of Interior Russia: Representations of the Imperial Center in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries,” in *Russian Empire: Space, People, Power, 1700-1930*, 67-93.

<sup>20</sup> Cited in Uillard Sanderlend (Willard Sunderland), “Imperii bez imperializma?” in *Novaia Imperskaia Istoriia Post-Sovetskogo Prostranstva*, ed. I. Gerasimov et al. (Kazan: Tsentr Issledovaniia Natsionalizma i Imperii, 2004), 463. See also my article, “Russian Noble Officers and the Ethos of Exploration,” *Russian History/Histoire Russe* 35, Nos. 1-2 (Spring-Summer 2008), 181-97. Vera Tolz, *Russia: Inventing the Nation* (London: Arnold, 2001), 170-74.

<sup>21</sup> Willard Sunderland, *Taming the Wild Field: Colonization of Empire on the Russian Steppe* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2004), 177-220.

<sup>22</sup> On the varieties of imperial nationalism, see Vera Tolz’s chapter on “Imaginative geography: Russian empire as a Russian nation-state,” in *Russia: Inventing the Nation*, 168-81.

Discovering a Russian nation also vexed the leaders of the radical and liberal intelligentsia. According to the East European pattern, elaborated by Hroch, a nationalist intelligentsia took the lead in building a national culture, language, literature, ethnic myths, etc., in opposition to foreign rulers. The fact that the Russian monarchy was defined as national and continued to command sentiments of devotion and patriotism left the Russian intellectual divided between a sense of loyalty and a search for national identity. Those envisioning a state that embodied the desires and ideals of the nation fell into the classic situation of the “superfluous man” (*lishnii chelovek*), one whose ideals could not be accommodated within Russian reality and whose abilities could not be put to morally justifiable use. For the East European intellectual, the struggle was clear between the national self and the foreign enemy. For the Russian, the alien enemy was part of the national self. Ivan Turgenev described this conflict most eloquently in his novel *On the Eve* (*Nakanune*) in the persons of the sympathetic but futile Russians Shubin and Bersenev, who lacked inner strength of the stalwart Bulgarian, Insarov, struggling for his nation’s freedom. Dobroliubov described the inner conflict in his review of the novel, “When Will the Real Day Come?” The Russian man struggled to free himself from a milieu that he was bound to by powerful ties. “How can you turn this milieu upside down? For that you have to turn yourself upside-down. Try sitting in an empty box and turning yourself over with yourself in it. What effort it takes! But if you came to it from the outside, you could turn it over with a mere push.”<sup>23</sup>

The obvious response was to step out of the box, to alienate oneself from the milieu that constrained the *intelligent* from action. This was the radical posture, the posture of revolution, the conceiving of the national state, as well as the society that underlay it as the enemy. The revolutionary intelligentsia took this course based not on a nationalistic but an anti-national ideology—that the socialist movement was a universal one based on worldwide conditions of subjection and a historical process that would ultimately lead to universal justice. To be sure, there were national elements in populism’s focus on the commune, but only in the sense that it would hasten Russia’s path to socialism. The Russian state with its national history was only an obstacle to progress towards a world united in equality and social justice.

<sup>23</sup> N. A. Dobroliubov, *Sobranie sochenii v trekh tomakh* (Moscow: Khudozhevnaia Literatura, 1952), 3: 56.

The constraints on popular nationalism hardly diminished the appeals of Russian nationalism. On the contrary, nationalism, far from being a secondary factor in the Russian past, has been and remains a powerful force, sometimes manifest, sometimes latent, expressing insistent and unresolved demands for a state expressing the identity and will of the Russian people. Unfulfilled, national aspirations have ramified through Russian culture, taking ideological, institutional, philosophical, and artistic forms. They have been asserted and denied, reemerging as a visionary universalism. The nation is everywhere and nowhere, in Russian art, literature, religion, in the people, in philosophy, in a “Russian idea.”

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The meanings of nation, nationality, and nationalism, as a result, were nebulous and variable, reflecting an author’s ideological stance. Like many other western ideas received by Russian intellectuals, liberalism, law, positivism and socialism, the concept metamorphosed to fit the Russian political and social order. The issue was complicated by the semantics of a concept expressed in two related words, *narod*, which also meant people, and *natsiia*, which referred more to a nation-state, but which also could have conservative and even racist connotations.<sup>24</sup> In the nineteenth century, *narod* came to be associated with the common people, or with the official ideology of *narodnost’*, and *natsiia* with a political order of representative government. But for many liberals, like socialist intellectuals, nationalism represented the Russian state that claimed it, the incarnation of national distinctiveness and despotism and the foe of the forces struggling for an outcome that would bring a universal new order that would end Russia’s difference from the west and bring civil and political rights. For this to happen, Russia’s political past had to be totally repudiated. Paul Miliukov’s “Russia and Its Crisis,” published in 1905 on the basis of his 1903 lectures at the University of Chicago in 1903 imagined the autocracy was spent, leaving Russia with no “political tradition.” Autocracy remained “a material fact, not a political principle.” A tradition may have developed in the seventeenth century, but it had been broken by Peter. In Japan, Miliukov

<sup>24</sup> Alexei Miller traces the tortuous evolution of the semantics of these words in Alexei Il’ich Miller, “Istoriia poniatiia *natsii* v Rossii,” in *Poniatiia o Rossii: K istoricheskoi semantike imperskogo perioda*, ed. A. Miller, D. Sdvizhkov, I. Shirle (Moscow: NLO, 2011), 2: 7-49.



believed, progress had occurred so quickly that tradition had no time to die out. In Russia, no political tradition had survived.<sup>25</sup>

In his *Studies on the History of Russian Culture* (*Ocherki po istorii Russkoi kul'tury*), Miliukov relegated the nationalism that existed in Russia to the obsolete political system of the autocracy, responding in this way to the national narratives advanced during the nineteenth century. He drew a sharp distinction between national self-consciousness and public self-consciousness (*obshchestvennoe samosoznanie*). National self-consciousness glorified the existing features of the nation; public self-consciousness took on the task of criticizing the existing order. “National” (*natsional'nyi*) he replied to a critic, meant “relating to a nation,” and should not be confused with “popular” (*narodnyi*), which meant democratic. “National” indicated something “characteristic of a nation.” The terms “nationalistic” (*natsionalisticheskii*) and “nationalism” (*natsionalizm*) referred to doctrines seeking to preserve national peculiarities that he expected to give way to a popular movement free from the burden of the past.<sup>26</sup>

Miliukov's thinking reflected views of the liberation movement prevalent on the eve of the Revolution of 1905. That revolution brought into being a parliamentary institution that could be regarded as expressing a national will apart from the monarchy. With the change in the election laws in 1907, Petr Stolypin endeavored to promote a union of propertied interests—landed nobility, industrialists, and an individualist land-owning peasantry—which would provide a conservative basis for the Russian state and a Great Russia, *Velikaia Rossiia*. The state administration would foster such a development through the Ministry of Education and Interior. The moderate conservative bloc that formed around the Octobrists in the Third Duma espoused a new sense of a political nation, of groups hoping through the state to realize national, imperial goals.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>25</sup> Paul Miliukov, *Russia and Its Crisis* (New York: Collier Books, 1962), 400-03. In fact much of the Japanese tradition, which had been described by a Professor Ienaga at Chicago, had been constructed only in the previous decades. T. Fujitani, *Splendid Monarchy: Power and Pageantry in Modern Japan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996); Carol Gluck, *Japan's Modern Myths*.

<sup>26</sup> P. N. Miliukov, *Ocherki po istorii russkoi kul'tury* (St. Petersburg: I. N. Skorokhodov, 1903), 3:13-14, 422n.

<sup>27</sup> On the appearance of new expressions of nationalism see *Scenarios of Power*, 2, 407-09; Geoffrey A. Hosking, *The Russian Constitutional Experiment: Government and*

Leading figures in liberal politics and thought then envisioned the emergence of a Russian nation resembling the patterns of the western national state. They sought to define the meaning of Russian nation, and nationalism. In his lectures of 1912, Miliukov set forth a positive view of nationality as a belief in a shared history and shared values.<sup>28</sup> At the beginning of his lectures on Russian history, in September 1907, the historian A. E. Presniakov distinguished between nationality (*narodnost'*) and nation (*natsiia*). A state became a nation when there developed national self-consciousness (*natsional'noe samosoznanie*) or a national will (*natsional'naia volia*). "The will to a common political life, therefore, a product of the collective psyche of a given population, is the fundamental characteristic of personal as well as public '*narodnost'*' or '*natsional'nost'*' at that stage of historical development, when nations take form."<sup>29</sup> Peter Struve called upon Russians to educate themselves in politics and to develop a national bond with the state, cherishing the illusion that the tsarist state now had accepted participation and could continue to embody the nation. He conceived of the state in almost mystical terms and nation as a form of spiritual unity uniting people with a national imperial state. He took British and American experiences as examples for an active Russian nationalism that he set against the conservative, official nationality.<sup>30</sup>

But the very appearance of a political nation threatened Nicholas II's conviction that he was the divinely-inspired tsar, ruling a Russian land like his pre-Petrine ancestors, and enjoying a union with the Russian people that

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*Duma, 1907-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973), 215-22. On the use of Russian ethnicity as a political category after 1905 see Charles Steinwedel's discussion of Bashkiria, in "To Make a Difference the Category of Ethnicity in Late Imperial Russian Politics, 1861-1917," in Hoffman and Kotsonis, *Russian Modernity: Politics, Knowledge, Practices*, ed. David Hoffman and Yanni Kotsonis (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000), 75-76, and in greater detail in his PhD dissertation, "Local Politics of Empire: State Religion, and Ethnicity in Bashkiria, 1865-1917" (Columbia University, 1999).

<sup>28</sup> On the development of Miliukov's ideas on nationality, see Melissa Kirschke Stockdale, *Paul Miliukov and the Quest for a Liberal Russia, 1880-1918* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1996), 187-92.

<sup>29</sup> A. E. Presniakov, *Lektsii po russkoi istorii* (Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe Sotsial'no-Ekonomicheskoe Izdatel'stvo 1938), 1: 7-8.

<sup>30</sup> P. B. Struve, *Patriotica: politika, kul'tura, religiia, sotsializm* (Moscow: Respublika, 1997), 67-70, 167-72; Hosking, *The Russian Constitutional Experiment*, 218-20.

enabled him alone to represent the nation. The development of parliamentary institutions only confirmed and strengthened his deep suspicion of the institutions of the Russian state, which he felt eluding his control. Neither he nor the radical opposition could suffer a state based on nation, for both claimed to represent the people. The conception of a Russian nation governing through parliamentary institutions was destined to remain a Utopian dream. The absence of a unified political nation after 1914 must be accounted one of the factors leading to the political fragmentation that overtook Russia during the years of war and revolution. Out of the chaos arose a new more powerful state to reunite, defend, and strive to modernize Russia.



# 11. The “Integrity” (*Tselost’*) of the State in Imperial Russian Representation<sup>1</sup>



From the reign of Peter the Great, statements of the power, extent, and beneficence of the Russian monarchy also revealed an underlying and persistent concern for *tselost’*—the unity, or integrity of the empire. The problem of the integrity of the realm arose intermittently, in response to both internal and external threats, but persisted even at the root of scenarios that obscured or denied it. It emerged as a central theme in the era of revolutions of the first decades of the twentieth century.

The word “integrity” in English carries a meaning of completeness—the state of being whole and undamaged: “the territorial integrity of the nation.” *Tselost’* was the comparable Russian term during the imperial period, *tselostnost’* after the revolution. Tracing the evolution of its usage and variant expressions gives us a glimpse into the thought processes that strove to preserve the monarchy, which in the end conditioned its downfall and that persist even today in post-Soviet Russia. The size and national diversity of the Russian empire made its integrity a frequent cause for apprehension: what would happen if it fell apart?

The responses to this problem figured largely in the representations of monarchical power in imperial Russia. The initial and principal response to threats to the integrity of the realm justified the exertion of unlimited and energetic personal monarchical power. The principle was central to Peter the Great’s Succession Law of 1722. Peter decreed the right of the reigning monarch to choose his successor, that is, he enshrined in law the practice of

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<sup>1</sup> This article is followed by an exchange with the editors of *Ab Imperio* concerning my assumptions and conclusions.

designation in effect before his accession.<sup>2</sup> Rather than regulate the succession according to heredity, he openly subordinated the principle of heredity to the goal of the utility, the well-being of the realm, determined by the untrammelled will of the rational legislator. To avoid the succession of “unworthy heirs,” he ordained that the ruling tsar always have the freedom (*volia*) to designate “whom he wishes and to remove the one who has been designated.” He was acting in this way because of his “care for the integrity of our state [*popечenie o tselosti nashego gosudarstva*], which with the help of God has now grown in extent, as is obvious to all.”<sup>3</sup> The law thus ascertained the connection between the tsar’s unlimited absolute power and the well-being of the realm reflected in the size and territorial unity of the empire.

Peter issued the decree in the context of his scenario of founder, asserting the right of conquest to destroy the old order. He assumed the persona of western rulers, but rejected the juridical premises of their rule. The decree made clear the distance between the legal bases of his rule as Russian emperor and the emerging legal grounds for hereditary monarchy in the West. Early eighteenth century statutes such as England’s Act of Settlement, 1701, Sweden’s “On the Form of Rule,” 1719, Philip V of Spain’s testament, 1713, and Charles VI’s Pragmatic Sanction of 1713 for the Habsburg Empire introduced permanent, fundamental laws of succession that would provide grounds for monarchical stability and continuity.<sup>4</sup> In the name of law, Peter’s edict gave signal demonstration of the supremacy of the unrestrained imperial will and aroused consternation and criticism both in Russia and Europe. In defense of Peter’s decree, his principal ideologist, Feofan Prokopovich, published the tract “The Law of the Monarch’s Will,” which deployed natural law arguments and language in order “to disabuse foreigners of their false opinion of our people and to give them reason to think better of us,” “thus the whole civilized world is our witness.”<sup>5</sup>

<sup>2</sup> See Article 2 in this volume.

<sup>3</sup> *PSZ, Sobranie* 1, no. 3893, February 5, 1722.

<sup>4</sup> Heinz Mohnhaupt, “Die Lehre von der ‘Lex Fundamentalis’ und die Hausgesetzgebung europäischer Dynastien,” *Der dynastische Fürstenstaat: Zur Bedeutung von Sukzessionsordnungen für die Entstehung des frühmodernen Staates*, ed. Johannes Kunisch and Helmut Neuhaus (Berlin: Duncker and Humblot, 1982), 6; Oleg Omel’chenko, “Stanovlenie zakonodatel’nogo regulirovaniia prestolonaslediiia, 26.

<sup>5</sup> Antony Lentin, *Peter the Great*, 27, 127, 33-34.

The result of the law was to subordinate legal considerations to the contingencies of imperial policy taken to preserve the integrity of the state, which was often in peril due to Russia's size and state of backwardness. This point of view was developed by the most prominent Russian historian and geographer of the first half of the eighteenth century, Vasilii Tatishchev. Tatishchev invoked natural law arguments advanced by Montesquieu to connect the monarch's absolute power to Russia's size and geopolitical situation. "Large states that are not safe from neighbors cannot remain whole (*v tselosti sokhranit'sia ne moguť*) without an absolute monarch." In his *Istoriia Rossiiskaia*, he stressed the obstacles: "Large regions with open borders, and especially where the people are not enlightened by learning and reason and fulfill their duties from fear rather than their own good conduct, ... must be monarchies." The size of the empire and its undisciplined and untutored population indicated the vulnerability of the state order, which could be overcome only by the exercise of the forceful will of the absolute monarch. I call this the admonitory mode of the Russian state narrative.<sup>6</sup>

Chapter 2 of Catherine the Great's 1767 Instruction (*Nakaz*) to her "Legislative Commission consists of lapidary statements in admonitory mode. Article 9—"That sovereign is absolute, for there is no other Authority but that which centers in his single Person, that can act with a Vigor proportionate to the Extent of such a vast Dominion." The same point is given even greater emphasis in articles 10 and 11. Article 10 contends that "The Extent of the Dominion requires an absolute Power to be vested in that Person who rules over it" for it ensures "the quick Dispatch of affairs." Article 11 preemptorily evokes the alternative: "Every other Form of Government whatsoever would not only have been prejudicial to Russia, but would even have proved its entire Ruin."<sup>7</sup>

Peter's and Catherine's legislation also provided early statements of what Willard Sunderland has called "territoriality," the identification of the state with the size, cohesiveness, and unity of the territory of the realm. This interest led to the advance of cartography, explorations, and the deployment of

<sup>6</sup> V. N. Tatishchev, "Razgovor dvukh priatelei o pol'ze nauki i uchilishch," in V. N. Tatishchev, *Izbrannye proizvedeniia* (Leningrad: Nauka, 1979), 138-39; V. N. Tatishchev, *Istoriia Rossiiskaia* (Moscow-Leningrad: Akademiia Nauk, 1962), 1: 362; Cynthia Hyler Whittaker, *Russian Monarchy: Eighteenth Century Rulers and Writers in Political Dialogue* (De Kalb, IL: Northern Illinois University Press, 2003), 130-31.

<sup>7</sup> W. F. Reddaway, ed., *Documents of Catherine the Great* (New York: Russell and Russell, 1971), 216.

knowledge as a means of asserting power over territory and the peoples within. Knowledge became a means to take possession of those lands studied and mapped; the empire's great extent became the object of pride, of mastering the lands under the monarch's rule.<sup>8</sup> It fed the monarch's sense of omnipotence: the power of knowledge and rhetoric could shape perception of reality and unleash the sovereign's will.

By the same token, the study of the nationalities led to a reveling in the variety of national groups in the empire. Catherine sponsored ethnographic expeditions and surveys, under the aegis of the Imperial Academy of Sciences, to learn about those peoples of the empire so that they could be transformed into Russians and would be able to "share in their happiness." Her ideas informed the pioneering ethnographic works of the late eighteenth century, particularly Johann Georgi's landmark four-volume account of the nationalities of the empire (*Opisanie vsekh obitaiushchikh v Rossiiskom gosudarstve narodov*).<sup>9</sup> Georgi asserted that the Russian empire was the most diverse of empires. "Hardly any other state in the world possesses such a great variety of different nations, survivals of peoples, and colonies as the Russian state."<sup>10</sup> Enlightenment promised to erase these indigenous traits. Those at earlier stages, Georgi wrote, the Tungus, the Chukchi, were ignorant, simple, and possessed a beguiling innocence. It was "the uniformity of State organization" that could transform all nationalities into educated, Europeanized Russians. The state, Georgi concluded, was "leading our rude Peoples by giant steps toward the common goal of general enlightenment in Russia, of a wonderful fusion of all into a single body and soul, and of creating, as it were, an unshakable Giant that will stand for hundreds of centuries."<sup>11</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Willard Sunderland, "Imperial Space: Territorial Thought and Practice in the Eighteenth Century," in Burbank et. al, eds., *Russian Empire: Space, People, Power, 1700-1930*, 37-55.

<sup>9</sup> I. G. Georgi, *Opisanie vsekh obitaiushchikh v Rossiiskom gosudarstve narodov ...* (St. Petersburg: Imp. Akademia Nauk, 1779), 3 Vols; Nathaniel Knight, "Constructing the Science of Nationality: Ethnography in Mid-Nineteenth Century Russia," Doctoral Dissertation, Columbia University, 1995, 32-40; S. A. Tokarev, *Istoriia Russkoi Etnografii* (Moscow: Nauka, 1966), 103-110.

<sup>10</sup> Tokarev, *Istoriia Russkoi Etnografii*, 103.

<sup>11</sup> I. G. Georgi, *Opisanie vsekh obitaiushchikh v Rossiiskom gosudarstve narodov*, 1: ix; Yuri Slezkine, "Naturalists versus Nations: Eighteenth-Century Russian Scholars Confront Ethnic Diversity," in *Russia's Orient: Imperial Borderlands and Peoples, 1800-1917*, ed. Daniel R. Brower, and Edward J. Lazzerini (Bloomington: Indiana

At the same time, the expansion to the south and the incorporation of Crimea and much of the Black Sea littoral into the empire led to grandiose designs to create a "new Russia" and establish a successor empire to ancient Greece and Rome. Now, it is not in the way of warning, not that of the only alternative but one of bravado, that the monarch boasts of having successfully coped with a daunting task. I call this the celebratory-triumphalist mode of the state narrative. Catherine rejoiced in the size and diversity of Russia and succeeded in increasing both, expanding the already formidable space of Russia to the south and the west, and introducing new peoples to the already multinational population. The inimitable preambles of her legislation do not suffer from understatement.

The vision of a vast multinational empire became especially important to Catherine's image as her reign progressed. Kappeler points out her great pride for the complete listing of the empress's title, which she cited frequently. The Charter of the Nobility opens with the enumeration of the titles to thirty-eight provinces and lands under her rule, including tsaritsa of the new "Kherson-Tauride" province. By the end of Catherine's reign, it was important to confirm that Russia was not only an empire, but the most imperial of nations, comprising more peoples than any other. Thus the academician Heinrich Storch boasted of the ethnographic variety of Russia in 1797, commenting that "no other state on earth contains such a variety of inhabitants. Russians, and Tatars, Germans, Mongols, Finns and Tungus live in an immense territory in the most varied climates..."<sup>12</sup> This was "a most rare phenomenon" and "one seeks in vain another example in the history of the world." Poets compared the Russian empire to ancient Rome.

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The defeat of Napoleon's challenge to Russia's independence as a sovereign state and the Decembrists' challenge to the monarch's absolute power resulted in reaffirmations of both the integrity of the empire and the indispensable role of absolute rule in the survival and flourishing of the Russian state. The survival of the Russian state was a central theme of Karamzin's *History of the Russian*

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University Press, 1997), 38-39; Nathaniel Knight, "Constructing the Science of Nationality," 36-39.

<sup>12</sup> Andreas Kappeler, *Russland als Vielvölkerreich: Entstehung, Geschichte, Zerfall* (Munich: Beck, 1992), 99, 129.



*State*. Explaining the benefits of history, he informed the ordinary citizen why he should read history: “it consoles him when the state suffers calamities, by bearing witness that in bygone times similar events—and even more terrible ones—occurred and the state did not disintegrate.”<sup>13</sup> It was autocracy that tided Russia through its calamities. For Karamzin, the decisive moment was Ivan III’s violent subjugation of Novgorod. In a sentence extending over half a page of text, he elaborated, “Although the human heart typically wishes well to republics, which are based on basic rights of freedom dear to it ... history must glorify the mind of Ivan, for wisdom of state taught him to strengthen Russia by the unification of its parts into a whole (*tseloe*) so that she attained independence and greatness.”<sup>14</sup> In the memorandum he wrote in criticism of Alexander I’s efforts at reform, he claimed that autocracy was the source of both Russia’s state unity and its progress. He decried Alexander’s tolerance as weakness and pointed out widespread ineptitude and corruption. But he disagreed with those “who, perceiving weakness, expect imminent destruction. No! States are sturdy, especially Russia, which is impelled by autocratic power!” “Autocracy is the Palladium of Russia,” he affirmed, “its integrity (*tselost’*) is necessary for her happiness.”<sup>15</sup>

The rhetoric of Nicholas I’s scenario transmuted Karamzin’s ideas into an ideology of autocracy. The successes of the first years of his reign, the suppression of the Decembrist and the Polish uprisings, the victorious wars with Turkey and Persia, fed a triumphalist mentality that celebrated a united empire and nation. The defeat of the Decembrists showed that the autocracy itself enjoyed the support of the Russian people, an incorporation of the notion of popular sovereignty into official rhetoric. The Decembrists’ design was alien to the Russian people. “Neither in the characteristics nor the ways of the Russian is this design to be found. The heart of Russia was and will be impervious to it.” The manifesto went on, “In a state where love for monarchs and devotion to the throne are based on the native characteristics of the people, where there are laws of the fatherland and firmness in administration, all efforts of the evil-intentioned will be in vain and insane.”<sup>16</sup> The logic that

<sup>13</sup> N. M. Karamzin, *Istoriia gosudarstva rossiiskogo* (Moscow: Kniga, 1988), 1: ix, 24.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 2: 86.

<sup>15</sup> Nicholas Karamzin, *Karamzin’s Memoir on Ancient and Modern Russia: A Translation and Analysis by Richard Pipes* (New York: Atheneum, 1969), 191, 200.

<sup>16</sup> N. K. Shil’der, *Imperator Nikolai Pervyi*, 1: 704-06.

obedience and submission signaled consent was reaffirmed after the Polish revolution of 1830. Nicholas asserted in a memorandum that in 1815, Poland "had been given to Russia by right of conquest," and that Alexander I had sought to ensure the interests of Russia "by recreating Poland as an integral part of the empire [*partie intégrante de l'empire*] though with the title of kingdom and with a separate administration and army."<sup>17</sup> Pushkin's poems of 1831, "To the Slanderers of Russia" and "On the Anniversary of Borodino" answered the effrontery of western, and particularly French, support for the Poles and denunciations of Russia as challenges to the unity of the empire. "To the Slanderers of Russia" described the uprising as "a family quarrel" between Slavs, the Europeans' protests expressing hatred of Russians. "Won't the Russian land arise," he warned them. His description of the Russian land (*russkaia zemlia*) evoked the vast reaches of the empire from Perm to Crimea, from Finland to Colchis, from the Kremlin to the Chinese border. "So bards send us your embittered sons: there is room for them in the fields of Russia, amongst the graves of their kinsmen." He asked in "On the Anniversary of Borodino," with irony, where Russia should build fortresses: at the Bug, the Vorskla, the Liman? Who would receive Volynia, the legacy of Bogdan Khmel'nitskii? Would Lithuania be torn from Russia, Kiev?<sup>18</sup> A *reductio ad absurdum* answered foreign challenges to the unity of the empire.

In the years after the Polish uprising, official nationality writers celebrated the solidarity of the peoples of Russia with the monarch. The ethnic diversity of the empire was now dissolved in an image of a single people, which dispelled concerns about the unity and integrity of the empire. All nationalities of the empire shared the devotion to the tsar, which overshadowed ethnic particularities. Mikhail Pogodin wrote in 1832, "Occupying an expanse that no other monarchy on earth has ever occupied, neither the Macedonian, nor the Roman, Arabic, the Frankish or the Mongol, [Russia] is settled principally by tribes who speak one language, have, consequently, one form of thought (*obraz mysl'i*), practice one Faith, and like an electronic circuit, quaver at a single contact."<sup>19</sup>

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 2: 582-84.

<sup>18</sup> A. S. Pushkin, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii* (Leningrad: Akademiia Nauk SSSR, 1948), 3: 269-70.

<sup>19</sup> M. P. Pogodin, *Istoriko-kriticheskie otryuki*, 2.

The minister of education, Sergei Uvarov, formulated these ideas in the doctrine of Official Nationality. A student of German idealist philosophy, he articulated the doctrine as principles that distinguished Russia from the West—“orthodoxy, autocracy, nationality” (*pravoslavie, samoderzhavie, narodnost'*), Russia's answer to “liberty, equality, and fraternity.”<sup>20</sup> In an age of idealism, Uvarov sought “the principles comprising the distinctive character of Russia that belong exclusively to her.” He elevated Karamzin's glorification of the historical role of autocracy to the level of a national idea. Autocracy represented “the chief condition of Russia's political existence. The Russian colossus rests on it as the cornerstone of its greatness. This truth is felt by the countless majority of Your majesty's subjects; they feel this in full measure, though placed on different levels of civic life. The redeeming conviction that Russia lives and is preserved by the spirit of a strong, humane, and enlightened autocracy, should permeate public education and develop with it.”<sup>21</sup>

Defeat in the Crimean War punctured the celebratory rhetoric and idealization of autocracy, making clear that the integrity of the state was again vulnerable. As Olga Maiorova has shown, the allies' attack on Crimea was understood as an attack on the Russian homeland equivalent to the Napoleonic invasion.<sup>22</sup> The losses in the Crimea, and the fall of Sevastopol in the spring of 1855, revived the admonitory mode. Alexander Herzen, reproaching Nicholas for an unnecessary war, argued that the attack had aroused the Russian people's heroic defense but also caused horrible suffering to save “the *tselost'* of the state.”<sup>23</sup>

After the war, Alexander sought to reinforce the bonds with the Russian people by appeals to the feelings of mutual love and the gratitude for the Great Reforms. But reform awakened hopes for popular participation in government and representative institutions. Alexander gave some rein to the noble constitutional ideas, but then rebuked the nobility's pretensions to

<sup>20</sup> Andrei Zorin, “Ideologija ‘Pravoslaviia-Samoderzhavii-Narodnosti’: Opyt rekonstruktsii,” *Novoe Literaturnoe Obozrenie* 26 (1996): 86-87, 92-101.

<sup>21</sup> M. O. Gershenzon, *Epokha Nikolaia I* (Moscow: Obrazovanie, 1910), 115-16.

<sup>22</sup> Olga Maiorova, *From the Shadow of Empire: Defining the Russian Empire through Cultural Mythology, 1855-1870* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2010), 30-33.

<sup>23</sup> Aleksandr Gertzen, *Sobranie sochinennii v XXX tomakh* (Moscow: Akad. Nauk SSSR, 1957), 12: 268-69; A. G. Tartakovskii, *1812 god i russkaia memuaristika* (Moscow: Nauka, 1980), 230.

participate in the work of legislation, stating that the right of initiative for reform belonged to him exclusively, "and is inseparably connected with the autocratic power, entrusted to me by God." His subjects did not have the right to anticipate his "incessant care for Russia's well-being.... No estate has the right to speak with the name of other estates. No one can take it upon himself to petition me about the general welfare and needs of the state." He confided to Bismarck his belief that the Russian peasants believed in a strong personal ruler and would not obey a representative government.<sup>24</sup> He also feared for the unity of state and, in a letter of January 1865 to the heir, Nicholas Aleksandrovich, expressed the close connection he believed existed between autocracy and the unity of the empire. Constitutional demands, he wrote, thwarted the initiatives of the government toward "the gradual development of the prosperity and power of our Mother Russia. Constitutional forms on the model of the West would be the greatest misfortune here and would have as their first consequence not the unity of the State but the disintegration of the Empire into pieces" (*ne edinstvo Gosudarstva a raspadenie Imperii na kuski*). These words were underlined. Alexander expressed the same concern in a conversation with D. D. Golokhvastov in September 1865.<sup>25</sup>

The Polish revolution of 1863 brought forth new concerns for the integrity of the realm. Once more, the affirmation of integrity took the form of an ideological and symbolic statement of unity. Words and images produced a sense of a unified empire that could resist challenges to its borders and the power of the sovereign. The author of this formulation, accordingly, was a writer, the journalist and publisher, Mikhail Katkov, who in future decades would serve as the *éminence grise* of the monarchy. In the pages of his newspaper, *Moskovskie Vedomosti*, and his journal, *Russkii Vestnik*, Katkov introduced a new narrative in celebratory mode that evoked a unified empire. The concept of "integrity" (*tselost'*) became his leading idea, a virtual obsession. But this was not only territorial integrity: Katkov also elaborated a concept of "national integrity."<sup>26</sup> His national state was not the official nationality,

<sup>24</sup> See *Scenarios of Power*, 2: 77, 91.

<sup>25</sup> GARF, 665-1-13, January 30, 1865; Tatishchev, *Imperator Aleksandr II*, 1: 534.

<sup>26</sup> Andreas Renner, *Russischer Nationalismus und Öffentlichkeit im Zarenreich, 1855-1875* (Cologne: Böhlau, 2000), 314-15; Idem, "Defining a Russian Nation: Mikhail Katkov and the 'Invention' of National Politics," *The Slavic and East European Review* 81, No. 4 (October 1983): 660; V. A. Tvardovskaia, *Ideologiya poreformennogo samoderzhaviiia: M.N. Katkov I ego izdaniia* (Moscow: Nauka, 1978), 25-26.

which had stressed the distinctiveness of Russia due to sentimental and historical bonds of devotion. Rather, his models were contemporary European states, Great Britain, Italy, and later Germany, which united different groups in allegiance to a state.<sup>27</sup> The nationalism he envisioned was a political nationalism—the peoples of the empire sharing an allegiance to a unified Russian state even if they practiced different religions and ethnic customs.

In April 1863, he wrote, “There is in Russia one dominant nationality, one dominant language, which was developed by centuries of historical life.” There were many tribes with different languages and customs, but they all felt a sense of unity with “the Great Russian world” “in the unity of the state, in the unity of the supreme authority in the Tsar, the living, sovereign, the personification of this unity.”<sup>28</sup> Two years later he asserted that the national party in Russia comprised “all the Russian people” (*russkii narod*). “The Russian people are confident about their honor and their national interests because of the certitude that they are completely protected by the supreme authority, which they consider completely Russian [*russkaia*], which they never opposed, and which they feel themselves as one organism.”<sup>29</sup> He thus confounded *Rus'*, the Russian core of the state, with *Rossia*, the empire with the countless ethnic groups and indistinct boundaries between them. In February 1867, he wrote, “One integral state [*tsel'noe gosudarstvo*] and one language recognized by the state, or, what is the same, one political nationality—this is the crux of the issue that should be placed above all doubts, vacillations, customs, social formations, the physiology of cities and villages. These villages may differ, but without doubt there must be the unity of a political nationality, and all the closer the bonds linking the two halves of Russia the more vital the contact between them.”<sup>30</sup>

Katkov appealed to nationalists and chauvinists in his writings condemning the Poles. He did not consider Poland a part of the empire. But neither could he tolerate an independent Polish state, for that state, assisted by western allies, would imperil the very survival of Russia. Moreover, a nation,

<sup>27</sup> Renner, *Russischer Nationalismus*, 315-17.

<sup>28</sup> M. N. Katkov, *1863 god; sobranie statei po Pol'skomu voprosu* (Moscow: Moscow University Press, 1887), 100-01.

<sup>29</sup> M.N. Katkov, *Sobranie peredovykh statei Moskovskikh Vedomostei, 1865g.* (Moscow: Moskovskie Vedomosti, 1897), 350-51.

<sup>30</sup> M.N. Katkov, *Sobranie peredovykh statei, 1867g.*, 88.

he believed, could not abide claims against its territory. He wrote in 1863, "The nation is not a dead aggregate of people. As long as the nation lives, it has a vital claim to the whole of its territory: it belongs not only to its present but its future. If the nation begins to sacrifice its territory, it is the beginning of its downfall, its disintegration."<sup>31</sup>

Katkov contended that the state, certain of the allegiance of all groups in population, had to lead and dominate public opinion, and he saw his mission to appeal to public opinion. In this respect too he broke with the Official Nationality, which presumed an abiding devotion of the people to the sovereign. Andreas Renner has emphasized the modern character of Katkov's contribution in helping to create and dominate "a community of discourse." The unity of the state and empire was to be constructed or maintained by an active and forceful policy of the government supported by a press devoted to shaping public opinion on its behalf.<sup>32</sup> In 1863, he used his newspaper to create an illusion of national "public opinion," to promote his demand for more vigorous suppression of the Polish rebellion. Katkov claimed he was expressing the views of the people, which he counterpoised to those of liberal society. While other newspapers avoided chauvinistic proclamations during the Polish uprising, *Moskovskie Vedomosti* reported numerous outbursts of patriotism among the common people. Katkov wrote that "simple and ignorant (*temnye*) people," "small people, who are poor and impoverished in spirit," who, "in their dark depths, more than ... people who are enlightened and intelligent ... heard the voice of the Fatherland and responded to it." Accounts from *Moskovskie Vedomosti* of peasant communes declaring their wish to die for God and Fatherland were reprinted in *Severnaia Pochta*, and *Russkii Invalid*, organs of the Ministry of Interior, and the War Ministry. Descriptions in the newspaper of meetings of communes near Moscow, it was reported, brought tears to the eyes of the empress.<sup>33</sup>

Excerpts from the diary describing the heir's (Nicholas Aleksandrovich's) tour of the empire, written by his mentors Constantine Pobedonostsev and Ivan Babst, and printed in *Russkii Vestnik* during the rebellion, confirmed Katkov's notion of a unity of the nationalities with the Russian state. As the trip proceeded down the Volga, the authors emphasized the theme of imperial

<sup>31</sup> Renner, *Russischer Nationalismus*, 223.

<sup>32</sup> Renner, "Mikhail Katkov...", 680-82.

<sup>33</sup> See *Scenarios of Power*, 2: 162-63.

unity around the Russian nation. At the Governor's house in Astrakhan', they stood next to the heir and beheld a strange motley throng in national costumes, among them Greeks, Armenians, Persians, Kalmyks, and Tatars. There were few Russian faces in the crowd, but they still felt themselves in Russia, "in one of the remote regions of a great tsardom, united by the powerful bond of state power and a consciousness of state unity." There, among the mixture of "dress, faces, and tongues," the basic tone was provided by the "founding and gathering element of the Russian tribe."<sup>34</sup>

Katkov acted as a powerful and acute critic of Alexander II's reign in the 1870s, and when Alexander III came to the throne, exerted considerable major influence on governmental policy. Although he came to accept the ethnic and religious grounds of autocracy as presented in the national myth, his focus remained on state as the expression and the enforcer of nationality. When Alexander III visited Moscow in the summer of 1881, Katkov described the popular acclaim as a resounding affirmation of state power by the people. He welcomed the tsar to Moscow, "to come in contact with the Russian Land in the shrine of her past, in her heart, in the very source of her strength." He emphasized that all economic development, philanthropy, and freedom in Russia came from the state, that the state was the mainstay of the people's welfare. In Russia, he insisted, no contradiction, no antagonism, "not the slightest disagreement" could arise between the interests of the people and the interests of the state. The various estates of the realm, he argued, should assist the state, or more specifically the police, in fighting sedition.<sup>35</sup>

Katkov was as insistent on the internal as on the territorial unity of the state. The state was a unifying force, which justified the exercise of powerful ruthless force against internal opposition. As early as 1863, he called for a dictatorship to deal with revolutionary ferment in Russia as well as Poland. "It is as if we have forgotten that the symbol of the state is a sword, and that the state must when necessary resort to strict, even severe measures."<sup>36</sup> The assassination of Alexander II led him to appeal for more energetic measures to defend state power. Alexander II had been "a softhearted, long suffering lover of mankind who diminished rather than

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 2:107.

<sup>35</sup> *Moskovskie Vedomosti*, July 18, 1881: 3.

<sup>36</sup> Tvardovskaia, *Ideologiia poreformennogo samoderzhaviiia*, 37.

elevated the majesty of his rights." His kindness had prevented him from wielding his power forcefully. "May the supreme power in *Rus'* observe its sacred meaning and all its plenitude and its freedom in vital unity with the forces of the people."<sup>37</sup>

Katkov, along with Constantine Pobedonostsev, encouraged the new tsar, Alexander III, to be unrelenting in his oppression and assertion of the power of the autocratic state, to reject the suggestion of introducing a *Zemskii Sobor*, an Assembly of the Land proposed by Ivan Aksakov and other Slavophiles. He encouraged a new, brash confidence in a regime invigorated by the defeat of liberal and revolutionary challenges. He was not troubled by conservative fears of the disruptive effects of industrialization and, following the example of Germany, pressed for government ownership and promotion of railroads. "After the bayonet, it is the railroads that consummate political cohesion." He thought that workers' disturbances required greater state involvement to regulate owner-worker relations and only in his last days did he recognize the political dangers of a workers' movement.<sup>38</sup> He conveyed his bravura to his protégés Ivan Vyshnegradskii and Sergei Witte, who embarked on Russian industrialization with the certainty that the Russian state could avoid the social conflicts experienced in the West and counter the efforts of western entrepreneurs to turn Russia into colonies.

Katkov's ideology of state unity sustained the monarch's resolve during Alexander III's reign. The new tsar did not rely on a unity of the nation around the state. Rather, his scenario enacted a national myth that evoked a spiritual and emotional unity of the Russian people around an ethnic Russian tsar. Declaring triumph over the revolutionary threat, Alexander III's manifesto of April 19, 1881, written by Constantine Pobedonostsev, reaffirmed the principle of autocracy while elaborating the new goals it sought to attain. It evoked a new founding period of the Russian empire—an idealized version of seventeenth-century Moscow. It referred not to the Russian state or empire, but to the "Russian land" (*zemlia russkaia*.) The Russian land had been disgraced by vile sedition, but "hereditary tsarist power," continued to enjoy the love of its subjects, and this power "in unbreakable... union with [Our land]" (*v nerazryvnom soiuze c neiu*) had survived such troubles—*smuty*—in the past, recalling the breakdown of authority at the beginning

<sup>37</sup> *Moskovskie Vedomosti*, March 3, 1881, 1-2, March 5, 1881, 2, March 15, 1881, 3.

<sup>38</sup> Tvardovskaia, *Ideologiia poreformennogo samoderzhavii*, 74-78, 100-02.



of the seventeenth century.<sup>39</sup> The theme of the unity with the Russian land, the pre-Petrine land untainted by western borrowings resonated through the rhetoric and imagery of Alexander III's reign. On his visit to Moscow in July 1881, he declared, "Moscow has attested and now attests that in Russia, Tsar and people compose one concordant and strong whole [*edinodushnoe, krepkoe tseloe*]."<sup>40</sup>

The national myth introduced a new celebratory imagery. This was not the official nationality of Nicholas I's reign; the slogan Orthodoxy, Autocracy, Nationality, now rarely figured in official pronouncements.<sup>41</sup> The scenario evoked not an empire of diverse peoples united by personal devotion to an autocracy, but a Russian people, united through the Orthodox Church and bonds of kinship to their tsar, reviving the dormant traditions of Muscovy. Alexander brought a new physiognomy to the imperial image: he distinguished himself from his predecessors by appearing ethnically akin to his subjects—as the most Russian of Russians. The full red beard he had grown during his command in the Russo-Turkish War (1877-1878) marked him as a native tsar. No Russian ruler since Tsar Alexei Mikhailovich (1645-1676) had worn a beard. Officers were expected to grow beards as well. He introduced new uniforms and standards emblazoned with icons of saints, their saints' days coinciding with their regimental holidays. Eight-pointed Orthodox crosses were placed on the flagstaves.<sup>42</sup>

In place of a presumed assimilation into a multiethnic empire, the national myth presumed a preexistent national supremacy and dominance inherited from a distant and glorious past. Alexander III pursued policies of cultural Russification in many areas of the empire, imposing an image of a pre-Petrine empire ruled by an ethnic Russian nationality. In Ukraine, the Western provinces, and Poland, it led to measures encouraging the spread of Orthodoxy and the Russian language. Alexander also endeavored to eliminate the rights the Grand Duchy of Finland enjoyed to separate laws, tariff, postal systems, and coinage. After reading a memorandum on this question, he remarked, "I am astonished as to what it is all about—a part of the Russian Empire or about a foreign state? What is Russia, finally? Does

<sup>39</sup> PSZ, Sobranie 3, no. 118, April 29, 1881.

<sup>40</sup> *Vsemirnaia Illiustratsiia*, no. 656 (1881): 102.

<sup>41</sup> Olga Maiorova, private communication, October 18, 2011.

<sup>42</sup> *Scenarios of Power*, 2: 204-05, 235-70.

it belong to or is it a part of Finland or does the Grand Duchy of Finland belong to the Russian Empire?"<sup>43</sup> The rights enjoyed by Finland impugned his belief in the integrity of the Russian Empire and his sense of his own autocratic power. The 1892 edition of the Fundamental Laws introduced an article stating, "The Thrones of the Kingdom of Poland and the Grand Duchy of Finland are inseparable from the Russian throne." The defense of the integrity of the state now took the form of a reaffirmation of a personal bond with the Russian tsar.<sup>44</sup>

The national myth had its counterpart in widespread notions that the colonization of the empire by Russians, especially by peasants and Cossacks, would in effect take possession of the far-flung peripheries of the empire, and thereby make the empire congruent with a state Russian nationality.<sup>45</sup> Explorers and nationalist thinkers viewed the southern steppe and the Asian borderlands as destined for Russian colonization, as territories virtually empty and ready for occupation that could provide an answer to the land hunger prevailing in the internal provinces. In 1892, the eminent explorer-geographer Petr Semenov described Russia's mission as "part of the great colonizing movement of the European race," comparable to the overseas colonization of Spain, France, and England.<sup>46</sup> In literature and history, the Russian land became an expression and metaphor for the Russian nation, a kind of surrogate for parliamentary bodies representing a political nation. In his popular *Course of Russian History*, Vasilii Kliuchevskii wrote that colonization was "the basic fact of Russian history" and that "the history of Russia is the history of a country that colonizes itself."<sup>47</sup>

<sup>43</sup> C. Leonard Lunden, "Finland," in *Russification in the Baltic Provinces and Finland, 1855-1914* ed. Edward C. Thaden (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), 370-71.

<sup>44</sup> B. E. Nol'de, *Ocherki Russkogo Gosudarstvennogo Prava* (St. Petersburg: Pravda, 1911), 227.

<sup>45</sup> Willard Sunderland, *Taming the Wild Field*, 177-220; Vera Tolz, *Russia: Inventing the Nation*, 170-74.

<sup>46</sup> Cited in Uillard Sanderlend (Willard Sunderland), "Imperii bez imperializma?" in *Novaia Imperskaia Istoriia Post-Sovetskogo Prostranstva*, ed. I. Gerasimov, et al. (Kazan: Tsentr Issledovaniia Natsionalizma i Imperii, 2004), 463. See also my article, "Russian Noble Officers and the Ethos of Exploration," *Russian History/Histoire Russe* 35, Nos. 1-2 (Spring-Summer 2008): 181-97. Vera Tolz, *Russia: Inventing the Nation*, 170-74.

<sup>47</sup> Sunderland, *Taming the Wild Field*, 208-13.

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The outbreak of revolution in 1905 belied the fictions of unity evoked in tsarist myth and ceremony as well as the Katkovian confidence that the Russian state disposed of irresistible might and repressive capacities. The revolution confronted Nicholas II with a specter of chaos and breakdown, convincing him to heed Sergei Witte's warnings that concessions were unavoidable. On October 17, he issued the October Manifesto promising civic freedoms and representative institutions. "From the present disturbances, there may arise a great national disorder and a threat to the integrity and unity of Our State (*tselost' i edinstvo Nashei Derzhavy*).<sup>48</sup> Witte's memorandum regarding the situation stated the same fear. "It cannot be that Russian society wants anarchy, which, in addition to all of horrors of battle, threatens the disintegration of the state."<sup>49</sup>

In his discussions with Nicholas, Witte had suggested that Nicholas entrust the formulation of the reform to a council of officials chaired by Witte himself. Andrew Verner has observed that Witte sought to use the conjuncture to separate the institutions of the administration from the direct purview of the tsar and to sanction "the ideal of a 'legal order,' in which depersonalized, institutionalized bureaucratic authority was separate from that of the sovereign." Nicholas had little use for such a proposal. He regarded the new institutions as his own personal grant from the throne and insisted on overseeing the process. In this way, he denied a break with the past, preserving his powers as autocrat and, having bestowed concessions on the nation, felt entitled to rescind them when he saw fit.<sup>50</sup>

As a result, the new legal order emerged as an uneasy composite of rules, some governing a state claiming authority on the basis of a popular mandate and others sustaining the absolute and unimpeachable prerogatives of the sovereign monarch. The opening articles of the new Fundamental Laws of the empire, issued on April 23, 1906, make clear the clash of incompatible goals.<sup>51</sup> Article 1 makes an unequivocal assertion of the integrity of the Russian state: "The Russian State is one and indivisible" (*Gosudarstvo Rossiiskoe edino i nerazdel'no*). It contrasts with Article 1 of the previous version of the

<sup>48</sup> PSZ, Part 3, no. 26, 803, October 17, 1905.

<sup>49</sup> Nol'de, *Ocherki Russkogo Gosudarstvennogo Prava*, 243.

<sup>50</sup> Andrew Verner, *Crisis of Russian Autocracy*, 245.

<sup>51</sup> PSZ, Sobranie 3, 27805, April 23, 1906.

Fundamental Laws, issued in 1832: "The Imperial All Russian Monarch is autocratic and unlimited. To obey his supreme power is ordained not only by fear but by conscience as well." The integrity of the state for the first time is defined separately from the powers of the monarch.

Such a provision was completely new to Russian legislation. Its origins were explained by the eminent jurist Boris Nolde, whose father played an active role in the formulation of the Fundamental Laws; Nolde himself wrote commentaries on the drafts.<sup>52</sup> In his *Ocherki Russkogo Gosudarstvennogo Prava*, Nolde traced the origins of Article 1 to the French Constitution of 1791 and concluded that it expressed the revolutionaries' determination to assert centralized power against the "privileges and rights" of the provinces. It opposed a Rousseauist general will enforced from the capital to lingering principles of regional autonomy based on traditional rights. The centralized character of the new nation was declared on August 4, 1791, "The national assembly unanimously abolishes feudalism."<sup>53</sup>

The Fundamental Laws did not borrow directly from the French constitution of 1791. Nolde traced the appearance of the proviso in the constitutions of several German states, where they were used to counter regional pressures and to defend against claims against the princes' territories. The most likely and significant antecedent was the legislation of the Austrian monarchy, which, in the wake of the revolution of 1848, issued numerous laws insisting on the "indivisibility" of the empire. The Manifesto of March 4, 1849, after dissolving the Kremsier Reichstag, which had proposed a federalist system, introduced an imperial constitution "for a united and indivisible Austrian Empire," and the phrase "unity and indivisibility" turned into a slogan of the Habsburg monarchy in its struggle with revolution."<sup>54</sup>

<sup>52</sup> Peter Holquist, "The Dilemmas of a Progressive Administrator: Baron Boris Nolde," *Kritika* 7, No. 2, (Spring 2006): 243.

<sup>53</sup> Nol'de, *Ocherki Russkogo Gosudarstvennogo Prava*, 227-35; Marc Szeftel suggests that it may have derived from projects advanced by the Liberation movement in 1904 and 1905. Szeftel was unable to determine the authorship of the document in government offices, but it clear that regardless of its origins, it was inserted into the document by state officials, foremost of whom was Sergei Witte. Marc Szeftel, *The Russian Constitution of April 23, 1906: Political Institutions of the Duma Monarchy* (Brussels: Editions de la Librarie encyclopédique, 1976), 38-39, 84-85, 114.

<sup>54</sup> Nol'de, *Ocherki Russkogo Gosudarstvennogo Prava*, 241-42.

Article 2 then asserts that the Grand Duchy of Finland “is an inseparable part of the Russian State,” but is governed in its internal affairs by special rules on the basis of special legislation. Article 3 establishes that the Russian language is the state language, but also that local languages are used according to special statutes. The opening articles thus define the Russian state as a single entity and insist on its unity, mentioning at the same time its exceptions. Moving from the first three articles to the next three, we move from the state to a monarch endeavoring to maintain his prerogatives in the face of representative institutions. During the deliberations on revision of Article 4 of the Fundamental Laws in April 1906, Nicholas finally accepted, albeit reluctantly, the deletion of the word “unlimited” from the old formula defining the monarch’s power as “autocratic and unlimited” (*samoderzhavnyi i neogranichennyi*). But he succeeded in retaining the word “autocratic,” and in this way indicated that his power was supreme in ways not subject to legal definition.<sup>55</sup> Article 4 of the 1906 Fundamental Laws reads “Supreme Autocratic Power belongs to the All-Russian Emperor. To obey his supreme power is ordained not only by fear but by conscience as well.”

Nicholas’s claims to autocratic prerogatives rested on his spiritual and symbolic kinship with the Russian people. His determination to defend his prerogatives was reinforced by the campaign of letters and telegrams, organized by the Union of Russian People and other rightist parties, which informed him of “the touching feelings of loyal subjects, together with the pleas not to limit My power.”<sup>56</sup> Article 5 of the Fundamental Laws, which states “The person of our Sovereign Emperor is sacred and inviolable,” is also an innovation. It also seems a borrowing from the 1791 French Constitution, perhaps representing an effort of the Assembly to find a *modus vivendi* with the king, to create a constitutional monarchy. It seems to have prompted no commentary, perhaps regarded as a statement of an attribute obvious from Nicholas’s scenario of divinely inspired hereditary power.

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The assertion of state integrity in Article 1 of the Fundamental Laws would be taken over by moderate liberals in the Constitutional Democratic Party, those who, in some respects, envisioned themselves as heirs to the leaders

<sup>55</sup> Verner, *Crisis of Russian Autocracy*, 299-300.

<sup>56</sup> *Scenarios of Power*, 2: 401.

of the first years of the French revolution. But the Kadets were striving to unite autonomous regional groups in a constitutional multinational empire, not to defeat the survivals of a feudal regime. The party's platform, Alexander Semyonov has argued, allowed for a considerable measure of particularism among local social and political groups, preserving in that respect the imperial government's accommodation of difference in the administration of the national regions of the empire. "Introducing the logic of collective rights into the liberal vision of the Russian Empire opened the liberal platform, much as the first State Duma, to the field of diverse and particularistic articulations of collective rights and exposed it to the rival taxonomy of collective rights as being national in their nature."<sup>57</sup> The elections to the first two Dumas, which advanced the political organization of local ethnic groups, tested the fragile unity of the party.<sup>58</sup> Semyonov describes "the pluralistic and particularistic landscape of the Duma," with many deputies revealing " manifold allegiances" and fully one-third undecided.<sup>59</sup> Reconciling the centrifugal elements with the central authority, which many leaders of the Kadets hoped would prevail after the establishment of a constitutional order, proved a daunting task.

In a report written after the fall of the monarchy in 1917, the legal expert on cultural matters, Fedor Kokoshkin, expressed the frustration of trying to attain common goals while contending with myriad local collectivities by invoking a metaphor of a house built without structural supports:

Advocates of national autonomies do not propose an exact and detailed plan of how to create in Russia a federation based on the principle of nationality. They address the All-Russian parties with a claim: . . . we want to have such and such room in the future building of Russia. The task of

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<sup>57</sup> Alexander Semyonov, "The Real and Live Ethnographic Map of Russia: The Russian Empire in the Mirror of the State Duma," in *The Empire Speaks Out: Languages of Rationalization and Self-Description in the Russian Empire*, ed. Ilya Gerasimov, Jan Kusber, and Alexander Semyonov (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 223.

<sup>58</sup> R. A. Tsiunchuk, "*Dumskaia model'*" *parlamentarizma v Rossiiskoi Imperii: Etnokonfessional'noe i regional'noe izmereniia* (Kazan: FEN, 2004); Idem, "Peoples, Regions, and Electoral Politics: The State Dumas and the Constitution of New National Elites," in *Russian Empire: Space, People, Power*, 366-97; Elena Campbell, "The Muslim Question in Late Imperial Russia," in *ibid.*, 330-43. Charles Steinwedel, "To Make a Difference: The Category of Ethnicity in Late Imperial Politics, 1861-1917," in *Russian Modernity: Politics, Knowledge, Practices*, 76-77.

<sup>59</sup> Semyonov, "The Real and Live Ethnographic Map of Russia," 215-17.

erecting the whole of the building is yours. . . . But the construction of the entire building turns out to be impossible in view of all these *particular* [italics added, A.S.] demands. Building separate rooms first, according to separate plans makes it impossible to erect buttresses and lay main beams to secure the roof and the walls.<sup>60</sup>

Unlike the leaders of the French Revolution, the members of the Kadet party themselves were not united on behalf of a centralized rationalizing government. Peter Holquist has shown that Baron Nolde, who joined the Kadet party during the war, had expected that the imperial state would be able to tolerate local liberties and rights on a federal basis, as had France before the revolution, but as a member of the Judicial Council of the Provisional Government and the Cadet Party Central Committee, he fought all federalist solutions to the nationality problem.<sup>61</sup> After the overthrow of the autocracy, many leading members of the party took up the slogan “Russia one and indivisible.” During the Civil War, General Anton Denikin, influenced by the liberals in his government, adopted the slogan in opposing Ukrainian independence, which then came to identify the Cadets with the chauvinism and excesses of the White armies.<sup>62</sup> The image of a unified empire, like that of the Official Nationality and Katkov’s “political integrity” of the Russian state, proved a mythical figment justifying the exertion of central power in the face of rising centrifugal forces.

The unity of the empire, or what remained of the empire, was restored only with the victories of the Red Army and institutionalized in the Communist Party, a new centralized, personalized authority that reproduced the nexus of the ideas of autocracy and territorial integrity. In 1989, Mikhail Gorbachev’s establishment of a Council of People’s Deputies would spell the doom of the Soviet Union, confirming the prophetic words of Emperor Alexander II. The ensuing crises in the Caucasus and Chechnya closed the circle. Vladimir Putin understood the Chechen rebellion as “a continuation of the breakup

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 226.

<sup>61</sup> Holquist, “The Dilemmas of a Progressive Administrator,” 248.

<sup>62</sup> William G. Rosenberg, *Liberals in the Russian Revolution: The Constitutional Democratic Party, 1917-1921* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974), 471; Anna Procyk, *Russian Nationalism and Ukraine: The Nationality Policy of the Volunteer Army during the Civil War* (Edmonton: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, 1995), 58-59, 82, 172-75.

of the Soviet Union.” “Today,” he declared in an interview in 2000, “we all recognize, and rightly so, that it is necessary to observe the territorial integrity [*territorial'naia tselostnost'*] of Russia and not support terrorists and separatists.”<sup>63</sup> Territorial integrity figured in his presentation not as a justification of autocratic power, but as a unity forged by the Russian people and the state of which he was the democratically elected leader. He stated in his “Message to the Federal Assembly of the Russian People” of 2003,

Over the length of our history, Russia and its citizens have achieved and are achieving a truly heroic feat (*podvig*): A feat in the name of the integrity (*tselostnost'*) of the country, of peace and stability in it. The maintenance of a state over a vast space, the preservation of a unique association (*soobshchestvo*) of peoples under the strong positions of the country in the world—this represents not only an enormous labor. It also represents enormous sacrifices and tremendous deprivations.<sup>64</sup>

On July 13, 2011, Putin held a meeting to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the birth of Petr Stolypin. As prime minister, Stolypin in 1910 had convinced the Duma and State Council to pass laws to reduce the powers of the Finnish Seim and to subject Finland to the laws of the Russian state, in effect acting to realize the intentions of Alexander III to eliminate the Grand Duchy’s liberties.<sup>65</sup> Putin declared,

Petr Arkad'evich traveled a long way in his state career and served at the head of Russia’s government during a complex and, with no exaggeration, dramatic time ... a time of political and social divisions. The consequences of war, revolutionary upheavals, discord in the economy represented a real threat to the territorial integrity [*tselostnost'*] of Russia,

<sup>63</sup> *Ot pervogo litsa: razgovory s Vladimirom Putinyim* (Moscow: Vagrius, 2000), 133, 136.

<sup>64</sup> V. V. Putin, *Izbrannye rechi i vystupleniia* (Moscow: Knizhnyi Mir, 2008), 161.

<sup>65</sup> Edward C. Thaden, “The Russian Government” in *Russification in the Baltic Provinces and Finland*, 84-86. In his speech of May 21, 1910 propounding the law, Stolypin declared in regard to those who pointed to the opinion of Europe, “to the thousands of signatures collected by Finns abroad,” that “not I, but all Russia, as many evidently have not understood, replies that under the new order Russia is not falling apart, not being dismembered into parts, but is becoming strong and coming to know itself.” P. A. Stolypin, *Rechi v Gosudarstvennoi dume i Gosudarstvennom Sovete, 1906-1911* (New York: Teleks, 1990), 262.



and even to its sovereignty. With all this, it was necessary to give answers to the key, principal questions of Russia's development. It required of the head of the government not only an unflinching will but also personal courage and readiness to take on the full burden of responsibility for the situation in the country, and Petr Arkad'evich manifested these qualities in full measure.<sup>66</sup>

#### POSTSCRIPT: A SHORT EXCHANGE WITH THE EDITORS OF AB IMPERIO

Ab Imperio: It seems that your text rests on two implicit juxtapositions, one is more evident, the other is less obvious, yet both deserve a more elaborated discussion. On the one hand, the integrity and cohesion (*tselost'*) of the Russian empire is frequently opposed to its diversity, ethnic and territorial. Thus, integrity appears as something more than a paranoiac concern of imperial rulers, but as a stable element of the very quality of "empireness," just as its semantic counterpart, the notorious "imperial diversity." Hence, the first question: how would you characterize your application of the concept of *tselost'* as an analytical category, that is, as an instrument of contemporary scholarship, rather than some original concept with historically fixed meanings that would evolve over time? Is it an element of legal discourse, a cultural category, an ideological construct that you study? How does this category of analysis by a modern-day historian characterize the imperial regime (beyond the obvious concern of its rulers with territorial integrity and wholeness)?

On the other hand, the references to *tselost'* in imperial Russia in your text are occasionally opposed to the contemporary usages of similar categories in Western Europe, while any possibility of discoursing *tselost'* in pre-Petrine Russia (thus forming a certain intellectual legacy) is ignored altogether. Obviously, a detailed analysis of Muscovite political discourse with its specific vision of wholeness, and even more so of the diverse and rich European traditions of legal and political thinking (where indivisibility was a *sine qua non* of sovereignty already for Hobbes) requires a special and voluminous study. Still, there is a need to reflect on the basic characteristics of this second usage of *tselost'* as a category of historically contextualized practice. What, if any, were the influences of the historical memory of the Time of Troubles, of

<sup>66</sup> *Kommersant*, July 14, 2011, 1.

witnessing political developments in Rzeczpospolita in the eighteenth century, and in the post-*Ausgleich* Habsburg empire? How idiosyncratic was the concern of indivisibility and cohesion to the Russian empire?

The previous question can be reformulated in a less analytical and more direct way: do you endorse a *Sonderweg* reading of Russian imperial ideologies? Indeed, you explicitly oppose Russian practices to those accepted in “the West” (as in the case of Peter’s legislation), which in the context of the early eighteenth century is quite a dubious category. So was Great Britain indifferent to its territorial integrity (including Ireland) in the eighteenth century, or was France careless about national cohesion in the nineteenth century? On the other hand, we can probably identify certain disparities between Russian and certain foreign cases in certain periods. For instance, there was a period when it was acceptable to Germans to populate different polities, while during the same period Russians were expected to reside within the borders of the Russian empire (and when certain peoples were identified as “relatives” of the Russians, in the Carpathians or the Balkans, this immediately led to very practical steps in foreign policy). Another example is the separation of powers in some European countries, with very uneven progress in this direction in Russia. What do these specific and chronologically localized disparities reveal about the imperial regime in Russia—both vis-a-vis the broader international context and against the background of internal political dynamics and evolving scenarios of power? Was it the same *tselost'* that concerned different generations of Russian rulers—not only in its semantics but also in perceiving the scale of the problem and its “format” (a legal question, ideological concern, cultural trope, etc.)?

Reply: I would characterize the term “integrity” as I explore its use in this paper as a cultural category, a category of representation of the monarchy that recurs in official statements and political writings. It does not, in this usage, necessarily assume legal moment, but rather constitutes one element of what I understand as a political culture of Russian monarchy. It acts to express goals considered crucial to the wielding and preservation of absolute power and to celebrate successes of the ruler in governing a vast and diverse empire. Its recurrence over time and its centrality in official discourse indicate that it is something more than the usual insistence of a government on territorial integrity. It appears as a principal symbol of the monarchy, one that can convey, at times qualms about the state authority, at others exaltation at its triumphs, and often a combination of the two.

The question of comparisons with other political systems of course was not within the parameters of my brief article, though I would welcome such studies, and I give a few thoughts of my own below. Nor have I studied pre-Petrine legislation from this point of view. Although there may have been occasions to address the concept before Peter, it was Peter who defined in laws and manifestos the basic principles that would guide the political ideas and representations that were fundamental for imperial Russia. He was the first to issue a succession law, and laws of succession were in general considered the central ones for monarchies: Peter's legislation marks the beginning of what was considered the evolution of state law in the imperial period.

First, I shy from using the term "ideology" because I treat ideology as a specific form of representation, incorporating philosophical and political concepts after the French revolution. "Official Nationality" was an ideology formulated to provide legitimation for the monarchy, but it operated in the context of a whole system of representations that defined how the monarchs and their advisers and servitors thought at a particular time, which I have designated scenarios, to provide the personal and mythological framework in which they operated. As Victor Zhivov wrote regarding Catherine's *Nakaz*, "The *Nakaz*, like the entire state ideology, entered the sphere of myth and fulfilled a mythological function. It was an attribute of the monarch establishing universal justice and creating harmony in the world."<sup>67</sup>

I suppose you might say that I endorse a *Sonderweg* reading of Russian imperial political representation. Looking back over Russia's history in the past three centuries, I find no other understanding credible. To a certain degree, I think every nation has its own distinct institutions, memories, and cultures, in addition to commonalities, but I find the particularities more interesting and meaningful than the commonalities. Certainly our history, that is, American history, is exceptional—a country that has maintained a republican, federalist system over a large expanse, based on a unique constitution, an advanced economy and society accompanied by the flourishing of religious fundamentalism, an ideological commitment to freedom and capitalism that many Europeans find difficult to understand.

<sup>67</sup> V. M. Zhivov, "Gosudarstvennyi mif v epokhu Prosveshcheniia i ego razrushenie v Rossii kontsa XVIII veka," in *Vek Prosveshcheniia. Rossiia i Frantsia, Vipperovskie chteniia*, 22 (Moscow, 1989) 150.

On every visit to Russia since my first in 1961, I have been struck by its difference from our society and from European societies. I felt baffled and yet fascinated by the manifestations of difference. I had difficulty "finding my feet" with Russia and my readings on the subject were of limited use. Clifford Geertz made this point, quoting the words of Ludwig Wittgenstein, "One human being can be a complete enigma to another. We learn this when we come to a strange country with entirely strange traditions; and, what is more, even given a mastery of the country's language. We do not *understand* [italics in original] the people. (And not because of not knowing what they are saying to themselves.) We cannot find our feet with them."<sup>68</sup>

Geertz's answer to this problem was "thick description," of trying to understand the "webs of significance" through which a society understands itself, and I believe that this is particularly germane to the study of political representation.<sup>69</sup> "Our formulations of other peoples' symbols must be actor-oriented," Geertz wrote. These arguments of Geertz, set forth in the 1970s, are familiar to us, but their lessons are still worth heeding. Scholarship about the Russian empire, its development, expansion, policies, and changes in its nature over time as well as about nationalities is important and has yielded important results in recent decades. But what is often lacking is an understanding of agency and intent, the way this representational order was constructed and the state of mind of those who were engaged with it. The subject of my paper is not the concept of *tselost'* taken alone, but the way that the concept became a principal symbol that infused the thinking of the monarch and his state elite.

It is notable that while Peter was following European examples of the early eighteenth century in issuing a law of succession, he ignored their example by not instituting a fundamental law of hereditary succession, which caused anger and consternation both in Russia and abroad. He thereby subordinated the principle of law to the will of the ruling of the monarch exerted in a heroic demonstrative act to preserve the integrity of empire. My forthcoming article in *Kritika* (Article 2 in this collection) traces the troubled relationship between representation and the law in imperial Russia.

<sup>68</sup> Clifford Geertz, "On Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture," in idem, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York, Basic Books, 1973), 13.

<sup>69</sup> Description, Geertz continued, "must be cast in terms of the interpretations to which persons of a particular denomination subject their experience, because that is what they profess to be descriptions of," Ibid., 5, 15.

The integrity of the empire and absolutism formed a symbolic and conceptual nexus. In such a context, *tselost'* became more than a legal term: it represented a good in itself, unchallengeable and lasting, and it precluded various options practiced by other monarchies, particularly the possibility of compromise. Undoubtedly, then, integrity or some similar concept appears in Habsburg legislation and representation, but it did not prevent granting considerable autonomy to national areas.<sup>70</sup> It did not prevent the emperor from conferring authority on a chancellor. *Tselost'* took on a sacral character within the symbolic system of Russian monarchy that lent it moment and significance, which may not have characterized other systems. In short, in following the term's meaning and historical significance, it does not suffice to rely on dictionary definitions or translations. Of course, other countries are not "indifferent" to their territorial integrity. But in which others does it arise as a principal goal and symbol and persist from era to era?

The importance of the concept to official thinking may derive from the continental character and the uncertain relationship between *Rossiia*, the empire, and Russia, its national core. The Russian monarch's claim to sovereignty, from the reign of Ivan III, derived from his status as emperor, and challenges to that status were taken as indignities. In the nineteenth century, the boundaries between the metropolis and the peripheries tended to blur, so that any threats to the empire could also be regarded as threats to the nation, and even greater threats to the emperor's absolute power. Territorial integrity of course was a matter of concern to the rulers of the British Empire, but challenges to its integrity, such as occurred in 1776, did not jeopardize the bases of English sovereignty.



<sup>70</sup> I do not take seriously the view of Boris Nolde, later elaborated by Leonid I. Strakhovsky, that the extension of rights to some nationalities represented a federalist or quasi-federalist solution, since these arrangements fell far short of even minimal grants of autonomy. Leonid I. Strakhovsky, "Constitutional Aspects of the Imperial Russian Government's Policy Toward National Minorities," *Journal of Modern History*, vol. 13, No. 4, December, 1941, 467-92.

## 12. The Tsar and Empire: Representation of the Monarchy and Symbolic Integration in Imperial Russia



Symbolic representation played a central role in defining the concept of monarchical sovereignty in Russia. In the absence of native traditions of supreme power, Russian tsars invoked and emulated foreign images of rule to elevate themselves and the state elite above the subject population. The source of sacrality was distant from Russia, whether it was located beyond the sea whence the original Viking princes came, according to the tale of the invitations of the Varangians, or fixed in an image of Byzantium, France, or Germany.<sup>1</sup>

The centrality of conquest in the representations of Russian rulers contrasts with the mythical history of the Hapsburg emperors, which legitimized the expansion of imperial dominion through marriage.<sup>2</sup> From the fifteenth century, when Ivan III refused the title of king from the Holy Roman Emperor with the declaration that he “had never wanted to be made king by anyone,” Russian monarchs affirmed and reaffirmed the imperial character of their rule, evoking the images of Byzantine and later Roman and European imperial dominion. Beginning with Ivan IV’s conquests of Kazan and Astrakhan, they

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<sup>1</sup> On the symbolic force of foreignness see Ju. M. Lotman and B. A. Uspenskii, “The Role of Dual Models in the Dynamics of Russian Culture (Up to the End of the Eighteenth Century),” in Ju. M. Lotman and B. A. Uspenskii, *The Semiotics of Russian Culture*, ed. Ann Shukman (Ann Arbor: Michigan Slavic Contributions, 1984), 3-35.

<sup>2</sup> See the interesting comparison by Orest Subtelny between Hapsburg and Romanov empires in “The Hapsburg and Russian Empires: Some Comparisons and Contrasts,” in *Empire and Society: New Approaches to Russian History*, ed. Teruyuki Hara and Kimitaka Matzuzato (Sapporo: Slavic Research Center, Hokaido University, 1997), 86-90.

sought to realize the imperial vision of rule over extensive realms and other peoples.

Of course, European monarchs also borrowed foreign and imperial images of rule. The distinguishing feature of Russian monarchy was the persistence of a pattern of appropriation of symbols and images from abroad long after it ceased to be the practice in Europe. This pattern has befuddled efforts to categorize the Russian state under a single cultural rubric, Mongol, Byzantine, or European. The devices of identification with foreign sources of power were varied—tales of foreign origin, like the “invitation of the Varangians,” or analogies with or imitation of foreign rulers. A national sub-theme runs through Russian political imagery and myths, but until the late nineteenth century as an antithesis repeatedly submerged by a dominant foreign motif.

The pattern of representation that emerged in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries identified the ruling monarch and his servitors with dominant figures of western monarchy. The monarch assumed features of European absolutist rulers, Baroque, Neo-Classical, Napoleonic, presented in scenarios suiting contemporary ideas and tastes. The Russian nobility, lacking traditions of feudal rights or local autonomy, owed their standing, wealth, and influence to service to the sovereign. Joining imperial ceremonies, they displayed their personal bond with the monarch and shared in his sacral aura. They performed his scenarios as cultivated western noblemen and elevated them as Russians capable of appearing as Europeans, above and superior to their subjects, but nonetheless Russians acting the role of Europeans. As Iurii Lotman wrote, it was necessary “not to be a foreigner” but to retain “the outsiders ‘alien’ Russian attitude to them. One did not have to become a foreigner, but to behave like one.”<sup>3</sup>

The universalistic westernized forms of representation facilitated the integration of national elites into a multi-ethnic All-Russian nobility, the *userossiiskoe dvorianstvo*. As the empire expanded to include Baltic provinces, Cossacks, Muslim khanates, and Georgia, its members took on the westernized culture and manners of the court and participated in its ceremonies.<sup>4</sup> In this

<sup>3</sup> Lotman and Uspenskii, “The Role of Dual Models,” 232-33.

<sup>4</sup> See Andreas Kappeler, *The Russian Empire: A Multi-ethnic History* (Harlow, UK: Longman, 2001), 28-29, and passim; on the processes of repression and co-optation in the steppe regions see Michael Khodarkovsky, *Russia's Steppe Frontier: The Making*

respect, imperial Russia represents an example of what Ernest Gellner called an agro-literate society—a traditional society organized horizontally, in which the privileged, regardless of ethnic background, sought to separate themselves as much as possible from the lower orders, in this case by assuming western personas.<sup>5</sup>

The emperors of Russia elaborated and performed narratives of foreign and imperial origin to display the great distance between rulers and ruled and to dramatize and perpetuate their claims to absolute, transcendent power. The exercise of power and the representation of the monarch in this way proved reciprocal processes: absolute rule sustained the image of a transcendent monarch, the incarnation of the state, which in turn warranted the untrammelled exercise of power. The imperative to appear in the context of myth instilled an aversion to compromise and delegation of authority—to accept intermediaries, such as parliamentary institutions or even a chancellor loyal to the monarch, at times of political crisis. The aversion to constitutionalism reflected merely one aspect of a mentality that knew only absolute domination or utter defeat.

## ENLIGHTENMENT AND INTEGRATION

Catherine the Great envisioned a process of enlightenment of native elites, which, undertaken by the Russian state, would assimilate the diverse nationalities into the secular, westernized culture of the Russian nobility. She adopted V. N. Tatishchev's theory that Russians came from a mixture of various peoples and she expected assimilation to continue by uplifting and instructing native populations. She sponsored ethnographic expeditions and surveys, under the aegis of the Imperial Academy of Sciences, to learn about those peoples of the empire so that they could be transformed into Russians and would be able to "share in their happiness." Catherine's ideas informed the pioneering ethnographic works of the late eighteenth century, particularly Johann Georgi's landmark four-volume *Description of All the Peoples Inhabiting the Russian State* (*Opisanie vsekh obitaiushchikh*

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*of a Colonial Empire, 1500-1800* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002), 201-10, 225-26.

<sup>5</sup> Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1983), 11.



*v Rossiiskom gosudarstve narodov*).<sup>6</sup> Georgi asserted that the Russian empire was the most diverse of empires. “Hardly any other state in the world possesses such a great variety of different nations, survivals of peoples, and colonies as the Russian state.”<sup>7</sup>

But enlightenment promised to efface their indigenous traits. Those at earlier stages, Georgi wrote, the Tungus, the Chukchi, were ignorant, simple, and possessed a beguiling innocence. It was “the uniformity of State organization” that could transform all nationalities into educated, Europeanized Russians. The state, Georgi concluded, was “leading our rude Peoples by giant steps toward the common goal of general enlightenment in Russia, of a wonderful fusion of all into a single body and soul, and of creating, as it were, an unshakable Giant that will stand for hundreds of centuries.” It is indicative that the one national group that Georgi omitted from his survey was the Russians: the Russians for him did not represent the peoples “inhabiting the Russian state,” who were characterized by a variety of distinctive customs, dress, and religious beliefs, and thereby at a lower level of development than they. When the Russians were introduced in the second edition, which was not authored by Georgi, they were characterized as a “ruling nation.”<sup>8</sup>

Enlightenment also presumed conversion to Orthodoxy, which was understood to be the first step in the process.<sup>9</sup> This faith in the power of reason and Orthodoxy to transform backward peoples is suggested by the remarks of a young Russian, M. N. Makarov, who observed a Kalmyk deputy marching among the noblemen to the Assumption Cathedral for the rites of coronation of Alexander I in 1801. The deputy, he observed, crossed himself and wept at the sight of the Cathedral. Makarov believed that the Kalmyk was on his way to becoming an Orthodox Russian, and he anticipated that “the

<sup>6</sup> I. G. Georgi, *Opisanie vsekh obitaiushchikh v Rossiiskom gosudarstve narodov* (St. Petersburg: Imp. Ak. Nauk, 1776-1777), 3 Vols; Nathaniel Knight, “Constructing the Science of Nationality,” 32-40; S. A. Tokarev, *Istoriia Russkoi Etnografii* (Moscow, Nauka, 1966), 103-110.

<sup>7</sup> Tokarev, *Istoriia Russkoi Etnografii*, 103.

<sup>8</sup> I. G. Georgi, *Opisanie vsekh obitaiushchikh v Rossiiskom gosudarstve narodov* (St. Petersburg: Imp. Ak. Nauk, 1799), 1: ix; Yuri Slezkine, “Naturalists versus Nations,” 38-39; Nathaniel Knight, “Constructing the Science of Nationality,” 36-39.

<sup>9</sup> Yuri Slezkine, *Arctic Mirrors: Russian and Small Peoples of the North* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1994), 48-49.

time will come when the light of Christ will dawn upon the wearer of the turban and the heathen.”<sup>10</sup>

The conception of a Russian nation as a body with its own distinctive traits appeared in tsarist imagery and rhetoric with the accession of Nicholas I in 1825 and the propagation of the doctrine that came to known as “Official Nationality.” The manifestos of the reign and the accompanying doctrinal literature established that the distinguishing feature of the Russian people was their monarchical spirit, their obedience to their sovereign, attested by the fact Russian people had not joined the rebels on palace square in December 1825. The decree on sentencing of the Decembrists of July 13, 1826 referred to Russia as a “state where love for monarchs and devotion to the throne are based on the native characteristics of the people.”<sup>11</sup> It was this spirit that had enabled the Russian people to resist revolutionary doctrines and had made Russia the strongest state in Europe after the Napoleonic Wars.

The triumphalist rhetoric of Nicholas I’s reign extolled both the will of the tsar and the rapt discipline of his Russian subjects. That category comprised the mass of Russians without distinction between Little Russians, White Russians, Great Russians and others who had been assimilated into the official elite. The Ukrainian language was defined as a dialect of Russian, while Ukrainian folksongs and literature were viewed as expressions of an early Slavic culture that had been perfected by the Russians.<sup>12</sup> The historian Mikhail Pogodin wrote, “Occupying an expanse that no other monarchy on earth has ever occupied, neither the Macedonian, nor the Roman, Arabic, the Frankish or the Mongol, it is settled principally by tribes who speak one language, have, consequently, one form of thought (*obraz mysli*), practice one Faith, and like an electronic circuit, quaver at a single contact.”<sup>13</sup> In Pogodin’s formulation, the monarchy was identified with a Great Russian nation worshipful of its tsar, the nationalities serving at best as ornaments to its power and glory. The assimilation that enlightenment would wreak

<sup>10</sup> M. N. Makarov, “Vospominaniia o koronatsii Imperatora Aleksandra I,” *Pamiatniki novoi russkoi istorii* (1871), 1: 64, 75-79.

<sup>11</sup> N. K. Shil’der, *Imperator Nikolai Pervyi*, 1:459.

<sup>12</sup> See David Saunders, *The Ukrainian Impact on Russian Culture, 1750-1850* (Edmonton: Canadian Institute for Ukrainian Studies, 1985), 144-75.

<sup>13</sup> M. P. Pogodin, *Istoriko-kriticheskie otryuki*, 2.

was presumed to continue under the rule of the dominant nation responsive to its tsar.

When defeats in the Crimean war dispelled the triumphalist certainty of Nicholas's scenario, Alexander II ushered in a mood of conciliation and openness and modified the discourse of official nationality to evoke the imagery of attraction rather than submission. The Russian people then were said to be bound to their ruler by the force of a love animated by gratitude for efforts at reform that he had selflessly enacted for their benefit. Alexander II presented himself as a popular national leader, incorporating democratic sentiments into the mythic narrative of Russian monarchy. The trope of love portrayed Russian monarchy as a romance between monarch and Russian people, joined willingly by the other nationalities of the empire.

These feelings were put on display at Alexander's coronation in 1856, which celebrated successes of imperial expansion in previous decades that compensated for the humiliating defeats of the Crimean War. In the context of a scenario of love, the nationalities were drawn into the mythical image of a nation adoring the sovereign. The emperor's coronation entry displayed the loyalty and submission of the peoples Russian armies had succeeded in conquering in the Caucasus, Central Asia, and Middle Asia. For the first time, their representatives marched in native costumes with members of the Russian elite. Accounts of the coronation exulted about the dashing horseman from the various Caucasian and Central Asian nationalities. The illustrated journal, *Russkii Khudozhestvennyi Listok*, described the deputies of "Asiatic peoples" as "tangible proof of the vastness of our state, which some justly call a special kind of planet." Their appearance in procession "eloquently convinced everyone of the one whose power they recognize, whom they had come from their own lands to greet."<sup>14</sup>

The love of the Russian people for the sovereign was projected on the other peoples of the empire, as well, conjuring the vision of an empire united by mutual affection. The participation of Asian noblemen attested to their acceptance of the suzerainty of the Russian element in the empire. For the poet Fedor Tiutchev, who attended the ball as a chamberlain of the court, the masquerade expressed the Eastern character of Russia. It allowed him to imagine himself in the realm of dream—the dream of Russia's embracing the East. Tiutchev saw old aristocrats in familiar costume beside "quite authentic"

<sup>14</sup> *Russkii Khudozhestvennyi Listok*, No.29 (October 10, 1856), 1.

Mingrelian, Tatar, Imeretian princes in magnificent costumes, and two Chinese. “And two-hundred steps from these halls resplendent with light and filled with this crowd that is so contemporary lay the tombs of Ivan III and Ivan IV.” He wondered how they would react if they saw this scene. “Ah, how much dream there is in what belongs to reality,” he wrote.<sup>15</sup> Vasiliï Grigor’ev, who was serving in Orenburg at the time of the coronation, arranged to have several Kirgiz deputies invited. In addition to the effect of their colorful costumes, he emphasized the “governmental significance” of their presence. “I have no doubt that this measure will be ten times more effective in instilling a favorable disposition towards and respect for Russia in the members of the [Kirgiz] horde than ten military expeditions to the Steppe and all possible circulars from the Commission.”<sup>16</sup>

The metaphor of love thus presumed that displays of reciprocal sentiments could dispose the nationalities to the monarchy and induce them to feel themselves part of an imperial nation. After Shamil’s capture in August 1859, Alexander received him as a friend in public at balls and parades, as a living and willing trophy of conquest. When he met Shamil at the military camp at Chuguev, in Kharkov province, the newspaper, *Syn Otechestva*, reported that he embraced and kissed his captive and invited him to wear his sword during the review of troops at his side. Shamil’s biographer wrote, “The former Imam, astonished by this tenderness, this soft, ineffably kind greeting, the like of which he had never heard, understood at this moment the true majesty of the mighty tsars...” The ruler of Russia “gave the wild man of the mountains a touching example of dealing with one’s foe.” Shamil later recalled the episode with tears in his eyes.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>15</sup> I.S. Aksakov, *Biografiia Fedora Ivanovicha Tiutcheva* (Moscow: M. G. Volchani-nov, 1886), 262-63; “Lettres de Th. I. Tjutsheff a sa seconde epouse née Baronne de Pfeffel,” *Starina i Novizna*, XIX (1915): 160-61.

<sup>16</sup> N. I. Veselovskii, *V. V. Grigor’ev po ego pis’mam i trudam, 1818-1881* (St. Petersburg: A. Transhel’, 1887), 146. I thank Nathaniel Knight for point out this citation.

<sup>17</sup> Thomas M. Barrett, “The Remaking of the Lion of Dagestan: Shamil in Captivity,” *Russian Review* 53, No. 2 (July 1994): 353-56; M. N. Chichagova, *Shamil’ na Kavkaze i v Rossii* (St. Petersburg: S. Muller and I. Bogel’man, 1889), 107. See also Austin Jersild, *Orientalism and Empire: North Caucasus Mountain People and the Georgian Frontier, 1845-1917* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2002), 110-25.

The most influential propagator of the image of a monarchy united with a conscious Russian nation was the editor of *Moskovskie Vedomosti*, Mikhail Katkov. In the wake of the Polish uprising, Katkov responded to the feeling of sympathy in educated society for the monarchy, by devising a new discourse of nationality. Andreas Renner has shown that he invented a “new method of ‘patriotizing’ thoughts and actions” and presented the nation “as an already established concept.” He gave a name to a “political nationality” that “included other *narodnosti* with equal (except political) rights with a common national state.”<sup>18</sup> But the state justified this authority, not through a national mandate, but through the ruthless and efficacious wielding of power that ensured its survival. Katkov urged the Russian armies in Poland to “aggressive and merciless action” and “to punish inexorably.” At home, he believed in severe measures of state security. He wrote in 1863, “We somehow have forgotten that the sword is the symbol of the state, and the state is compelled to resort when necessary to strict and even severe measures.” Katkov’s answer to challenges to the monarchy was a dictatorship that would temporarily end the disturbances in society and even “hold back and slow down the normal development of the social and economic interests of the country.”<sup>19</sup>

Katkov developed the idea of the multi-national empire at one with the Russian nation in his articles in *Moskovskie Vedomosti*. In April 1863, he wrote, “There is in Russia one dominant nationality, one dominant language, which was developed by centuries of historical life.” There were many tribes with different languages and customs, but they all felt a sense of unity with “the Great Russian world”: “in the unity of the state, in the unity of the supreme authority in the Tsar, the living, sovereign, the personification of this unity.”<sup>20</sup> Ivan Babst and Constantine Pobedonostsev, accompanying the heir, Nicholas Aleksandrovich, on his tour of the empire, described such sentiments in the pages of *Moskovskie Vedomosti*. At the governor’s house in Astrakhan’, Babst, Pobedonostev, and the Grand Duke marveled at the strange motley throng in national costumes, including Greeks, Armenians, Persians, Kalmyks, and Tatars. There were few Russian faces in the crowd, but

<sup>18</sup> Andreas Renner, “Defining a Russian Nation,” 676-77, 681.

<sup>19</sup> V. A. Tvardovskaia, *Ideologiia poreformennogo samoderzhaviiia: M.N. Katkov i ego izdaniia* (Moscow: Nauka, 1978), 27, 37-38.

<sup>20</sup> M. N. Katkov, *1863 god; sobranie statei po Pol’skomu voprosu* (Moscow: Moskovskie Vedomosti, 1887), 100-01.

the three still felt themselves in Russia, “in one of the remote regions of a great tsardom, united by the powerful bond of state power and a consciousness of state unity.” There, amongst the mixture of “dress, faces, and dialects,” the basic tone was provided by the “founding and gathering element of the Russian tribe.”<sup>21</sup>

The precepts of enlightenment that informed the European myth of Russian autocracy presumed a propensity to assimilation among the subject peoples. Alexander II’s scenario inspired projects to take advantage of this disposition by instilling concepts of citizenship (*grazhdanstvennost’*) in native leaders and intellectuals. The blueprint for these efforts was the Bashkir statute of 1865, formulated under the direction of the Minister of War Dmitrii Miliutin. Jurists from several Ministries drafted the legislation, which was extended to Caucasus, Tartarstan, and Turkestan, as well as Bashkiria. Officials and generals now sought to spread ideas of citizenship by introducing reformed courts, local self-government, schools that would teach literacy, and open opera houses, museums and other purveyors of Russian and European culture.<sup>22</sup>

The existence of a propensity to assimilation, however, was belied by the realities of local power politics in the national regions. The officials who tried to impose the new civic order found their principles bent to the advantage of native elders who used the newfound autonomy to strengthen their own influence and promote opportunities for corruption. They sponsored their own appointees to local offices, created their own “political machines,” and exacted “pay-offs” from local chiefs, which they could use to bribe the administration.<sup>23</sup> The policy did produce leaders of the *jadid* movement, who sought to propagate a reformed version of Islam that could be incorporated into Russian imperial culture. The Tatar Ismail-Bey Gasprinskii, the Azerbaijani Hasan Melikov-Zardobi, and Munawwar Qari from Tashkent sought to spread an educational system that would create an enlightened, civically minded Islamic culture, compatible with Russian rule. But they found their efforts thwarted by

<sup>21</sup> K. P. Pobedonostsev and I. Babst, *Pis'ma o puteshestvii gosudaria naslednika tsesarevicha po Rossii ot Peterburga do Kryma* (Moscow: Grachev, 1864), 356-57.

<sup>22</sup> Dov Yaroshevskii, “Empire and Citizenship,” in *Russia's Orient*, 69-71; Austin Lee Jersild, “From Savagery to Citizenship: Caucasian Mountaineers and Muslims in the Russian Empire,” in *Russia's Orient*, 101-14.

<sup>23</sup> Yaroshevskii, “Empire and Citizenship,” 71-73.

tsarist officials who had little sympathy for local differences or autonomy and maintained traditional authoritarian practices.<sup>24</sup>

In the end, the monarchy remained trapped in its own mythology of conquest, which proceeded even as citizenship was touted. The Russian colonization of lands in the Caucasus and Central Asia, led by detachments of Cossacks, resulted in mass expulsions and extermination of native peoples, efforts that were countenanced by Miliutin himself, and opened territories for Russian peasants.<sup>25</sup> Miliutin's military reform of 1874, which presumably aimed at creating a citizen army, sought above all to preserve the existing system of estates and the subordination of national groups.<sup>26</sup>

The imagery of conquest and absolute domination could provide a means to integrate noble elites whose authority rested on a paternalistic ideology and who could share in the benefits of rule and a Western monarchical culture. But it could not accommodate native intellectuals who strove for a measure of national autonomy and toleration of cultural difference. The proffered embrace of the monarchy was rebuffed most powerfully by the Poles in 1863, when the milder rule introduced by Alexander resulted in the slaughter of the sleeping Russian troops in Warsaw and open rebellion. The government's response was violent repression in Poland and the western provinces and the ruthless efforts of the Governor-General M. N. Murav'ev to Russify the western provinces.<sup>27</sup> In Ukraine, the emergence of a national movement in literature belied the

<sup>24</sup> Jersild, "From Savagery to Citizenship," 109-11; Edward J. Lazzerini, "Local Accommodation and Resistance to Colonialism in Nineteenth-Century Crimea," *Russia's Orient*, 169-87; Adeb Khalid, "Representations of Russia in Central Asian Jadid," *Russia's Orient*, 188-202.

<sup>25</sup> Peter Holquist, "To Count, to Extract, to Exterminate: Population Statistics and Population Politics in Late Imperial and Soviet Russia," in *A State of Nations: Empire and Nation Making in the Age of Lenin and Stalin*, ed. Ronald Grigor Suny and Terry Martin (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 116-21.

<sup>26</sup> John S. Bushnell, "Miliutin and the Balkan War: Military Reform vs. Military Performance," in *Russia's Great Reforms, 1855-1881*, 148-49, 154-56.

<sup>27</sup> See Theodore R. Weeks, *Nation and State in Late Imperial Russia: Nationalism and Russification on the Western Frontier* (De Kalb, IL: Northern Illinois University Press, 1996); Mikhail Dolbilov, "Russification and the Bureaucratic Mind in the Empire's Northwestern Region in the 1860s," *Kritika*, New Series, 5, no. 2 (Spring 2004): 245-72; idem, "Konstruirovanie obrazov miatezha: Politika M. N. Murav'eva v Litovsko-Beloruskom krae v 1863-1865gg kak ob"ekt istoriko-antropologicheskogo analiza," in *Actio Nova*, ed. A. I. Filiushkin (Moscow: Globus, 2000), 338-408.

image of a union of all the Russias obedient to the Tsar of Great Russia. The efforts of intellectuals to find a Ukrainian language threatened the belief in the ethnic unity of all the Russias, vital to the concept of a national empire. To Mikhail Katkov these efforts appeared outlandish. He wrote with disdain in 1863, "There have recently appeared in the Ukrainian villages, in sheepskin caps, so-called disseminators of Little Russian literacy and organized Little Russian schools. There have appeared books in the newly fudged language. Finally, one famous professor has solemnly opened a nation-wide fund-raising subscription for publishing Little Russian books."<sup>28</sup>

A rift opened between officials such as Dmitrii Miliutin, who thought that punitive steps should be taken in Ukraine, and those sharing in Alexander's scenario, like the Minister of Interior Petr Valuev, who believed that assimilation could take place only by winning over public opinion to the imperial cause. Valuev was baffled by the dilemma of how to generate "centripetal and not centrifugal forces." He decided on mild measures, "light force" that would be assimilationist and civilizing. His circular, which he advanced reluctantly, banned religious and popular literature in the Ukrainian language. He believed that it would be temporary and could be revoked after the crisis of the Polish revolution. But it remained in force and brought an end to Sunday schools in the Ukrainian language and the attempts to publish Ukrainian primers and a Ukrainian version of the bible.<sup>29</sup> The movement, however, persisted, prompting further repressive measures in the 1870s.

The scenario of love had been meant to obviate a system of popular representation. Alexander envisioned a unity of the estates with the monarchy in gratitude for the great reforms and the measure of freedom permitted after his accession to the throne. The first spurning of his embrace had been the noble constitutional movements of the early 1860s, which brought forth the emperor's angry reprimand. He declared that the reforms the government had introduced "sufficiently attest to my constant concern to improve and perfect, to the extent of possibility and in the order prescribed by me, the various branches of state administration." He insisted that the right of initiative for

<sup>28</sup> Alexei Miller, *The Ukrainian Question: Russian Nationalism in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Central European Press, 2003), 105.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 210-12; Olga Andriewsky, "The Russian-Ukrainian Discourse and the Failure of the 'Little Russian Solution,' 1782-1917," in *Culture, Nation, and Identity: The Ukrainian Russian Encounter (1600-1945)*, ed. Andreas Kappeler et al. (Edmonton: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, 2003), 210-13.



reform belonged to him exclusively, “and is inseparably connected with the autocratic power, entrusted to me by God.” His subjects did not have the right to anticipate his “incessant care for Russia’s well-being.... No estate has the right to speak with the name of other estates. No one can take it upon himself to petition me about the general welfare and needs of the state.”<sup>30</sup> But rather than an upsurge of gratitude, Alexander’s scenario brought forth disappointment, a sense of betrayal and anger, reflected in the growth of a revolutionary movement and finally the turn to terror that resulted in his assassination.

### NATIONAL MYTH AND NATIONAL MONARCHY

Alexander II’s scenario of love fostered the presumption that increasing education and freedom would lead to increasing sympathy for the monarchy and a diminution of support for liberal and national programs. Both Valuev and Konstantin Pahlen, the Minister of Justice, clung to these presumptions as did many of the reformed officials in the administration. The assassination of Alexander II and the accession of Alexander III in March 1881 shattered these illusions and replaced them with the conviction that defense of the autocracy required the show and application of ruthless force. The new reign opened with the reaffirmation of a motif of conquest that ruled out conciliation and efforts at integration.

While measures of “Russification” had been taken during Alexander II’s reign, they ill fit the dominant scenario of warm feelings and were pursued vigorously only in Poland and the western provinces of Russia. The elaboration of a “national myth,” which presented the tsar as an ethnically Russian ruler, the most Russian of Russians, expressed a new militancy embodied in the figure of a burly, bearded, stolid tsar with firm resolve to forge an empire that was an ethnic Russian state. The manifesto of April 29, 1881, written by the tsar’s mentor, Constantine Pobedonostsev, announced a new conception of autocracy. The bond between tsar and people was to be religious. The “Voice of God” had summoned the tsar “to turn vigorously to the task of Ruling, with hope in Divine Providence” after the shameful act of assassination. The use of the word “vigorously” (*bodro*) signified a revitalization of police authority.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>30</sup> Terence Emmons, *The Russian Landed Gentry and the Peasant Emancipation of 1861* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968), 410-11.

<sup>31</sup> PSZ, no. 118, April 29, 1881.

The faith in God, the prayers of the people charged him to act with energetic and ruthless action from above. “Vigor” became a common term in the rhetoric of conservative periodicals calling for unyielding autocratic power.

The manifesto replaced the reign of Peter the Great preceded by “the invitation of the Varangians” with a new founding myth of Russian monarchy. Pobedonostsev wrote not of the Russian state or empire, but the “Russian land” (*zemlia russkaia*) evoking a neo-Slavophile picture of seventeenth-century Russia as a period of harmony between tsar and people. The Russian land had been disgraced by vile sedition but with “hereditary tsarist power,” continued to enjoy the love of its subjects, and this power “in unbreakable ... union with Our land” had survived such troubles (*smuty*) in the past. The historical paradigm now shifts from the Petrine empire, with its westernized multinational elite to a picture of idealized seventeenth-century polity, borrowed from the Slavophiles, when the tsar ruled in union and harmony with the Russian land.

The elevation and glorification of the monarch now took place by claiming to inhabit another time frame, when the Russian tsar was in contact with the nation. The synchronic mode was profoundly anti-traditional, expressing absolute rejection of the legacies of the recent reigns in the hope of resurrecting a distant past. The distance between the ruler and the ruled was the distance between him and the manifestations of the fallen present that encumbered his power. By exalting the seventeenth century, the national myth diminished the eighteenth and nineteenth, and delegitimized the legalistic bureaucracy, the intelligentsia, and the dynamic of reform that had reached its culmination in the previous reign. It looked back to a timeless heritage, untouched by historical change. The Russian emperor might live in Western palaces, consort with western royalty, and rule institutions with western names, but these superficial overlays concealed a national substratum (*ustoi*) that could be recovered through a restoration of the earlier political and spiritual order.

While Russifying initiatives succeeded only in certain areas of the empire, the prevalence of this ideology during the reigns of Alexander III and Nicholas II represented a powerful deterrent to the integration of nationalities throughout the empire. In place of a presumed assimilation into a multi-ethnic empire, the national myth presumed a preexistent national supremacy and dominance inherited from a distant and glorious past. In Ukraine, the western provinces, and Poland, it led to measures encouraging the spread of Orthodoxy and the Russian language.

The building of Muscovite style churches in the national regions established the image of the empire not as a multi-national union of elites, but as a dominion of the Russian state. They were visual representations of an invented tradition of national domination that persisted since the sixteenth century that could deliver Russian from western liberal encumbrances by the measures introduced by an active and ruthless autocracy. Churches appeared as symbols of an empire dominated by ethnic, Orthodox Russians, rather than a multi-ethnic empire. They evoked images of a distant past of Orthodox religion and Russian rule, suggesting that the reproduction of the visual artifacts could restore the imagined unity of the earlier time.

Imposing orthodox churches displayed imperial rule over Central Asia. The Cathedral of the Transfiguration, a large neo-Byzantine church completed in 1888, towered over the governor's house on the principal square of Tashkent. It was the most prominent building in the center of the new Russian city. The buildings of the Teachers' Seminary in Tashkent were constructed in the 1880s in Muscovite style. In 1898, a tall five-cupola tent-style brick church designed by A. L. Benois was built into the walls of the seminary compound, confirming the particular national and ethnic character of the Russian presence in Tashkent.<sup>32</sup>

Russian colonists and missionaries in the Caucasus expected "to restore" Orthodox Christianity, evoking a time when it was presumably the dominant faith in the region. Tent-style churches went up in Baku in the 1880s. Russian missionaries and officials in the Caucasus pointed out the importance of the physical presence of Orthodox churches for the religious guidance of the mountain peoples. The Viceroy of the Caucasus, Prince Alexander Dondukov-Korsakov wrote that the "external" aspects of the faith were most important for "Eastern peoples."<sup>33</sup>

<sup>32</sup> V. A. Nil'sen, *U istokov sovremennogo gradostroitel'stva Uzbekistana: xix-nachalo xx vekov* (Tashkent: Gafur Guliam, 1988), 49-52, 64-65; Robert Crews, "Civilization in the City: Architecture, Urbanism and the Colonization of Tashkent," in *Architectures of Russian Identity: 1500 to the Present*, ed. James Cracraft and Daniel Rowland (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2003), 117-32.

<sup>33</sup> Austin Jersild, "From Frontier to Empire: The Russification of the Caucasus, 1845-1917," unpublished manuscript, Chapter 4; A. Platonov, *Obzor deiatel'nosti obshchestva vozstanovleniia pravoslavnago khristianstva na Kavkaze za 1860-1910 gg.* (Tiflis: n.p., 1910).

In the Baltic provinces and Poland, new churches and cathedrals ensured that the inhabitants would not forget who ruled their land. Cathedrals in Riga and Warsaw carried the name of Alexander Nevskii, Alexander III's namesake, and the traditional defender of Russia against Western Christendom. Publications celebrated their construction, providing conspicuous statements of domination. A large orthodox cathedral in Russian-Byzantine style had been built in the center of Riga from 1876-1884.<sup>34</sup>

The use of ecclesiastical architecture as a statement of symbolic conquest was most apparent in Warsaw, where almost twenty Russian-style Orthodox churches were built in the 1890s. In Warsaw, as in Riga, the Moscow-Byzantine style remained prevalent, signifying imperial domination. The principal cathedral, Leontii Benois' immense Alexander Nevskii Cathedral (1894-1912), combined the classical Moscow-Byzantine form with abundant *kokoshniki* covering on the roof affirming the national character of imperial rule. Its 70 meter bell tower made the Russian presence known by dwarfing surrounding buildings. It became "the most conspicuous accent of the city skyline," prompting lewd comparisons from the city's residents.<sup>35</sup> Initiative belonged to the Governor-General, I. V. Gurko, who solicited contributions from Russian donors. The chancellery of the Governor-General appealed to residents of Moscow: "By its very presence ... the Russian Church declares to the world ... that in the western terrains along the Vistula, mighty Orthodox rule has taken root .... The appearance of a new ... church in Warsaw as a boundary and pillar of Orthodox Russia will animate the hopes of the Orthodox Slavs for unification under the Orthodox cross." The journal of the Warsaw Eparchy boasted in 1912, "Under the dome of this magic temple, we find ourselves as if on Russian soil."<sup>36</sup>

Authorities pressed colonization of land in the Caucasus and Turkestan by Russian peasants, regardless of the resistance of native elites. Although Russian peasants proved ill-suited to colonization, and local officials preferred farmers of other nationalities, such as Armenians, Greeks, Moldavians, and Czechs,

<sup>34</sup> *Riga und seine Bauten* (Riga: P. Kerkovius, 1903), 181-84.

<sup>35</sup> Piotr Paszkiewicz, "The Russian Orthodox Cathedral of Saint Alexander Nevsky in Warsaw," *Polish Art Studies* 14 (1992): 64-65, 67.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 65-66; for a more detailed discussion of revival church architecture see my article, "'The Russian Style' in Church Architecture as Imperial Symbol after 1881," in *Architectures of Russian Identity*, 101-116.

the government endeavored to grant permissions and subsidies only to Russian peasants. The policy of discrimination in the Caucasus, an official paper argued, “was necessary for the strengthening of the Russian element amid the different and not always reliable nationalities in order to raise the prestige of Russia [and] its faith, language, and civilization in the region.”<sup>37</sup> The relationship that prevailed at the local level is well illustrated by the inaugural ceremony of Governor-General A. N. Kuropatkin held in Ashkabad of the Transcaspian Region in 1890. When welcomed by an Armenian merchant, he retorted angrily that the delegations should be rearranged. The Russians from the townspeople estate (*meshchane*), he declared, should be placed in front, then the Turkmen and Kirgiz, then Christians, including the Armenians, finally the foreigners, Persians, and Afghans. The Russian townspeople, though representing a lesser estate, had to appear as the leading delegation in the local hierarchy.<sup>38</sup>

The national myth framed new policies to exclude Jews from the national body, in contrast to the relative tolerance of the previous reign. The appeal to ethnic identity and rejection of the western character of the autocracy encouraged the exclusionist image of the Jew not only as alien, but an enemy of the Russian nation. Beginning with the pogroms of 1881, the government sought to reverse the effects of the reforms, introducing limits on Jewish residence, and restrictions of admissions to the universities and the bar.<sup>39</sup> The monarchy endeavored to cleanse Moscow, the symbolic center of the national autocracy, of Jews.<sup>40</sup> When Grand Duke Sergei Aleksandrovich assumed the office of Governor-General of Moscow in 1891, he asked, with the tsar’s support, that the Jews be removed, leading to brutal expulsions of two-thirds of the city’s thirty thousand Jewish residents.

Most fundamentally, the new national symbolic increasingly precluded the possibility of national groups, either the religious hopes for conversion or the secular visions of enlightenment, which had been conflated. Despite the rhetoric and imagery of Russification, the discourse increasingly emphasized

<sup>37</sup> Jersild, *Orientalism and Empire*, 126-29, 138-40.

<sup>38</sup> Yaroshevskii, “Empire and Citizenship,” 58-59.

<sup>39</sup> On the “selective integration” of Jews in the second half of the nineteenth century and the setbacks during the 1880s, see Benjamin Nathans, *Beyond the Pale*.

<sup>40</sup> On the shift from Petersburg to Moscow as the symbolic center of empire see article 8.

permanent, even racial, attributes of national identity, reflected in a shift in the terminology for other nationalities, from *inovertsy*—peoples of other religions—to people of other ethnic stock, *inorodtsy*, or aliens. Russian law had included only Jews and nomads in the category *inorodtsy*, groups considered so alien to the Russian social system that they could not be assimilated. But in the last decades of the nineteenth century, the term began to be applied to all non-Russian nationalities and to express ethnic differences that implicitly precluded assimilation.<sup>41</sup>

This shift that took place in official discourse also reflected the emergence of a popular Russian national vision of a Russian land that would engulf and even extend the empire. The line between metropole and periphery is the standard term now in use in the literature on empires. Russian explorers and nationalist thinkers, like Nicholas Danilevskii, viewed the southern steppe and the Asian borderlands as destined for Russian colonization, territories virtually empty and ready for occupation that could provide an answer to the land hunger prevailing in the Russian interior. In 1892, the eminent explorer-geographer Petr Semenov described Russia's mission as "part of the great colonizing movement of the European race," comparable to the overseas colonization of Spain, France, and England.<sup>42</sup> Semenov's fellow explorer and geographer, Mikhail Veniukov, who believed that the autocracy was the principal deterrent to the formation of a nation state, declared in a speech of 1873 that the endurance and courage of Russian soldiers not only defeated the native peoples, but ensured that "the Caucasus became Russian land." They triumphed in a region where "without the arrival of Russians barbarism

<sup>41</sup> See Paul Werth, "Changing Conceptions of Difference, Assimilation, and Faith in the Volga-Kama Region, 1740-1870," in *Russian Empire: Space, People, Power, 1700-1930*, 171-88; John W. Slocum, "Who, and When, Were the Inorodtsy? The Evolution of the Category of 'Aliens' in Imperial Russia," *The Russian Review* 57 (April 1998): 173-90; on the complexities of the usage of the term in Muslim regions, see V. O. Bobrovnikov, "Chto vyshlo iz proektov sozdaniia v Rossii inorodtsev? (Otvét Dzhonu Slokumu iz musul'manskikh okrain imperii)," *Poniatiia o Rossii*, 2: 259-91.

<sup>42</sup> Cited in Uillard Sanderlend (Willard Sunderland), "Imperiia bez imperializma?" in I. Gerasimov, et al., ed. *Novaia Imperskaia Istoriia Post-Sovetskogo Prostranstva* (Kazan: Tsentr Issledovaniia Natsionalizma i Imperii, 2004), 463. See also my article, "Russian Noble Officers and the Ethos of Exploration," 181-97; Vera Tolz, *Russia: Inventing the Nation*, 170-74.

would rule forever.”<sup>43</sup> In literature and history the Russian land became an expression and metaphor for the Russian nation, a kind of surrogate for parliamentary bodies representing a political nation. In his popular *Course of Russian History*, Vasilii Kliuchevskii wrote that colonization was “the basic fact of Russian history” and that “the history of Russia is the history of country that colonizes itself.”<sup>44</sup>

The erection of daunting Muscovite edifices, the evocation of an imagined Russian national empire, and the spread of an ethos of colonization, however, only revealed the rift between the imagery and ideology of the monarch and its adherents and the subject nationalities of the empire. The rift became evident with the established of the State Duma and elections of 1906, which led to the formations of native elites who organized political parties seeking national rights and autonomy.<sup>45</sup> The new institutions produced a heightening of tensions between Russians and national groups and led to conflict rather than reconciliation or efforts at integration. In Bashkiria, where Russians and Bashkirs had reached a *modus vivendi* with local elites, a “language of patriotism began to penetrate local political life” that was expressed in widely-circulated chauvinistic pamphlets.<sup>46</sup> At the same time, those Tatars in Kazan who succeeded in assimilating Russian culture or converted to Orthodoxy met with aversion from Russians, whose sense of nationality was threatened by natives, who did not resemble them.<sup>47</sup>

The first Duma consisted of only 58.5% Russian delegates (including Ukrainians and White Russians), challenging the Russian domination of empire.<sup>48</sup> S. E. Kryzhanovskii, then an official in the Minister of Interior who was formulating the electoral laws, had foreseen the problems:

<sup>43</sup> M. I. Veniukov, *Iz vospominanii: kniga pervaiia, 1832-1867* (Amsterdam: n.p., 1895), 336-38. The memoirs were written in the 1880s when Veniukov was living abroad.

<sup>44</sup> Willard Sunderland, *Taming the Wild Field*, 177-220.

<sup>45</sup> Rustem Tsiunchuk, “Peoples, Regions, and Electoral Politics: The State Dumas and the Constitution of New National Elites,” in *Russian Empire: Space, People, Power, 1700-1930*, 366-97; Elena Campbell, “The Muslim Question in Late Imperial Russia,” in *ibid.*, 330-43.

<sup>46</sup> Charles Steinwedel, “To Make a Difference: The Category of Ethnicity in Late Imperial Politics, 1861-1917,” in *Russian Modernity: Politics, Knowledge, Practices*, 76-77.

<sup>47</sup> Robert P. Geraci, *Window on the East: National and Imperial Identities in Late Tsarist Russia* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2001), 309-51.

<sup>48</sup> Tsiunchuk, “Peoples, Regions, and Electoral Politics,” 387.

In Russia, the predominant nationality (*natsional'nost'*) on which the government stands comprises only about 66 percent of the overall population, and alien nationalities (*chuzhnye narodnosti*) 34 percent, that is a percentage not seen in a single Western European power other than Austria ... Therefore the interests of the greatest state importance urgently require that the voice of the Russian people, upon whom both the strength of state authority and the very throne of the Russian sovereign depend, unconditionally prevail in institutions concerned with the preparation of legislation ... A strong majority inconvenient for the government may form in the Duma on questions touching on the interests of non-Russians.<sup>49</sup>

On June 7, 1907, Stolypin perpetrated his coup d'état, a change in the election laws under the tsar's emergency powers, which curtailed the representation of urban populations and enhanced that of the nobility. The law also assured Russian domination of the Duma by sharply reducing the number of deputies elected by Poles, Tatars, and Armenians and excluded representatives from Turkestan. The rhetoric of the manifesto made clear that tsar and government viewed the state as Russian, and the nationalities as alien to the body politic. Nicholas declared that the Duma, "created for the strengthening of the Russian State (*Gosudarstvo Rossiiskoe*), must be Russian (*russkii*) in spirit as well." Other nationalities should have "representatives of their needs in the State Duma, but not in numbers allowing them to decide questions that are purely Russian." Elections were temporarily ended in those border regions "where the population has not attained a sufficient level of civic development."<sup>50</sup> Of the delegates to the Fourth Duma, 83.4 percent were Russians.

The tsar and prime minister agreed on the need to maintain Russian national dominance: neither favored compromise or conciliation with the nationalities. But they maintained completely irreconcilable conceptions of Russia. The manifesto conflated the meanings of "*Rossia*" and "*Rus'*," but whereas Stolypin identified *Rossia* with the empire in the form of a modern nation-state, Nicholas looked to a resurrection of the spirit and traditions of ethnic *Rus'*, which he understood as a bond between himself and the Russian people, which predated Peter's westernized empire and was exemplified in an idealized image of the reign of Alexei Mikhailovich.

<sup>49</sup> Cited in Tsiunchuk, "Peoples, Regions, and Electoral Politics," 369.

<sup>50</sup> *PSZ, Sobranie* 3, no. 29240, June 3, 1907; Tsiunchuk, "Peoples, Regions, and Electoral Politics," 387.



This bond was personal, displayed in ceremonial meetings at the great historical celebrations staged from 1909 to 1913, where scenes of mutual devotion between Nicholas and the army and Nicholas and the peasantry inspired in him a sense of mystical exaltation. The bicentenary of the battle of Poltava in 1909, the centenary of the battle of Borodino in 1912, and the tercentenary of the election of the first Romanov tsar in 1913, transformed these great historical triumphs of early centuries into episodes in Nicholas's scenario. Representatives of the conservative-dominated Duma were either excluded or assigned secondary roles. For the tsar, Russia was represented by the army—the instrument and symbol of conquest that had crushed the revolutionary movement—and the Russian peasants, who he believed remained devoted to him despite the peasant uprisings of 1905 and 1906. The parades at the Poltava and Borodino celebrations provided occasions to display the strong, comradely rapport that Nicholas felt with the officers and troops of his military. At all three celebrations, he was cheered by masses of peasants. He chatted with groups of peasants and claimed to feel bonds of sympathy and friendship that he did not experience with the educated and privileged.

The emperor's and the empress's trip along the Volga in May, 1913 was the culmination of the Tercentenary celebration and a display that Nicholas regarded as amply demonstrating his bond with people. Their visits to churches and veneration of local icons along the way enhanced their sense of closeness to Moscow and distance from the present. Sailboats covered with flags greeted them. At the prompting of the Ministry of Interior, scenes and ceremonies of welcome took place along the river banks. Villages put up triumphal arches decorated with plants and the words "God Save the Tsar." Peasants gathered in camps stood on the shore and even ventured into the river up to their waists to see the tsar. As the flotilla approached each town, church bells sounded, and priests led processions of the cross from their churches to banks, where they blessed the ships. Peasants knelt, crossing themselves, and shouted, many with tears, "God protect the little father tsar (*batiushka-tsar'*)."

In Kostroma, the original Romanov patrimony, Nicholas was blessed by the Icon of the Fedorov Mother of God that had been used to bless Tsar Michael Fedorovich in 1613. Atop the town pavilion, Nicholas was greeted with a thunderous "hoorah" and an ovation from the crowd. A regimental band gave a show of marches to tunes from *A Life for the Tsar*. When the moment came to sing the tsarist anthem, the crowd sank to their knees. As Nicholas stood before the thousands of kneeling peasants, his eyes moistened.

Those present also felt moved, convinced that this was a significant show of popular devotion for the tsar. In Moscow, a similar scene was enacted on Red Square, before mass of shouting peasants. While political conflicts marred Nicholas's visits to both Kostroma and Moscow, Nicholas returned to Tsarskoe Selo convinced that he made contact with the Russian nation. He declared that his trip to the Volga and old Russian towns "has proved once more that the bond between Tsar and people that distinguished our Mother Russia in olden times exists indestructibly now as well."<sup>51</sup>

The historical celebrations were accompanied by a campaign of mass publicity, which reached its culmination during the Tercentenary events that sought to popularize Nicholas's image and sustain the impression that he enjoyed mass support. Pictures of the tsar and the imperial family appeared on new postage stamps, commemorative coins, and kitsch, the souvenirs of celebrations. Films acquainted a mass public with scenes of the imperial family at ceremonies and episodes from Russia's past. Articles in the press and a widely circulated official account of Nicholas's life acquainted a growing reading public with his habits, tastes, and ostensibly democratic predilections.<sup>52</sup>

At the same time, Nicholas sought to embody the image of a Muscovite tsar, inhabiting an imaginary landscape of seventeenth-century Rus', where the tsar enjoyed absolute power and lived in harmony with his subjects. At Tsarskoe Selo, he and Alexandra created a replica of an early Russian town, the Fedorovskii gorodok, built for the tsar's personal convoy and his sharpshooter regiment. The centerpiece was the Fedorov Cathedral, (1908-1912) dedicated to the Fedorov Mother-of-God—the protectress of the dynasty. The official name of the church, Fedorovskii Gosudarev Sobor, The Sovereigns' Fedorov Cathedral, made it clear that it was the domain of the tsar and tsaritsa.

The architect, Vladimir Pokrovskii, designed the cathedral in the spirit of the neo-Russian school, which sought sources of inspiration for a reborn national architecture in all periods of early Russian architecture. Pokrovskii took the model of the fifteenth-century Annunciation Cathedral in the Kremlin, which had served as the private chapel of the Moscow tsar's family, but attached tent-shaped roofs over the main entrance and the covered

<sup>51</sup> *Moskovskie Vedomosti*, May 26, 1913, 2.

<sup>52</sup> See my article, "Publicizing the Imperial Image in 1913," in Laura Engelstein and Stephanie Sandler, eds., *Self and Story in Russian History* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2000), 94-119.

vestibules adding flamboyant elements recalling seventeenth-century churches. He also drew on Novgorod motifs for the bell tower. In this respect, the church created its own esthetic that erased the historical and stylistic distinctions of early Russian architecture and strove for a contemporary esthetic true to the past rooted in a popular spirit.

The town was to represent a spiritual model of a reborn nation, taken from Russia's distant past. Stepan Krichinskii designed a Kremlin with walls and towers of elaborately decorated white Staritskii limestone. Krichinskii and other architects of neo-Russian style favored the form of Kremlin walls, which emphasized the separation of the church and the town from the outside world. If the models for Alexander III's official Russian style were urban churches in popular style like Vasilii the Blessed and Moscow-Iaroslavl churches, the models for Nicholas II's were old Russian monasteries, sequestered by walls from intrusion. The purpose was not admonitory but exemplary, showing the survival and revival of old Russian piety by those forswearing the contestation and distractions of modern society.

Nicholas's historical imaginings lent his scenario an aspect of fantasy and make-believe alien to previous imperial presentations. But he clearly believed that the roles reflected his national self, and he came away from these appearances with a heightened sense of mission and determination to restore pure autocracy. As a result, in the opening years of the twentieth century we witness the collision of two violently opposed insurgent forces, a Russia awakening politically and demanding to be heard and a monarch seeking, through the punitive means at his disposal, to create a pure autocracy where a tsar drew personal authority from God and the people, unencumbered by institutions of state.

It is clear that, in this epic struggle for Russia's political destiny, neither side sympathized with the cause of the integration of the nationalities into the empire. Both the leaders of the non-socialist parties and the monarch looked to the emergence of a nation state dominated by ethnic Russians. Meanwhile, national movements emerged that strove for autonomy within the empire. In the political circumstances and culture of the time, these aspirations could be resolved only in the spirit of conflict, with the clash of the antinomies, rebellion and submission, taking precedence over hopes for integration and acceptance.

# Richard S. Wortman: A Bibliography (1962-2013)

by Ernest A. Zitser



This bibliography of the works of Professor Richard S. Wortman (b. 1938) lists his publications from 1962 until 2013. It is based on the 2011 version of his curriculum vitae as well as items identified by examining reference works, periodicals, subscription databases, and web search engines.<sup>1</sup> Under each year, his original works are listed before reviews, which are in alphabetical order of the author's or editor's name. I have decided to include reprints and Russian translations in the bibliography, primarily because doing so provides a glimpse of the circulation and diffusion of his ideas, as well as the gradual formation of the "Wortman School" of Russian Imperial historiography.<sup>2</sup> This explains, for example, why the bibliography includes two different entries for *Stsenarii vlasti*, a translation of his *magnum opus*, which appeared in Russia over the course of two years with two different translators. Similarly, his *Development of a Russian Legal Consciousness* is mentioned three times: once as the original English-language monograph; again as a Russian translation; and finally, as an ACLS Humanities e-book. However, mention of his advisory role in such works as the *Encyclopedia of Social History*<sup>3</sup> and his involvement on the editorial boards of such publications as *American Historical Review* are not included.

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<sup>1</sup> ABSEES, Historical Abstracts, ISI Web of Knowledge, Zhurnal'nyi zal, Yandex.ru, Google Scholar. See also [Aleksandr Semenov], "Bibliografiia rabot Richarda Uortmana na russkom iazyke i v rossiiskikh izdaniiax," *Ab Imperio: teoriia i istoriia natsional'nostei i natsionalizma v postsovetskom prostranstve* 2 (2000): 59. I also gratefully acknowledge the advice and suggestions of Molly Molloy, Reference and Instruction Librarian, Stanford University; and Robert H. Davis, Jr., Librarian for Russian, *Eurasian & East European Studies*, Columbia University.

<sup>2</sup> Andrei Zorin, "Po napravleniiu k...?" *Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie* 50, No. 4 (2001): 408-414, here 412.

<sup>3</sup> Peter N. Stearns, *Encyclopedia of Social History* [Garland reference library of social science, v. 780] (New York: Garland, 1994).

## ABBREVIATIONS

- AI — *Ab Imperio: teoriia i istoriia natsional'nostei i natsionalizma v postsovetskom prostranstve*
- AHR — *American Historical Review*
- Biblion — *Biblion: The Bulletin of the New York Public Library*
- JfGO — *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas, Neue Folge*
- JMH — *Journal of Modern History*
- Kritika — *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History*, New Series
- NLO — *Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie*
- RH — *Russian History/Histoire russe*
- RR — *Russian Review*
- SR — *Slavic Review*

### 1962

1. “Koshelev, Samarin, and Cherkassky and the Fate of Liberal Slavophilism.” SR 21, no. 2 (Summer 1962): 261-279. [Article based on “Koshelev, Samarin, and Cherkasskii: Three Views of Russia’s Political Future” (A.M. Thesis, University of Chicago, 1960)].

### 1965

2. Review: A. Buzek, *How the Communist Press Works* [Praeger publications in *Russian history and world communism*, no. 147] New York: Praeger, 1964). JMH 37, no. 2 (1965): 281-282.

### 1967

3. *The Crisis of Russian Populism*. London: Cambridge University Press, 1967. [Monograph based on “The Crisis of Russian Populism” (Ph.D. diss., University of Chicago, 1964)].

### 1968

4. “The New Soviet Intelligentsia and Russia’s Past.” *Midway* 8, No. 3 (Winter 1968): 21-37.
5. Review: Edward J. Brown, *Stankevich and His Moscow Circle, 1830-1840* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1966). JMH 40, No. 4 (December 1968): 679-681.

### 1969

6. “Judicial Personnel and the Court Reform of 1864,” *Canadian Slavic Studies*, 3, No. 2 (Summer 1969): 224-234.
7. Review: Petr Lavrov, *Historical Letters*. Translated, with introduction and notes by James P. Scanlan (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967) and Klaus

von Beyme, *Politische Soziologie im Zaristischen Russland* [*Osteuropastudien der Hochschulen des Lande Hessen*. Reihe 4: *Frankfurter Abhandlungen zur osteuropäische Geschichte*, Bd. 1] (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1965). *JMH* 41, No. 2 (June 1969): 285-288.

8. Review: Leonard Schapiro, *Rationalism and Nationalism in Russian Nineteenth-Century Political Thought* [*Yale Russian and East European studies*, 4] (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967). *JMH* 41, No. 3 (September 1969): 409-411; "Erratum [to review of Schapiro]." *JMH* 41, No. 4 (December 1969): 660.

#### 1970

9. Review: Terence Emmons, *The Russian Landed Gentry and the Peasant Emancipation of 1861* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1968) and Wayne S. Vucinich, *The Peasant in Nineteenth-Century Russia* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1968). *JMH* 3, No. 3 (Spring 1970): 295-302.
10. Review: A. Walicki, *The Controversy over Capitalism: Studies in the Social Philosophy of the Russian Populists* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969). *JMH* 42, No. 4 (1970): 673-676.
11. Review: Anna M. Bourguina, *Russian Social Democracy—The Menshevik Movement: A Bibliography* [*Hoover Institution bibliographical series*, XXXVI] (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1968). *The Library Quarterly* 40, No. 3 (July 1970): 353-354.

#### 1971

12. Review: S. S. Dmitriev, ed., *Granovskii, Timofei Nikolaevich: Bibliografiia (1828-1967)* (Moskva: Izd. Mosk. un-ta, 1969). *SR* 30, No. 2 (June 1971): 389-390.

#### 1972

13. Review: Richard Pipes, *Struve: Liberal on Left, 1870-1905* [*Russian Research Center studies*, 64] (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1970). *JMH* 44, No. 4 (1972): 620-622.

#### 1973

14. "Gavrila Romanovich Derzhavin and his *Zapiski*." in G. R. Derzhavin, *Perepiska (1794-1816) i "Zapiski"*. Facsimile reprint of *Sochineniia Derzhavina, s obiasnitel'nymi primechaniiami I.A. Grota*. Tom 6 (Sankt-Peterburg: Izd. Imperatorskoi Akademii Nauk, 1871) [*Oriental Research Partners memoir series*], 1-8. Cambridge, UK: Oriental Research Partners, 1973.
15. Review: William F. Woehrlin, *Chernyshevskii: The Man and the Journalist* [*Russian Research Center studies*, 67] (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1971). *JMH* 45, No. 1 (March 1973): 148-150.

1974

16. "Peter the Great and Court Procedure." *Canadian-American Slavic Studies* 8, No. 2 (Summer 1974): 303-310.

1975

17. Review: Boris Petrovich Baluev, *Politicheskaia reaktsiia 80-kh godov XIX veka i russkaia zhurnalistika* ([Moskva]: Izd-vo Moskovskogo Universiteta, 1971). *JfGO*, Bd. 23, H. 2 (1975): 245-246.

1976

18. *The Development of a Russian Legal Consciousness*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976.
19. "Power and Responsibility in the Upbringing of the Nineteenth-Century Tsars." *Group for the Use of Psychology in History Newsletter* 4, No. 4 (Spring 1976): 18-27.

1977

20. "Remarks on the Service State Interpretation." *Russian History* 4, No. 1 (1977): 39-41.
21. "The Politics of Court Reform." In Don Karl Rowney and G. Edward Orchard, eds., *Russian and Slavic History* [International Slavic Conference (1st: 1974: Banff, Alta)], 10-25. Columbus, OH: Slavica Publishers, 1977.

1978

22. "The Russian Empress as Mother" In David L. Ransel, ed., *Family in Imperial Russia: New Lines of Historical Research*, 60-74. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1978.
23. Review: Nicholas V. Riasanovsky, *A Parting of Ways: Government and the Educated Public in Russia, 1801-1855* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976). *JMH* 50, No. 1 (March 1978): 176-178.
24. Review: Peter A. Zaionchkovsky, *The Russian Autocracy under Alexander III*, edited and translated by David R. Jones [*The Russian series*, v. 22] (Gulf Breeze, FL: Academic International Press, 1976). *SR* 37, No. 1 (March 1978): 127.

1979

25. Review: W. Bruce Lincoln, *Nicholas I: Emperor and Autocrat of All the Russias* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1978). *RR* 38, No. 2 (April 1979): 226-227.

1980

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