Part IV

Intellectual History

13. Koshelev, Samarin, and Cherkasskii and the Fate of Liberal Slavophilism

In the historiography of the Russian intelligentsia, liberal Slavophilism has suffered a sad neglect. Whereas Marxist and Populist historians alike have hallowed the radical Westernizers, the liberal Slavophiles have been relegated to a minor position and Slavophilism presented as an ideology of obscurantist conservatism. In one respect this is understandable: the liberal Slavophiles were above all moderates, and did not offer the violent expressions of resentment against the existing order that appealed so much to the revolutionary mentality. Although moderate, Slavophilism in the forties and fifties was a powerful progressive force, instrumental in bringing about the Great Reforms. In their concrete notions of reform and their determination and ability to carry them out, the liberal Slavophiles far surpassed the Westernizers, who in the forties were still groping in the labyrinth of Hegelian philosophy, and in the fifties were disoriented by the failure of the revolution of 1848. The Slavophile circles were the only forums where the social problems of Russia could be aired in the forties. Impelled by their devotion to the *narod*—the people—and their desire to rid their nation of its faults, the liberal Slavophiles went beyond theoretical considerations of reform to work out practical proposals for its execution.[1]

They also outstripped the westernizers in their understanding of the technical problems facing emancipation. The most talented and active members of the group, Alexander Ivanovich Koshelev, Vladimir Aleksandrovich Cherkasskii, and Iurii Fedorovich Samarin, had closely studied local

1 Pavel Annenkov, *Literaturnye vospominaniia* (Leningrad: Academia, 1928), 462-3.

conditions, and Koshelev and Cherkasskii had pressed for the first steps of emancipation in their districts (*uezdy*).[2] After the Crimean War, they took the lead in pressing the government for reform and providing it with informed advice. Iurii Samarin's memorandum on serf reform ("On the Serf Status and the Transition to Citizenship"), the first major statement of the need for emancipation, circulated through society after the war and produced a strong effect in government circles. In the pages of the new Slavophile journal *Russkaia beseda* all three campaigned for reform, and Koshelev opened an adjunct publication, *Sel'skoe blagoustroistvo*, devoted to enlisting the landlords' support for emancipation and instructing them in its technical intricacies. When the government requested projects from society in 1857, only those of Koshelev, Samarin, and Cherkasskii were seriously examined.[3] In 1858, they were chosen as government representatives in their respective gentry committees to defend the reform against the local nobility. Their three-way correspondence during this trying period is a poignant testimony to the resistance they encountered from hostile majorities and the common ideals that made them persist against great odds.

Three years later, the progressive influence of the Slavophiles had all but disappeared. Each continued to work for further reform, but they followed different paths and their efforts were isolated and ineffectual. In spite of their fruitful activity, the liberal Slavophiles left no tradition behind them, as had the radical Westernizers, for by the early 1860s they themselves were seeking new allegiances. The ideas that had been associated with Slavophilism became increasingly associated with reaction, and later moderate progressives identified themselves with other causes.

Liberal Slavophilism failed to endure because of changed historical conditions. The liberal Slavophiles' devotion to the *narod* was the basis of their united stand on the need for emancipation, but once the work on serf reform had begun, other questions arose for which devotion to the people provided no simple answer. The most pressing of these was the

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2 Aleksandr Koshelev, *Zapiski, 1812-1883* (Berlin: B. Behr, 1884), Appendix, 7-14; Ol'ga Trubetskaia, *Materialy dlia biografii V. A. Cherkasskogo: Cherkasskii i ego uchastie v razreshenii krest'ianskogo voprosa* (Moscow: G. Lissner and A. Geshel', 1901, 1904), 1: 11-20.

3 Aleksandr Kornilov, *Obshchestvennoe dvizhenie pri Aleksandre II, 1855-1881* (Paris: Russkaia Mysl', 1905), 31-2.

political problem: the question of who was to rule Russia and how Russia was to be ruled. When the form emancipation would take became known, groups in society that had been dormant awakened to challenge the terms of the reform and insist on a part in its enactment. How the political claims of the various groups could be satisfied and fitted into the traditional Russian system had not been considered by the liberal Slavophiles, for they had all placed implicit faith in a reforming autocracy. Once they realized the shortcomings of the autocracy's policies, they were forced to consider the insistent political demands of the array of newly awakened social forces and to evolve and clarify their own political views. In this endeavor, their Slavophile ideas were of little help. The Slavophiles believed the *narod* to be the only pure, uncorrupted Russian element in the land, but their doctrine was not at all democratic, and they were anything but democrats. Their idealization of the people never brought these landlords to believe that uneducated peasants could suddenly rise to positions of power and responsibility. The only other institution unstained by Western influence was the autocracy, and the Slavophiles' ideal was a fusing of tsar and people—the tsar should *slit'sia s narodom* ("merge with the people"). How this was to be accomplished was unclear, as nobility and bureaucracy alike appeared alien and venal. The only political programs Slavophilism could offer were schemes of idealized peasant anarchism under a benevolent tsar or glorifications of a romanticized version of the ancient *zemskii sobor*, notions too remote from mid-nineteenth-century Russia to appeal to practical-minded men like Samarin, Koshelev, and Cherkasskii.

Slavophilism was an ideology of the forties, conceived in dreamlike ideals; and though such a mode of thought might well befit a revolutionary bent on destroying the existing order, it offered little help to those seeking to accommodate prevailing arrangements to newly arisen needs. Koshelev, Samarin, and Cherkasskii had never held common political ideals, but had not realized their differences, since the political problem had been dormant in the forties, and their views on the political destiny of Russia, however deeply rooted, remained vague and unformulated. As their political ideas developed, the force of their common devotion to the *narod* flagged; they formed new loyalties and forsook their allegiance to the group of Slavophile reformers. Thus, while its adherents continued to work for reform, progressive Slavophilism ceased to be an influence of moment.

The evolution of a set of political and social ideals distinct from Slavophilism, though set in a Slavophile world view and expressed in Slavophile terminology, is strikingly displayed in the life and activity of Alexander Koshelev. A Riazan landlord of the generation of Ivan Kireevskii, Koshelev had close ties with the countryside and had acquired an authoritative knowledge of rural conditions. As a leading member of the Riazan nobility, he had pressed unsuccessfully in the provincial government for the introduction of a measure emancipating the province's serfs.[4] His disappointments turned him away from the gentry and led him to seek support for reform in the Slavophile circles, where he acted as a mentor and inspirer of younger members, among them Samarin and Cherkasskii.[5] His faith that the nobility would ultimately favor ideas of emancipation never disappeared.[6] A landlord conversant with estate management, he respected the expertise of those close to agricultural life and was disinclined to trust the judgments of those far from the scene. After the initial defeats in the Crimean War, he addressed a memorandum to the tsar, requesting him to resurrect the old *zemskii sobor*, to summon the leading men of the land to inform him of local conditions and to rally the nation behind the war. In the *zemskii sobor*, Koshelev saw the consummation of the Slavophile "fusion with the people," though the people themselves were to have little to do with the institution, composed as it was of the "leading men of the realm."[7] Koshelev's journal, *Sel'skoe blagoustroistvo,* published in 1858, sought to arouse reform sentiment among rural nobility and to instruct them in the complexities of reform, so that they could participate in a national assembly to consider emancipation.[8] However, in 1858, Koshelev's favorable attitude toward the gentry was more a hope of what they might become than a statement of their actual capacities. Until 1859, moreover, he could consider his scheme for national participation in government at least partly realized, since the tsar had requested projects from the gentry, convened local committees, and listened attentively to the views of leading men, Koshelev's included.

4 Koshelev, *Zapiski*, Appendix, 7-17.

5 Boris Nol'de, *Iurii Samarin i ego vremia* (Paris: n. p. 1926), 54.

6 Kornilov, *Obshchestvennoe dvizhenie pri Aleksandre II*, 10.

7 A. I. Koshelev, "Ot izdatelia," *Sel'skoe blagoustroistvo*, No. 1 (1858): i-ii.

8 Koshelev, *Zapiski*, Appendix, 45; Trubetskaia, *Materialy dlia biografii V. A. Cherkasskogo*, 1: 109.

Whereas Koshelev adapted Slavophilism to his faith in the wisdom of the Russian noble, Iurii Samarin, the most brilliant of the younger generation of Slavophiles, looked upon the state as the mainstay of reform, and the gentry as its chief foe. Bred and educated in an old and distinguished family with strong personal bonds with the tsar, Samarin deeply venerated the Russian autocracy.[9] This feeling was reinforced during his initial government service, when he acted as an agent of the reforming autocracy in Riga, opposing an intransigent Baltic nobility seeking to prolong its sway over the peasants after the abortive revolt of 1840. His frustrating experience in Riga also served to instill in him a distrust of the nobility, which was sharpened by his later observations of landlord-peasant relations in the Ukraine.[10] In 1853, he sat down to compose the memorandum that was to prove so influential after the climate in society had changed. Bearing the imprint of his injured sense of social justice and his reverence for the autocracy, Samarin's plans for reform insisted on the primacy of government action. They stressed the need for firmness and vigor to counter the powerful resistance of the local gentry:

> The decree should clearly express the government's conviction of the urgent necessity of the abolition of the arbitrary facets of serfdom. It should provide for the introduction of the obligatory statute, if this statement is not echoed: for until the government's views on the serf question are promulgated for all to hear, until its intentions and the advantage of the majority are no longer matters of doubt, until the bitter foes of all measures for the alleviation of the lot of the serfs can no longer pose as political conservatives, until all this happens, there is no doubt that no landlord will be affected.[11]

For Samarin, emancipation was but the first step in the slow emergence of the masses from servitude to civic freedom. He looked forward to the distant future, when the peasantry would replace the nobility as the mainstay of the autocracy and make possible a real fusing of tsar and people. Vladimir Cherkasskii, another member of the younger generation of Slavophiles, also favored government enactment of the reform, but he did not share Samarin's

9 Nol'de, *Iurii Samarin i ego vremia*, 8.

10 Ibid., 37-43, 56-9; Iurii Samarin, *Sochineniia* (Moscow: D. Samarin, 1877-1896), 7: ii-iii, xxxvi-xxxvii.

11 Ibid., 1: 294, Appendix, 1-2.

strong feelings for the autocracy and against the nobility. He simply believed that the government could execute emancipation more efficiently if it were free from gentry intervention. Certain that most noblemen would oppose the reform, he suggested that the government establish central committees that would assure tranquility by standing firm before gentry attacks.[12] While Samarin distrusted the nobility alone, Cherkasskii's more skeptical temperament led him to be wary of the bureaucracy as well, and he thought that the nobility, when it had come of age, would constitute the government's most reliable basis of support and the peasants' firmest safeguard against administrative excess.[13]

Koshelev, Samarin, and Cherkasskii became aware of the importance of the political problem but began to articulate and enunciate their views on the subject only after they had become disenchanted with the policy of the government and realized that the political problem could not be overlooked in the endeavor for social reform. The first to experience this change of attitude was Koshelev. All three had looked forward to being chosen as members of the Editing Commission, the body charged with the major task of drafting the reform. However, when the members were selected in the first months of 1859, Koshelev found that he had been passed over in favor of both Samarin and Cherkasskii, men respectively fifteen and nineteen years his junior, whom he had instructed in matters of rural economy. And these men were now going to build the new rural economy of Russia. Almost simultaneously, the tightening of censorship restrictions forced the closing of *Sel'skoe blagoustroistvo*. Koshelev's work for society seemed to have been in vain. Disoriented, without means to fulfill the obligations he thought were incumbent upon him, he feigned indifference and set off to Europe.[14]

Koshelev's withdrawal from public life was short-lived. When after a year abroad he returned to participate in the first summons of the provincial gentry, he found the mood of the gentry had changed. When their interests were threatened, the nobility's apathy vanished, and they began to demand a voice in the resolution of the reform. Uninvited members of the provincial nobility streamed to St. Petersburg, hoping by a show of zeal to divert the

12 Trubetskaia, *Materialy dlia biografii V. A. Cherkasskogo*, 1: Appendix, 84, 88-90.
13 Ibid., 1: 294, Appendix, 1-2.
14 Ibid., 2: 1-10.

reform to their own benefit. They had their own ideas on how emancipation should be executed, and these corresponded little with those in the minds of the leaders of the Editing Commission. Circles were formed to oppose the government's policy, the most notable of which gathered around the Senator A. M. Bezobrazov and his two sons. The Bezobrazov circle drew up and circulated an address rebuking the central government for its bureaucratic approach and warning that unless an assembly of the nobility with direct access to the tsar was summoned, a general cataclysm would ensue. A similar address came from the pen of the wealthy aristocrat Count V. P. Orlov-Davydov, charging that the government was aiding the peasantry to the detriment of the upper classes and calling for a gentry-dominated constitutional system.[15]

A fear that the Editing Commission was intent on destroying the Russian gentry was taking hold of the delegates in Petersburg when Alexander Koshelev, his wounds from his exclusion from the commission still fresh, arrived from abroad.[16] Now the situation in society seemed to resemble what he had been seeking since the forties: the Russian gentry were showing signs of revival. They were supporting the serf reform and demanding a role in central government. Koshelev entered into friendly relations with his former enemies among the Riazan gentry and, at the same time, began to sense a certain coolness in his contacts with his friends on the commission.[17]

The Editing Commission did not remain silent in the face of the charges leveled by the gentry. Its dominant figure, Nicholas Miliutin dispatched a memorandum to the tsar that portrayed the gentry representatives as the chief obstacle to the success of the reform.[18] Up to this point, the delegates' powers had remained undetermined. In August 1859, Miliutin placed the question of the gentry delegates before a special committee, which included Samarin and Cherkasskii. Miliutin posed the question, "Can the merging of the two committees [the gentry assembly and the Editing Commission] take

15 N. I. Iordanskii, *Konstitutsionnoe dvizhenie* (St. Petersburg: Obshchestvennaia Pol'za, 1906), 36-9; D. I. Khrushchev, *Materialy dlia istorii uprazdneniia krepostnogo sostoianiia pomeshchish'ikh krest'ian v Rossii v tsarstvovanie imperatora Aleksandra II* (Berlin: F. Schneider, 1860-1862), 2: 93-112.

16 Ibid., 2: 139-40.

17 Koshelev, *Zapiski*, 117.

18 M. A. Miliutin, "Iz zapisok Marii Aggeevny Miliutinoi," *Russkaia Starina* No. 4 (1899): 106-8.

place?" The committee voted unanimously in the negative. Miliutin then asked whether the deputies should be allowed to discuss all questions, or whether some—those on which the government would not permit retreat—should be shelved. On this question there was much discussion, but a compromise was reached that virtually gave Miliutin the power to determine which questions should be considered. On the final issue—whether the deputies should be permitted to assemble and present common opinions—there was open disagreement. Samarin, in the minority, upheld freedom of speech, since he did not believe that the nobility could organize effective opposition to the commission. The majority, including Cherkasskii, thought otherwise, and the delegates were silenced.[19]

Samarin's attitude toward the delegates stemmed from his low estimation of the political capabilities of the Russian gentry. At the first meeting of the summons, the delegates listened in silence to the rules that were to govern their future sessions, and their enthusiasm quickly turned to confusion and indignation. Samarin, however, regarded their response as ludicrous. Emancipation was his overriding interest: that the deputies had been summoned was but a great nuisance for him, and he never dreamed for a moment that they would be able to disrupt the business of reform. He described the opening meeting, in which a table was placed between the members of the commission and the gentry deputies thus:

> Such an arrangement fulfilled a dual purpose. First, the warring camps of the deputies and the members of the commission were divided from each other by an insuperable obstacle—a table: thus clashes were prevented. Second, only the back of the head of our leader [Ia. I. Rostovtsev] was visible to us, and we could not see his face, upon which signs of reddening and vexation were displayed. When all were in their seats, a magnificent spectacle began. Our first rank was radiant. On all the dress shone stars, while the back row, of course, was marked by an absence of all ornaments .... Do you remember the scene in *Dead Souls,* when the male half of the town was divided into fat and thin men? Surveying the deputies, I was convinced that a better means for sorting them could not be found.[20]

19 P. P. Semenov, *Osvobozhdenie krest'ian v tsarstvovanie imperatora Aleksandra II* (St. Petersburg: M. E. Komarov, 1889-1892), 1: 610-13.

20 Trubetskaia, *Materialy dlia biografii V. A. Cherkasskogo*, 2: 83.

A few days later, he attended a dinner with Cherkasskii, Koshelev, Miliutin, and Bezobrazov. "All are extremely discontented with the instructions," he wrote, "but at the same time all felt a certain malevolent glee at the puzzlement of the others. One must not expect any unity of action at all."[21]

Cherkasskii took the pretensions of the nobility far more seriously than Samarin. He was convinced that some of them were capable of damaging and others of aiding the reform. In a memorandum to the tsar he stated that even though the government had never before requested the assistance of society with such faith, the majority of gentry representatives were unsympathetic to reform. The landlords were reared in conditions of bondage and were alien to the conviction "that at present the state power is founded above all on the welfare of the mass of the people and on the firm security of the farming class." Unlike Samarin, Cherkasskii regarded the small landowners, many of whom wanted to liquidate their holdings for cash, as potential support for the reform.[22]

The deputies were stung by the tenor of the rules, and Koshelev was among the most voluble. With A. M. Unkovskii and Prince Gagarin, he drafted an address of protest, which was accepted by the majority of the deputies. Charging that the Editing Commission was incapable of coping with the local needs of the entire country, the address asserted that the Commission had to secure the help of the gentry through a conference of gentry delegates and members of the Commission.[23] The rules, however, were left unaltered.

These basic differences of view on how the reform was to be considered laid the groundwork for the division of opinion on Russia's political future that spelled the doom of liberal Slavophilism. Each had already fallen under the influence of a particular group: Koshelev was becoming a part of the revivified forces of the gentry, Samarin and Cherkasskii officials in a vigorous organ of the bureaucracy. As the conflict between these forces sharpened, Samarin, Cherkasskii, and Koshelev were drawn into closer identification with them, and their association with each other became increasingly tenuous. Frustrated by the Commission's restrictions of delegates and enraged by the

21 Ibid., 2: 84.
22 Ibid., Appendix, 36-45.
23 Koshelev, *Zapiski*, Appendix, 172-6.

smugness of its members, Koshelev became more violent in his recriminations. The committee took little notice of his statements. Cherkasskii labeled them a "pasquinade." The result was to drive Koshelev even further into the opposition. He attacked the commission for blindly trying to apply the *Complete Collection of Laws* to peasant conditions that they knew little about, disrupting, as a result, the course of peasant life.[24] Most important, he took up a theme he had acquired from the gentry constitutionalists, which would become increasingly prominent in his later writings: the indictment of the bureaucracy for all Russia's failings and the glorification of the nobility as a protection against the administrative menace. He feared that if power over the countryside slipped from the hands of the gentry, it would pass to the local bureaucracy and render the police all-powerful.[25] It was the gentry who were the true standard-bearers of reform.[26]

At the same time, Koshelev hoped to maintain his agreement with his Slavophile friends. He wrote to Cherkasskii:

> From the words of the Princess [Elena Pavlovna] and from your jokes I conclude that you think that I am caballing against the Editing Commission. We may hold different opinions superficially, but essentially we want the same thing and we cannot really differ. Agreeing on much with the Editing Commission, I really differ from it in a few essential points. This I do not conceal. But I will never cabal. First, this is not a part of my character. Second, I know that if the work of the commission were eliminated, we could, in another case, receive a project which is incomparably worse.[27]

Cherkasskii did not respond kindly to Koshelev's weaseling. He wrote:

> In general, I do not think that you caballed against the commission, but I think, and I hold, not without basis, that you were carried far beyond the bounds of what you first proposed by the spirit of critical opposition, and that you exploited our opponents with particular success. In this

24 Aleksandr Skrebitskii, *Krest'ianskoe delo v tsarstvovanie imperatora Aleksandra II: Materialy dlia istorii osvobozhdeniia krest'ian* (Bonn: F. Kriuger, 1862-1868), 1: 19-20.

25 Ibid., 1: 780-2.

26 Koshelev, *Zapiski*, Appendix, 195.

27 Trubetskaia, *Materialy dlia biografii V. A. Cherkasskogo*, 2: 95.

> respect you simply fell in with the general law and proved that it is hard to stand opposed to the influence of the surrounding milieu. . . . I will repeat to you what you cogently said yourself two months ago: sometimes we must remove ourselves to a point of view far away from our present quarrels and view things from the standpoint from which we will see them in two years, when the passion has died down. Think of what influence your views will have in two years among the rubbish that will surround them.[28]

Thinking the agreement that had existed between the Slavophiles still existed, Cherkasskii misunderstood Koshelev's motives. He did not realize that Koshelev's primary attachment was to the nobility and not to the Slavophiles, and that the next two years would bring not the modification but the crystallization of Koshelev's views. Koshelev, however, nourished similar illusions about Cherkasskii. He accused Cherkasskii of not understanding the iniquitous influence of the bureaucracy because he had fallen under the deception of state power.[29] Koshelev, however, had deceived himself: Cherkasskii had always stood for the ascendancy of the bureaucracy, and his actions and ideas were not inconsistent. The illusion of possible solidarity remained, though the reality had passed.

The clamor of the first summons was soon silenced. Heeding Miliutin's warnings, the tsar disbanded the assembly and announced that the deputies would be informed of the outcome by their local governor. When the deputies arrived home, they were further disappointed to learn that discussions and petitions on emancipation were henceforth prohibited.[30] Infuriated by the government's action, Koshelev addressed an open letter to the deputies of the second summons, calling upon them to persuade the tsar to make the state unite with the people and stand at their head by making local officials responsible to a local elective government dominated by the local nobility.[31] The interdiction of discussion of the serf reform seemed to provide a fertile field for the spread of Koshelev's ideas. The gentry committees

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28 Ibid., 95.

29 Ibid., 139-42.

30 Miliutin, "Iz zapisok Marii Aggeevny Miliutinoi," 113-7; Koshelev, *Zapiski*, Appendix, 1868.

31 Khrushchev, *Materialy dlia istorii* . . ., 2: 415-26.

in several northern provinces responded indignantly to the tsar's action. In Tver Province, A. M. Unkovskii, the young marshal of the nobility, lost his post because of his protest against the decree. Mikhail Bezobrazov and D. N. Shidlovskii, a delegate from Simbirsk, drafted addresses appealing for an oligarchic constitution, which won considerable support among wealthy landlords. These movements among the gentry perturbed Samarin, and the fact that Koshelev, one of his confreres, was leading the forces he least trusted, he judged perfidious and irresponsible:

> You still haven't tired of writing addresses, brochures, and letters, and you are spoiling the matters with which you sympathize as much as anyone. I hear from Galagin that you are preparing some sort of a manifesto from the name of the almshouse called rural economy. When will you give up? This is simply bothersome. Even if you were right a thousand times in your attacks against us, as you would like to believe, the mood at the moment is such that each word uttered against the Editing Commission will be seized upon with joy and turned into a weapon against the emancipation of the serfs with land.[32]

The tumult momentarily subsided. The second summons of deputies hardly took notice of Koshelev's letter and instead concentrated on the material concessions they sought. However, with the promulgation of the decree of Emancipation in February 1861, it revived again, and those who had expected more from the reform than it had provided as well as those who had expected to turn it more to their own advantage raised their voices in protest. Koshelev, seeing his apprehensions justified in the eyes of society, journeyed to Leipzig, where he published two pamphlets setting forth his plans for Russia's political renovation. These writings mark the end of Koshelev's attachment to the group of Slavophile reformers and the beginning of his campaign, to last the rest of his life, for a permanent, elected legislative body. Again, Koshelev called for an assembly of representatives of the land, which, like the *zemskii sobor*, would unite tsar and people. He no longer looked upon the political problem as one aspect of the greater issue of reform; now it occupied the center of the stage—the political system was the source of all evil in the country. Koshelev placed the responsibility for Russia's lamentable

32 Trubetskaia, *Materialy dlia biografii V. A. Cherkasskogo*, 2: 160-1.

situation on the bureaucracy. Once the existing bureaucratic machine had been abolished and replaced by a hierarchy of elected assemblies, the troubles of the land would soon disappear.[33]

Russia was not backward but poorly organized. Koshelev did not believe that there should be a long period of education in the institutions of local government before the Russian people participated in national politics, for he was certain that local government would remain impotent as long as the bureaucracy could arbitrarily interfere in its activity.[34] The talented men that Cherkasskii and Samarin claimed were lacking in Russia were merely in seclusion, shunning the noxious influence of the bureaucracy.[35] A system of representative government could be established only by a sweeping decree of the tsar.[36]

Again, Koshelev's program was but a masked version of the political claims of the gentry, and his defense of the political maturity of the Russian people was no more than a declaration of the gentry's political capacities. Not only were they to occupy the chief positions in the new assembly; they were also to strengthen their control over the countryside and maintain their tutelage over the peasantry:

> The most natural, most convenient, and above all, the most well-disposed intermediaries [for the peasants] will be the best people of the rural population, i.e., the landlords. The peasants cannot find better representatives, defenders, teachers, managers, and high judges than the landlords.[37]

The tsar, in fact, was to fuse not with the people but with the gentry. Koshelev's championing of the gentry had now passed the stage when it was only part of his world view; now it represented his total world view. Russia was in dire straits, and only the gentry could save it. Koshelev was to be committed in the future to gentry constitutionalism. As a leading

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33 A. I. Koshelev, *Kakoi iskhod dlia Rossii iz nyneshnogo eia polozheniia?* (Leipzig: F. Vagner, 1862), 5-39.

34 A. I. Koshelev, *Konstitutsiia, samoderzhavie i zemskaia duma* (Leipzig: F. Vagner, 1862), 36-41.

35 Ibid., 42-6.

36 Ibid., 22-4.

37 Koshelev, *Kakoi iskhod*, 62-3.

spokesman of the constitutional movement of the early sixties, he became the progenitor of the later gentry "Slavophile" constitutionalism of D. N. Shipov and N. A. Khomiakov. However, the links between him and his Slavophile associates had now all but disappeared. Nevertheless, after the publication of the first of his two pamphlets, he entertained the hope that his friends would accept his position. He wrote to Cherkasskii:

> Samarin curses and says that only the introduction is good … that the rest is the product of an itch. This confused me…. I wish very much to know your opinion. Are you of the same mind as Samarin: I cannot believe that. But that would not prove the erroneousness of my point of view. The more I scrutinize what is happening in St. Petersburg, the more I become convinced that matters cannot continue in this manner. Maybe we will not be granted a duma, but we must demand a summons of deputies from all classes. Beyond this there is no solution.[38]

Koshelev then spelled out his differences with Samarin and attacked Samarin's insistence that long schooling in local government should precede the introduction of a national legislative assembly:

> Samarin says that it is necessary to begin the construction of the building from the bottom, from the basis, local society. But how can local society develop when the bureaucracy doesn't even permit it to meet for common consultations? And under a bureaucracy you cannot say that local life will develop. What are we to do? Everything here occurs not gradually but by leaps. That is our faith. You have many practical sensibilities, and so I cannot believe that you are not in agreement with the ideas which I am proposing and defending.[39]

In short, Koshelev was asking a former member of the Editing Commission who had viewed the gentry's political pretensions with alarm to support a new gentry-dominated governmental structure. Cherkasskii replied:

> In many respects, and in the real essentials I wholly share Samarin's opinion. Thus I do not see the gain in convening a *Zemskaia Duma* at the present time, and I am convinced that now that time should be devoted

38 Trubetskaia, *Materialy dlia biografii V. A. Cherkasskogo*, 2: 351-2.
39 Ibid., 2: 352.

> to more essential and beneficial concerns, though ones that would perhaps be less flattering to the conceit of society. I repeat with Samarin from deep conviction: if Russia wants to be happy, she must begin by placing beneath her a firm foundation of local institutions, and then, later, think of the luxury of public life and the consolidation and ornamentation of political forms. In the correct order of historical development we are not destined to see the latter.[40]

"For us it is fated to build not from the foundation, but from the roof," Koshelev replied, and repeated his insistence on the priority of a national duma before local institutions.[41] The bureaucracy was encroaching on the independence of local assemblies, he claimed, and there was a growing tendency in the Ministry of Interior to augment the powers of governor-generals at the expense of local government.[42] In reply, after the promulgation of emancipation in February 1861, Cherkasskii cautioned Koshelev about his faith in the nobility:

> Gentry society has become embittered and, as a result, has been compelled to become thoughtful and wise. But it has not advanced far enough to overstep the negative types of reasoning. [The gentry] has learned to criticize precisely, but hardly are they capable of a peaceful attitude toward the more important social matters in prospect, so that we might expect something more from them than systematic, juvenile, and silly opposition…. I tell you frankly that even you … as you now play the liberal in the hands of the nobility, will hardly receive expiation of your old sins—which are "liberal" but not in the gentry sense. For all I know, when the *Zemskaia Duma* opens, we may have to be off to Berlin.[43]

Cherkasskii's own proposals for political reform, however, remained ambivalent and contradictory. Like Koshelev, he distrusted the bureaucracy because he feared it would tyrannize the peasantry. Hence, during the months following emancipation, in his plans for local government he upheld the establishment of an "all-class" assembly to restrain the excesses of the administration. He considered the nobility the only class in the countryside

40 Ibid., 2: 352-3.
41 Ibid., 2: 357.
42 Ibid., 2: 358.
43 Ibid., 2: 358-60.

capable of directing the operations of government, and hoped they would gain control of the assembly by winning the backing of other classes too busy to serve. He also believed the nobility to be the principal force striving to contain the reforming autocracy. Consequently, he wanted the government to circumvent the nobility by "fusing with the people," and though he wished to see the nobility endowed with considerable power in local government, he wished to see the bureaucracy invested with even more. It was not the body of deputies in the assembly who were to govern the affairs of the locality, in his plans, but an enlightened elite who could be trusted to safeguard the reforms. By directing the voting of the bourgeoisie and peasantry, removing refractory individuals from the area, and designating the assembly's chairman, the bureaucracy would ensure the elite's continued enjoyment of power. Watching benevolently over local government with *sage fermeté,* the Minister of Interior, meanwhile, would guard against the peril of constitutionalism. The nobility was to become the administrative lackey of the central government.[44]

Cherkasskii was soon forced to face the political problem and clarify his ideas, for he too was slowly becoming disillusioned by the consequences of the reform and the conduct of government. When in the summer and fall of 1862 landlord-peasant relations in Tula took a turn for the worse, he began to voice criticisms of the provisions of emancipation. The functioning of local government disappointed him. He feared that the financial problem and the Polish revolution might force the calling of a *Zemskaia Duma*. In the spring of 1863, he visited St. Petersburg, but once there, he felt himself in an awkward position. He expected, he wrote, that he might be asked to re-enter the service, and he was afraid to refuse and loath to accept. There was no cause for worry, however, for he was not asked. He wrote to Samarin,

> To my shame, I must confess that this result actually made me happy. It delivered me from the false position I had feared. Nevertheless, it also surprised me a little, for personal pride and a few memories of the place our commission occupied in the administration, combined with a not too high opinion of what comprises this world at present, led me to an erroneous judgment of the degree of importance which the government attached to the few members of our commission who had returned to private life. All this, I repeat, appeared to me as nothing but

44 Ibid., 2: Appendix, 121-7.

> error, and from the trip to Petersburg, I have derived a double benefit for myself: first I not only preserved my complete personal freedom, but as if by act of government itself, I was, so to say, retired from all obligatory moral relations, and from all the solidarity which willy-nilly bound all members of the commission to it. In the second place, I derived a personal moral gain, a few lessons in humility, which, without doubt, also did not pass in vain.[45]

Beneath the equivocation, it is evident that Cherkasskii had sustained no less a blow than had Koshelev when he was excluded from the Editing Commission. Cherkasskii had gone to the capital to secure a high administrative position. Four years before, he had been lionized in St. Petersburg society; now he was received coldly, if at all.[46] The man who had been instrumental in the successful culmination of the work of the Editing Commission had now been forgotten. New men were now in charge of the administration, and different reformers were undertaking the transformation of Russia. The tsar did not rely upon one group to carry through all the reforms, but upon new figures for each. Consequently, no firm cadre was formed that supported all the innovations, and many reformers, renouncing responsibility for the reforms as a whole, were inclined to attack those in which they had no part. Cherkasskii learned a lesson of humility in St. Petersburg, but lessons of humility often leave wounds that make the bearer resentful as well as humble. Cherkasskii's renunciation of solidarity with the Editing Commission was more than a severing of sentimental ties: it was a repudiation of his faith in the central government's capacity to prosecute the reforms. With his change in orientation, his view of conditions altered radically. A week after the letter quoted above, he wrote to Samarin,

> Speaking in general, the position of society and the general state of mind have improved significantly . . . . The reasons for these changes are known to you as well as to me. Among them, the incontestable success of the serf reform has played a not unimportant role. Its progress has even quieted down the nobility. The Petersburg fires also have contributed to the general sobering of minds. The general crisis has passed.[47]

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45 Ibid., 2: 428-9.
46 Ibid., 2: 430.
47 Ibid., 2: 431-2.

Just as society began to appear more mature and competent to Cherkasskii, the government began to seem more obtuse and inept:

> Is this situation firm? A sinful man, I am ready to believe that while such a mood prevails in society, in higher spheres they either drift off into autocratic dreams or wonder whether to go further and up to what limit. Generally it seems to me that the government has lost the understanding of what society wants, what it rightly and insistently expects, and what it should be given. Before, the necessity of the abolition of serfdom stood before all and was denied by none. Now, with the abolition of this great evil and the rise of versatility and diversity in the life of society, a multitude of secondary problems which are both important and difficult have been summoned forth. We need a more refined feeling of discernment, so that the real and urgent demands may be distinguished from those which are illusory or not so pressing. But such a feeling has not grown stronger, and meanwhile the worst possible enemy is well entrenched in the government—the feeling of true fear. Reitern and Melnikov are not building railroads, much as the nation clamors. In spite of the tsar's persistent demands, the zemstvo project is being worked out slowly and uncertainly and promises little that is good, while public opinion has already outstripped it in its demands and will not be content with it. The project on publication is veiled in semi-darkness. The new judicial project is now being worked out; from the early handiwork we can only conclude that it is unsatisfactory.[48]

Cherkasskii's attitudes toward the government had always been provisional and pragmatic. When the autocracy appeared to show little promise of enlightened leadership, and was cold to him to boot, he simply realigned his views. He now was convinced that society was ready to participate in central government, and that the emperor had become dependent upon it for information on the condition of the nation. By the spring of 1863, Cherkasskii had come around to Koshelev's conviction of the necessity of a legislative assembly:

> I must confess that all the above circumstances, especially the unexpected development of the Polish question, have significantly changed my thoughts on the necessity of national representation and have forced

48 Ibid., 2: 432-3.

> me, in this respect, to advance a great deal since I saw you over a year ago. In other words, I am convinced that the autocracy is dealing with the Polish question weakly and that Lithuania and Kiev can remain part of Russia only if an all-Russian assembly is summoned.[49]

But Cherkasskii was now confronted with a dilemma. Koshelev could turn away from the government to embrace the aspirations of the Russian nobility, with whom he already felt a deep affinity. But Cherkasskii was too realistic to believe in a sudden change of motives and was still wary of those who had opposed his reforming efforts. Rebuffed by the government and hostile to the political program of his own class, Cherkasskii sought solace in the rhetoric of Slavophilism and based his hopes on the people. His assembly was to be a democratic one:

> With the present mood in society, when civic spirit is penetrating everywhere and is even being felt in Russia, the old absolutist forms of government are becoming outmoded. It is necessary, in the interests of the government itself, to adopt a different system, different forms, to seek new forces and combinations upon which we can depend more surely. The democratic element of society seems to afford such support . . . . The government can rely upon it only after it has granted free institutions to the country. Its power will be decreased but little . . . . Its actual strength will be multiplied tenfold.[50]

In the scheme contemplated by Cherkasskii, the fusing with "the people" was actually to take place. But his reliance on "the people" was merely an intellectual artifice that enabled him to sidestep his dilemma; for Cherkasskii felt no kinship with the masses of the people, who would dominate his new institution:

> Service for me in any circumstances is impossible. Local government remains closed to me because of the local gentry's persistent enmity. I find no counterweight to this in the lower classes. Moreover, I have not sought such support and I hardly intend to seek it.[51]

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49 Ibid., 2: 433-4.
50 Ibid., 2: 435.
51 Ibid., 2: 426.

Like the Slavophilism it derived from, Cherkasskii's constitutionalism was entirely theoretical. In reality there was nowhere for him to turn. Disappointed in the autocracy, he was unable to find any group in society capable of replacing it at the head of the movement for reform. Again, as in the forties, Cherkasskii was a man with ideals and the capacity and energy to assist in their enactment, but deprived of the opportunity to use his abilities. "At the age of forty I am in the position of a completely superfluous man," he wrote.[52] His situation was immeasurably worse than it had been in the forties, for now he lacked the companionship and common devotion to social ideals that had linked the Slavophiles in friendship and action. While Koshelev reposed his hopes in the nobility and Samarin in the autocracy, Cherkasskii sought futilely for a nonexistent fountainhead of reform. Now he was alone, and his ideals and fantasies were incapable of being realized.

Samarin too was disappointed in the conduct of government after the Emancipation decree, and he too was forced to consider the political problem more seriously. While visiting St. Petersburg, he wrote to Cherkasskii that the mood depressed him; that a complacent, faithless cynicism prevailed there, and that there was no solidarity among those serving the government. The zemstvo reforms were emerging "ugly and emaciated."[53] Samarin had trusted in the state and had expected the reforms to bring about a general improvement in its personnel. Now it seemed that the new governmental order was worse than the old. "The old self-confident bearing, which displayed great energy despite all the attendant stupidity, is gone, never to return," he wrote. "The old processes of government have been rejected, and conditions have brought forth nothing to replace them."[54]

Despite his loss of faith in the government, Samarin was even more distrustful, even frightened, of the forces at work in society. Koshelev and Cherkasskii could turn away from the state, but Samarin could not because he suspected the motives of the gentry and feared the power of the uneducated peasantry. The dread of a cataclysm which would obliterate all Russian culture, all the values he cherished, tormented him:

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52 Ibid.

53 Ibid., 2: 110-11.

54 Anatole Leroy-Beaulieu, *Un homme d'État russe (Nicolas Milutine) d'après sa correspondence inédite* (Paris: Hachette, 1884), 110.

> On the part of society there is only weakness, chronic laziness, an absence of all initiative and a desire to antagonize authority, which has become more marked from day to day. Today, just as two hundred years ago, there are only two living forces in all of Russia—the autocracy at the top, and the rural commune at the opposite extreme. These forces, however, are not united, but are separated by all those intermediary layers, which, deprived of any root, have clutched to the summit during the course of centuries. These layers are now pretending to be courageous and are starting to defy their single support … for nothing. The tsar recoils, makes concession upon concession, without any profit to the part of society which irritates for the pleasure of irritating. But this will not last long. Otherwise, the meeting of the two extremes cannot be avoided, a meeting in which everything in between will be flattened and pulverized. What is in between includes all of literate Russia, all our culture. A fine future indeed.[55]

Above all, Samarin feared that constitutionalism would bring on such a calamity. In an article written originally for Aksakov's *Den'*, but published in 1881, Samarin insisted that no existing political force was powerful enough to curb the autocracy, except the people, who recognized "their personification and external embodiment" in the tsar and were unwilling to brook the interference of other classes. That the people themselves could not be an agent in a constitutional system was obvious. "The illiterate people, the people estranged from other classes, thrown from the path of historical development by Peter's reform—these people are incapable of taking part in the working of governmental institutions."[56] Only the tsar could govern Russia and satisfy the needs of the people: "toleration, an end to police homilies against the schism, an open and independent judiciary, free printing as a simple means to bring to light all the contaminating juices poisoning our literature … a simplification of local administration, reform of taxes, freely accessible education, restriction of unproductive expenses."[57] Samarin's image of Russia as a backward nation, whose most advanced members were peccant and unreliable, remained unshaken by his disappointments in the autocracy.

55 Ibid., 110-11.

56 Iu. F. Samarin, "Po povodu tolkov o konstitutsii," First published in *Rus'*, No. 29 (1881): 14.

57 Ibid.

Adhering to his belief in education and slow development, he continued to insist that only the tsar could uplift the masses and introduce a *Rechtsstaat*.

Samarin's reassertion of faith in the autocracy did not dispel his misgivings about the men then running the government and the policies they were introducing. In local government—the mainspring of his new society, the school of the future leaders of the nation—he found only indolence and indifference, and he concluded that under prevalent conditions, liberal ideas amounted to no more than connivance in the ascendancy of the strongest.[58] As before 1855, he was tormented by the tension between his belief in social reform and his loyalty to the autocracy. Again he resigned himself to an indefinite period of waiting for a reforming autocracy. However, now his friends did not share his conviction that the autocracy was the only force able to provide enlightened government. Now he was alone, possessed by a feeling of isolation and cut off from all constructive movement in Russian society. "I have come to a sad conclusion," he wrote, "nothing is possible except isolated, individual action in the limited circle of our private influence—the work of a missionary. Besides this, nothing takes."[59]

Once the serfs had been freed, the liberal Slavophiles, who had accomplished so much to inspire the reform and assist in its execution, ceased to exert a significant influence in Russian society. The turmoil the emancipation produced, coupled with the Slavophiles' rapid descent from positions of prominence and power to embittered solitude, led them to seek an answer to the question of how Russia was to be ruled and who was to rule it. Finding no solution in their old framework of ideas, they developed their political views independently and moved further and further apart. Thus, Koshelev's sympathy with the gentry class impelled him to assign a major role in Russia's future development to the nobility, and he advanced a program of gentry constitutionalism. In terms of his Slavophile ideology, this meant the summoning of a *Zemskaia Duma* and the achievement of the hoped-for union between tsar and people. Aside from terminology, however, his view had little in common with Samarin's and Cherkasskii's. Cherkasskii, who was firmly committed neither to gentry nor to autocratic rule, finally rejected both and demanded a literal realization of the formula, "fusing with the people."

58 Trubetskaia, *Materialy dlia biografii V. A. Cherkasskogo*, 2: 420.
59 Ibid., 2: 426.

Lacking democratic inclinations, he despaired of this course and was left without a political and social mission. Samarin alone remained faithful to the autocracy, for the reverence instilled in him as a child and his dread of other elements in society deterred him from looking elsewhere for a palladium of reform, despite his disillusionment with the government's conduct of affairs. Terrified at the thought of a mass peasant revolution brought on by the constitutionalism that Koshelev advocated, he maintained his faith in the autocracy and awaited another change of heart. Seeking the elusive source of reform, Koshelev, Samarin, and Cherkasskii sundered their common bonds and brought to an end the group that had done so much to inspire the progressive changes of past years.

14. Tolstoy and the Perception of Poverty: Tolstoy's "What Then Must We Do?"[1]

"What Then Must We Do?" ("*Tak chto zhe nam nuzhno delat'?*") presents Tolstoy's answer to the problem of poverty. It is a sprawling, disorganized essay that approaches the problem in many varied ways. It presents the scenes of want and suffering that Tolstoy witnessed in Moscow in the early 1880s. It recounts his personal responses to sights of poverty and his desperate attempts to remedy it. Finally, it contains his lengthy and highly repetitious critiques of contemporary philosophy and economics. Above all, it is a long autobiographical essay about Tolstoy's confrontation with poverty, especially urban poverty.

The work is actually a series of fragments related to Tolstoy's experiences in Moscow from 1882 to 1884, when he assembled and shaped the final essay. In his illuminating commentaries on the text, published in the complete collection of Tolstoy's works in 1937, N. K. Gudzii identifies the numerous drafts he left. He also describes the difficulties that he and Sofia Andreevna encountered with the censors, particular those in the Holy Synod, headed by Alexander III's éminence grise, Constantine Pobedonostsev. A complete and accurate version appeared only in England in 1902, under the auspices of his disciple, Vladimir Chertkov.[2]

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1 I am much obliged to Dr. George Moraitis for the many informative and illuminating discussions we had about this and many other works of Tolstoi in the past several years.

2 L. N. Tolstoy, "Chto zhe nam nuzhno delat'," in *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii* (Henceforth PSS), vol. 25 (Moscow: Khudozhestvennaia Literatura, 1937), 182-412; N. K. Gudzii, "Kommentarii," 740-839.

The solution Tolstoy prescribed was the renunciation of wealth and the simple life of the peasant in the countryside. He called upon educated individuals to throw off civilized habits and tastes, and to work, as he did, on the land. Such a solution, of course, was hardly extraordinary or novel at the time. Writers like Alexander Engel'gardt and Sergei Krivenko had praised a life of physical labor, and Engel'gardt had written of his commune of young *intelligenty* who lived like peasants and tilled the land.[3] Tolstoy admired these writers and was particularly impressed with the peasant Siutaev, who preached Christian pacifism and love and a life of work on the land. Tolstoy met Siutaev in 1881 and describes an early conversation with him in "What Then Must We Do?"[4]

"What Then Must We Do?" is revealing not in the depth of its philosophy or the originality of its solution, but in the distinctive way Tolstoy sought his answers. As always, he did not merely embrace current ideas of the intelligentsia. The work described his own existential search prompted by scenes of urban poverty. He struggled toward his own solution through introspection, thought, and reading, recorded in the fragments that made up the whole, as well as his letters, which give his responses a sense of immediacy. Dominating the problem of poverty is the story of Tolstoy's war with himself.

In the early 1880s, Tolstoy found a focus for his personal experience and quandaries in the indigence that surrounded him in Moscow. He went out to see the poor and began to dwell on their suffering. He used his writing to transmit his experience to others, hoping that they too would suddenly perceive poverty and that their perceptions would lead them to renounce their comfortable lives. Underlying this hope was a belief that other people differed little from himself.

> I am the same as everyone else, and if I differ in some way from the average person it is only because I, more than the average person, have served and pandered to the false teaching of our world, received more approval from people supporting the prevalent doctrine, and therefore corrupted and led more people astray.[5]

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3 On Tolstoy's debt to the intelligentsia in this period see D. N. Ovsianiko-Kulikovskii, *Sobranie sochinenii* (St. Petersburg: Prometei, 1911), vol. 9: 129-33; On Engel'gardt see my *Crisis of Russian Populism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967), 35-60.

4 PSS, 25: 233-8, 834-6.

5 Ibid., 376.

Tolstoy assumed that perception required little more than opening one's eyes to reality. However, his perception of the poor was not a mere passive act of witnessing. His was a complex process that began with intense feelings for those he saw and ended with emotional involvement with them. The main objects of his perception were destitute and suffering women, and encountering them awakened in him the troubled feelings he felt towards women in general. For Tolstoy, perception was an emotional act.

Tolstoy's preoccupation with the problem of poverty began during a difficult spell in his personal life during the fall and winter of 1881, when he began to spend part of the year in Moscow. Moscow sojourns were oppressive to him and arranged against his judgment. Sofia Andreevna insisted upon them in order to introduce their daughter Tatiana to Moscow society and allow their son Sergei to attend the university: to educate the children in a manner Tolstoy himself found absolutely abhorrent. As a result, constant family altercations ensued, and Tolstoy began to feel that his wife had never loved him. His letters and his diaries mention a loss of faith in himself and a loss of a desire to live. He described his first month in Moscow as "the most excruciating in my life."[6] He felt powerless to live in a manner consonant with the Christian principles he had embraced.

He now felt unable to cope with the sights of poverty and depravity he saw everywhere in Moscow. Urban poverty affronted his senses. It seemed different from the poverty of the countryside. The poor were deceitful and more numerous and visible than they were in the countryside. "Stench, stones, luxury, poverty, debauchery…." he wrote in his diary.[7] They somehow had to retrieve the money plundered from them. He could not look indifferently upon such suffering. It seemed his responsibility, and yet he felt his helplessness to do anything about it. "Everything that is repellent to me now is the fruit of my own mistakes," he wrote to a friend in September 1881.[8]

The problem of poverty seemed to exceed his powers and add to his sense of helplessness. The individualistic ethical principles he had presented in *The Confession* and subsequent religious essays did little to help in dealing with a social problem like poverty. His first attempt to act resembled the usual religious approach to the poor. He tried to go among them and give them alms.

6 PSS, vol. 49 (Moscow: Khudozhestvennaia Literatura, 1952), 48.
7 Ibid.
8 PSS, vol. 63 (Moscow: Khudozhestvennaia Literatura, 1937), 76.

The remoteness he felt from the poor could be overcome by associating with them. For this reason, he joined the work on the Moscow census of 1882, which in his article, "On the Census in Moscow," he described as an opportunity to observe the poor and learn about them directly rather than from numbers or sociological abstractions. The census counters had to see the poor directly and not "allow other considerations to hide this most important matter of our life." The census would raise the "curtain" on the poor: "all the sores of society, the sores of poverty, debauchery, ignorance, all will be exposed." The goal of the census should not be primarily scientific, giving society a glimpse of itself, but rather present an opportunity for introspection. "To go on the census, as thousands of people are doing now, is to look closely at oneself in the mirror."[9]

It was a bestowal of love that would eliminate the distance between rich and poor, as the poor, no longer alien and different, would appear as mirror images of the privileged. The great goal of the census should be "the affectionate socializing of people with the people and the destruction of those barriers that the people have erected between themselves, so that the joy of the rich man is not broken by the wild howls of people become cattle and the groans of helpless hunger, cold and illness."[10]

The census would help Tolstoy find a common humanity in the city and he would join with them in "fraternal socializing." Then the rich could help the poor. By this time, he had little confidence in charitable contributions from the rich, though he continued to solicit them, but he thought that this socializing and contact could create the common sense of humanity that could lead to continued help to the poor by doing good. "Doing good is not giving money but the affectionate relations between people. That alone is needed."[11]

These hopes soon appeared excessive, and Tolstoy began to feel acute embarrassment about his activity before and during the census. The first fragment of "What Then Must We Do?" was written shortly after the census in 1882 and reveals his dissatisfaction with his efforts. He found the poor, even before the census, difficult to mingle with and difficult to love. The urban poor were not the rural poor. When beggars approached him in Moscow, they did so in order to deceive. In the Khitrov market region of Moscow, he saw many

9 PSS, 25: 174-6.
10 Ibid., 178.
11 Ibid., 179.

poor living in great need, but he encountered many others who were getting along and enjoying life.

In a fragment of 1882, Tolstoy describes the feelings the poverty of Moscow prompted in him, but without assessing their meaning. At first, he realized that urban poverty could not be remedied since it exceeded his powers. Rural poverty could be ameliorated; it was a result of the shortage of land, and individuals like himself could and did assist the poor. The urban poor, however, were needy because they avoided work, even when it was available. At first, he became angry and cold to them. When he tried to give alms in the environs of the Khitrov market, he was mobbed. He felt helpless and futile, and yet responsible—an accomplice in a terrible crime. He recalled watching an execution twenty-five years earlier and feeling the same complicity; he should have cried out, and by remaining silent he had become a participant. The horror of the situation tormented him; he could neither eat nor drink.[12] His visit to the Rzhanov House for the Poor, however, left quite different impressions. The poor there seemed lighthearted and indifferent to him—not needy of his help.[13] He blamed his failure on his mistakes, "I erred because I forgot something I know very well: that one cannot begin an enterprise in the middle, that you can't bake bread without having mixed the dough, nor do good without preparing for it."[14]

By the time Tolstoy returned to this subject in 1884, he had discovered the source of his error and was writing about himself with considerable distance. He had reached the conclusion that nothing less than a complete rejection of his civilized self and the acceptance of life of physical labor would enable him to cope with the problem of poverty. The Tolstoy of 1884-85 jeers at the Tolstoy of 1882. He had been praised for his sensitivity and goodness and been told that he had reacted so strongly to poverty because he was so kind and good. He had begun to believe this. "Hardly had I turned around, when, instead of the feeling of reproach and repentance that I had first experienced, there was already in me a feeling of satisfaction with my virtue and a wish to explain it to people."[15] He was feeling embarrassed by soliciting contributions from the rich, he claims, but asserted himself all the more vociferously because he knew

12 Ibid., 618.
13 Ibid., 620.
14 Ibid., 618.
15 Ibid., 192.

himself to be in the wrong. He went to bed in the evening after the appeal for contributions "not only with a premonition that nothing would come out of my ideas, but with shame and an awareness that I had been doing something vile and shameful the whole day."[16]

Tolstoy looks upon his efforts with shame, and ascribes feelings of shame to his earlier self. Shame is the modal feeling of the final version of "What Then Must We Do?" and more than guilt, which Tolstoy also feels, expresses his own relationship to the poor. Shame is a matter of display. It is a public failure to live up to an ideal, unlike guilt, which connotes an inner sense of wrongdoing. The failure may involve the violation of a norm and bring forth censure from society. Or it may be a failure to live up to an ideal of self projected onto a fantasy audience. It is the latter type of shame that characterizes Tolstoy's writing, since Tolstoy is very much his own audience. He watches and condemns himself on the basis of his new ideal of life, though sometimes he sees his own censure reflected as well in the eyes of the poor.[17]

The occasion for shame in "What Then Must We Do?" is usually sexual. The disgust for sex or sexual impulses is an important source of shame. Freud used the word shame only in this sense: to refer to tension associated with exposure of the body.[18] Shame can refer also to a sudden loathing for one's animality, arising from a failure to live up to an ideal of human conduct. The condemnation of self that fills the final version of "What Then Must We Do?" is closely connected with the troubled feelings about women that awakened in Tolstoy in early l884, when the problem of poverty again began to torment him, and he resumed work on the text.

In 1884, he was assailed by feelings of loneliness and worthlessness. He resumed entries in his diaries, which he had left off in the spring of 1881, and again began to enumerate his shortcomings and sins. "It is painful for me. I am a negligible, pitiful, useless creature, and still concerned with myself," he wrote. "The one good thing is that I want to die." He complained about the power of the flesh, felt desolate, and explained his misery by the lack of a loving wife.[19] In "What Then Must We Do?" Tolstoy describes three incidents

16 Ibid., 193.

17 See Gerhardt Piers and Milton Singer, *Shame and Guilt: A Psychoanalytic and Cultural Study* (Springfield, IL: Thomas, 1953).

18 Ibid., 7-8.

19 N. N. Gusev, *Letopis' zhizni I tvorchestva L'va Nikolaevicha Tolstogo* (Moscow: Khudozhestvennaia Literatura, 1958), 573-4; PSS, 49: 67, 74-5, 89-90, 97-8.

from this period, all of them involving women who aroused confused feelings of compassion, affection, and shame in him.

The first was a relatively trivial episode that took place on his estate. He had borrowed twenty kopeks from his cook to give as alms. The next day, he returned it to the cook's wife, but he had only a ruble. She not knowing what was for, mistook it for a gift, and bent forward to kiss his hand. "I was ashamed, excruciatingly ashamed as hadn't happened for a long time. I writhed, I felt myself making grimaces, and groaned from shame, running from the kitchen."[20] Tolstoy, for the first time in the text, describes himself as completely aware of his shame at the time of the happening, and then seeking explanations. He gives two. First, he realizes the tiny part of his income that the gift represents. The second, however, reveals something of the sadistic feelings that he felt were shameful. He now saw giving as an amusement that involved no deprivation but represented only giving back a small part of what he and others had taken from the poor. The poor looked upon this not as real money, not as money gained by work, but "fools money" (*durashnye den'gi*) which he returned as a kind of diversion (*potekha*). It was the cook's wife who seemed to be thinking this: but it was in fact his own view of himself, a view "which she and other poor people should have of me." Tolstoy now perceives the eyes of the poor people, "whom I toy with," upon him, expressing condemnation and disdain. "That is the way everyone looks upon me." He had to escape from evil if he was to do good. "But then all my life is evil."[21] The incidence of Tolstoy's shame in this case has clear sexual connotations. The cook's wife, who had come to the estate only recently, was about to kiss his hand, to give loving gratitude for the gift when he ran from the kitchen. He felt himself buying affection, and the recurrence of an intensity of shame that he had not felt for a long time seems to have recalled memories of the feelings he had had as a youth after frequenting prostitutes.[22]

The two other episodes occurred in the course of less than a day in March 1884. He described them in Section 24 of the text, in a letter to V. G. Chertkov, and in his diary. First, he saw a fifteen-year-old prostitute as she was being apprehended by the police. Approaching her, he noticed that she was prematurely old; she looked thirty. "The dirty color of her face, small,

20 PSS, 25: 240.
21 Ibid., 242.
22 PSS, 46: 59-64.

cloudy, drunken eyes, a button nose, twisted dribbling lips, drooping at the corners, and short pleat of dried hair sticking out of her kerchief." He asked her if she had parents. She grinned with an expression that seemed to say, "Just think what he is asking!" When he returned home, he learned that his daughters had enjoyed themselves at a party and were already asleep. The next day, he visited the station and found that the girl had already been taken away. The police officer casually remarked that "there were twelve-year-old prostitutes too, and fourteen- and fifteen-year-olds were everywhere."[23]

The encounter is related in matter-of-fact terms in the text without explicit mention of Tolstoy's own feelings. In his diary, however, he remarked despairingly, "I didn't know what to do." He wrote to Chertkov that he was too sensitive to the life around him, and that "life is repulsive." He was disturbed not only by the sight of the child prostitute, but also by his own failure to help her. "They took her away, and I didn't take her to my home, did not invite her to my home, didn't take her in at all—and I had begun to love her (*Ia poliubil ee*)."[24] He felt his inability to help one he loved. The second episode occurred the next morning. He learned that a laundress of about thirty years old, ailing and near death, had been driven out of the Rzhanov House because she had no money. A policeman had evicted her, but with no other place to go she returned and died at the entrance. He went to the house to see the corpse, and marveled at its beauty. "All the deceased are beautiful but this one was especially beautiful and touching in her coffin." She had a pure pale face, protruding eyes, sunken cheeks, and soft red hair over a high forehead; "a tired face, kind and not sad, but surprised. And in fact if the living don't see, then the dead are surprised."[25]

Again, the text does not reveal Tolstoy's feelings mentioned in his letter to Chertkov. He condemns his own motives, condemns his failure to act. "I came out of curiosity. I am ashamed to write that, ashamed to live." At home, sturgeon was served, and people could not understand why he bothered about something he could do nothing about. He began to-pray, "My God, teach me how to be, how I should live, so my life will not be vile. I am waiting for Him to teach me."[26]

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23 PSS, 25: 297-8.
24 PSS, 49: 73-4.
25 PSS, 25: 298-301.
26 PSS, vol. 85 (Moscow: Khudozhestvennaia Literatura, 1935), 43.

Unable to help women for whom he felt strong feelings of affection and compassion, Tolstoy felt ashamed of his own weakness. These feelings enabled him to make contact with the world of the poor and to see its horrors. But others didn't see. "If the living don't see, then the dead are surprised." The task was to make the living see, by awakening their dormant sense of shame. Tolstoy now tried to generalize his shame, to make the privileged aware of the bestiality of their lives and teach them how to see.

His means to do this was first to expose his earlier self and his efforts during the census. Though expressing Tolstoy's own feelings and experiences, much of the final text of "What Then Must We Do?" is virtually a third person description of himself. The description of his experiences at Khitrov market, in the final version, stresses his feelings of alienation from the scene. He listens as two women, one young, one old, both dressed in grey and tattered clothing, are seriously discussing something. "After each necessary word, they uttered one or two unnecessary indecent words." Yet the men nearby paid no attention to this talk that he found so repellent. The men waiting to be admitted to the flop houses looked upon him with the same uncomprehending gaze, asking the questions "What are you here for?" (*Zachem ty?*), "Who are you?" "Are you a self-satisfied rich man who wants to enjoy our need, to divert himself from his boredom and torment us some more, or are you what does not and cannot exist—a person who pities us?"[27]

Tolstoy senses this question in the eyes of the poor; in fact none of the poor appear to care who he is, though his presence there surprises them. Tolstoy talks to them, and gives them hot drinks and money. He then goes into the house and sees one of the men whom he had given money. "Seeing him, I became horribly ashamed, and I hurried to leave." He returns home, and has a five course meal. The feelings of culpability and the recollection of the execution first set forth in 1882 are described at this point.[28]

In the following sections of the text, he writes that giving money makes him feel ashamed. As he confronts each group of poor, he feels himself a person from another world, and feels prompted to help them in some way. The only way he knows is to give money, and yet once he gives money he feels ashamed. The same pattern is repeated in the description of Tolstoy's visit to the Rzhanov House during the census: he feels alien and inferior, gives money, is filled

27 PSS, 25: 187-8.
28 Ibid., 188-9.

with shame. Entering the courtyard, he is overcome by the "revolting stench" and finds it "horribly ugly." He hears someone running. It is a thin woman, her sleeves rolled up, chased by a ragged man in a red shirt, trousers as broad as skirts and galoshes. The man grabs her and, laughing, says, "You won't get away!" "Oh, you squint-eyed devil!" she retorts, flattered by the attention. Then she turns to Tolstoy and shouts maliciously "Who do you want?"

"Since I didn't want anyone, I became confused and went away." The woman preferred the ragged lecher to the well-wishing Count. There was nothing surprising in what he saw, Tolstoy acknowledged, but it made him look at the enterprise he was undertaking in a new light. At this point, he sees himself realizing that these were human beings, with the same emotions as he, who lived a complete life that he had not considered. He understood that "each of these thousand people is the same person, with the same past, the same passions, temptations, errors, with the same thoughts, the same questions, the same kind of person as I." But this gave him little comfort. The enterprise of helping the poor now seemed so hard, "that I felt my helplessness."[29]

Looking back upon his experience in the Rzhanov House, Tolstoy identified a common flaw that linked him to the inhabitants. At the time, he had been "bedimmed" by pride in his virtues, which he had not recognized. While talking with impoverished noblemen in the house, he recalled, he saw his own failing in them "as in a mirror."[30] The people in the house needed not money, he concluded from his new vantage, but a change in their world view (*mirosozertsanie*), for like him the very poor had adopted the general view that work was burdensome, and if possible to be avoided. The tract then elaborates on this theme, showing how this mistaken view was held by prostitutes and children as well, creating their plight. Prostitutes merely imitated the ways of society ladies who tried to live without carrying out their role as mothers. The children in the Rzhanov House followed the example of rich children. Tolstoy even took an urchin from House into his own home to work in the kitchen, where the boy only got in the way of the servants. He then found him work in the countryside, but the boy then returned to Moscow to join an animal act. Tolstoy writes that he had thought himself kind and good at the time, though he had paid little attention to the boy who in Tolstoy's

29 Ibid., 198-9.
30 Ibid., 207.

home had seen only how the children lived by making work for others but not by working themselves:

> I might have understood how absurd it was for me, training my children for complete idleness and luxury, to correct other people and their children, who were perishing from idleness in what I have called the Rzhanov den, where three-quarters of the people, nonetheless work for themselves and others. But I understood nothing at all of this.[31]

Much of Tolstoy's exposé was directed at the members of his own family, whom he saw binding him to a cruel and immoral life. The specific references to his daughters and sons, however, were removed at Sofia Andreevna's instance. He described a ball where lavishly dressed women (his daughters) wore perfume, rode in carriages, and bared their chests before men they did not know. All of this took place near his home, which was located in the midst of a factory area that produced fancy goods for balls. There, impoverished workers could be seen collapsing and dying from starvation. His son (in the final draft called "a friend") hired a consumptive woman and a girl to make cigarettes and then awoke at noon to spend his life pursuing pleasure. His son remained oblivious. The woman complained of pains in her chest. However, Tolstoy wrote, she didn't have to complain: "It was enough to take a look at the girl. She has been working at this for three years, but anyone seeing her at this work would say that this was a strong organism that was already being destroyed." By insisting on changing his shirt twice a day, Tolstoy felt he shared responsibility for working laundresses to death.[32]

Tolstoy hoped to convey this sense of responsibility for poverty to other members of the privileged classes. They had erred, he felt, by trying to escape the struggle for survival. They tried to avoid work, indulged in luxury and excess, and thus forced the poor to toil to support them in their ease. He wanted them to renounce their privileged life and habits and produce for themselves, with their own hands, rather than enslave the poor. But like him, they had first to see that the poverty that existed right before their eyes was the result of their easy life. "We do not want to see that if our idle luxurious and dissolute life did not exist, there also would not be that backbreaking

31 Ibid., 213-14.
32 Ibid., 303-6, 803.

labor, and without this backbreaking labor we would not have our life."[33] The privileged could not see, he stated and repeated. "We see nothing, because this surprising effort is taking place beyond us: we do not hear, we do not see, we do not reason with our hearts."[34]

Tolstoy attributed their blindness, in true Rousseauist fashion, to the products of the intellect. They could not see because they had been taught that poverty was part of the natural order of things. This kind of thinking was supported by justifications of law, religion, and philosophy. In a rough draft, Tolstoy referred to these intellectualizations as "screens" that shielded the privileged from the sights of poverty. "If these screens did not exist, we would be able to see what one mustn't fail to see."[35] Much of the text of "What Then Must We Do?" is devoted to condemning all contemporary thought for making it seem that the existing way of life was in the nature of mankind, thus closing people's eyes to suffering.

Repudiating education and philosophy, Tolstoy called upon men to confront the truth directly and provide for their own material needs. To do this they first had to open their eyes by recognizing the falsehood of their own lives. In answer to the ubiquitous question, "What Is To Be Done?" Tolstoy prescribed first ceasing to lie to oneself. This meant renouncing the high opinions of oneself and recognizing the smallness of one's achievements and the immorality of one's life. It required a repentance of one's former life—a confession of inadequacy and an access of cathartic shame. The first answer to the question of what had to be done consisted of repentance in the full significance of the word, i.e., to change the evaluation of one's situation and activity completely: instead of the usefulness and seriousness of one's activity, to recognize its harm and triviality; instead of one's education to think of one's ignorance; instead of one's goodness to recognize one's immorality and cruelty; instead of one's loftiness to recognize one's baseness.[36]

The first step was to follow the example Tolstoy described in the text: to view one's earlier efforts and hopes with shame, to reject one's self and look at the horror of one's life. Then those with education would no longer attempt to repay their debt to the people with their knowledge and training.

33 Ibid., 313.
34 Ibid., 314.
35 Ibid., 636.
36 Ibid., 378.

Shamed, they would see the self-serving nature of their life, and would be able to aspire to a new ideal of human life that would enable them to live without exploiting the labor and suffering of others. In this way, man would achieve "the satisfaction of the bodily and spiritual demands of his nature: to feed, clothe and take care of oneself and one's fellow men is the satisfaction of bodily need, to do the same for others is the satisfaction of his spiritual need."[37]

Men would learn to care for themselves and to care for others—to play the role of nurturer. In many respects Tolstoy's virtuous life was an imitation of women. Even contemporary women were closer to the ideal than were men. The law of nature demanded labor from men; from women it demanded childbirth. "There have been hardly any deviations from the law of women."[38] Even most upper class women gave birth and in this way had gone through greater suffering, showed greater sacrifice, and thus had greater natural power than men. Once they had renounced their privileged lives they could have great beneficial influence upon succeeding generations. They would nurse their children themselves, do their own sewing and washing, and teach their children to live by their own labor. Only a mother could achieve complete submission to the will of God; only she could achieve the perfection people strove for.

Men could not achieve perfection. Even at their best, they fell short, and remained physically and morally inferior to women, whose creativity and virtue came naturally from their physical impulses. Tolstoy's perception of poverty as well as his vision of a just world arose from feelings of inadequacy before women. As victims, they prompted feelings of helplessness to remedy their condition. As intimations of the ideal, they prompted awe and worship of beings possessed of vital, natural forces, unburdened by civilization. Following the pattern of many of Tolstoy's works of this period, emphatic and aggressive assertions of a newly discovered truth culminate in passive longings for the caress of a kind and life-giving mother. "What Then Must We Do?" ends with a confession of weakness before the force of feminine love. "Yes women-mothers, in your hands, more than in anyone else's, lies the salvation of the world."[39]

37 Ibid., 381.
38 Ibid., 406.
39 Ibid., 406-11.

15. Property Rights, Populism, and Russian Political Culture

In his famous critique of the "legal obtuseness" of the Russian intelligentsia, Bogdan Kistiakovskii wrote: "The spiritual leaders of the Russian intelligentsia have constantly either completely ignored the legal (*pravovye*) interests of the individual, or have expressed open hostility towards them." Individual rights, he thought, could come to Russia only with the introduction of constitutional government. Kistiakovskii reserved his sharpest criticism for two of the leading ideologists of populism, Alexander Herzen and Nikolai Mikhailovskii. Both Herzen and Mikhailovskii, he claimed, had subordinated political freedom and the legal guarantees of the individual to the goal of social equality.[1]

Kistiakovskii's defence of individual rights made no mention of property rights. Indeed, he too looked forward to a socialist order and valued the right of property no more than the thinkers he had attacked.[2] In this respect, his thought was typical of the intellectuals who led the movement against the autocracy in the first years of the twentieth century. The programs of the Constitutional Democrats as well as the various socialist parties included demands for such rights as freedom of speech, assembly, and the press as well as the right to domicile. However, none of them mentioned the second of the Declaration of the Rights of Man, the right to property. The omission

1 V. A. Kistiakovskii, "V zashchitu prava," *Vekhi: Sbornik statei o russkoi intelligentsii* (Moscow: V. M. Sablin, 1909), 132-5.

2 On Kistiakovskii's conception of right, see Susan Heuman, "A Socialist Conception of Human Rights: A Model from Prerevolutionary Russia," in *Human Rights: Cultural and Ideological Perspectives*, ed. A. Pollis and P. Schwab (New York:Praeger, 1982), 50-3; Kistiakovskii, "V zashchitu prava," 142-3.

of property rights by groups seeking to defend the dignity and freedom of the individual points to a distinctive feature of the struggle for civil rights in Russia. Whether or not one deems property rights essential for human freedom, the assertion of civil rights in opposition to property rights places the Russian experience outside the western tradition that was supposed to serve as its model.

The hostility toward the concept of property reflected in part the socialist orientation of the Russian intelligentsia. But before 1905, the right of property had few consistent defenders in any political camp in Russia. Property rights were associated with the bourgeois west or the system of serfdom. Russians of divergent political persuasions favored the peasant commune with its principles of common ownership, even if their visions of its true character and ideal form differed. To be sure, there was an undercurrent of opposition to the commune in liberal circles and in the administration. However, it was the peasant uprisings of 1905 and 1906 that made the virtues of private holding clear to the Tsar, his most influential officials, and the majority of the landed nobility.[3]

Private property, of course, developed as a basis for the Russian agrarian and industrial economy in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. However, the notion of individual property *rights* lacked ethical justification in Russian political culture and retained a strong stigma throughout this period. Conservatives saw in it the seed of social discord and breakdown. Liberals and socialists could not reconcile private property in land with the concepts of equality or freedom. The word "property" conveyed the sense of oppression and exploitation of an illegitimate usurpation of the possessions of all under the auspices of arbitrary and brutal political authority. Landed property symbolized not a basis for the individual's freedom, but a constraint which, by tying him to a particular place, debased his concerns to the mundane and trivial and destroyed his spiritual freedom. They felt, like Ivan Ivanych in Chekhov's story "Gooseberries," that "a man does not need three arshins of land, not an estate in the country, but the whole globe, all of nature where he can freely display all the features and peculiarities of his free spirit."

Like other western concepts, the concept of property rights in Russia was transformed by a political culture that attached to it its own connotations

3 Victor Leontovitsch, *Geschichte des Liberalismus in Russland* (Frankfurt-am-Main: V. Klostermann, 1957), 153.

and associations. In the West, the modern sense of property came into usage during the French Revolution. Article 17 of the Declaration of the Rights of Man described property as "an inviolable and sacred right," yet justified the abolition of seigneurial rights by allowing that individuals could be deprived of their property "when a legally stated public necessity obviously requires it, and under the condition of a just and prior indemnity." This provision established a semantic continuity between old and new conceptions of property under the rubric of "natural right." As William Sewell has argued, it created a successful transition from the old feudal conception of property as an attribute of privilege to the new sense of property as a belonging rightfully held by all individuals. Under the rubric of natural right, the National Assembly extended the right of property to the middle classes. Detached from its feudal origins, the concept of property rights was transformed into an attribute of freedom. The Assembly defined property as "a set of physically palpable possessions that a person had annexed to himself by his labor and was free to use in any way that did not infringe on the liberty of other citizens." It meant an extension of "personhood" to be guaranteed "the same liberty as all other aspects of his person."[4]

In Russia, the transition from property as an attribute of privilege to property as an attribute of freedom never took place. Indeed, property rights remained an alien element in Russian historical development and never became a fully legitimate aspect of privilege. Slavophile writers in the nineteenth century extolled the absence of a tradition of Roman law and the prevalence of an orthodox collective spirit, which, they claimed, shaped the institutions of the people. But this was a romanticized view of secular developments. It was the prevalence of the state as a moral and legal entity in the Russian past, not deep religious feelings, that prevented property rights from gaining the esteem they held in the West.

In Russia, the notion of property developed from rights to land extended by the tsarist state. There was no tradition of feudal law to justify these grants. Before Peter the Great, servitors held land either as conditional grants for service, or in hereditary tenure, but both were obliged to serve. Private property was justified by an ethos of service to the public weal, embodied in the state. When Peter eliminated what had become an obsolete distinction and made

4 W. H. Sewell, Jr., *Work and Revolution in France: The Language of Labor from the Old Regime to 1848* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 134-6.

all lands hereditary in 1714, he enforced a requirement of compulsory lifetime service for the nobility. In 1762, the nobility gained freedom from compulsory service, but the connection between land and service retained its force. Their estates remained "unfree landed property," granted on assumption of a moral, if not a legal, obligation to serve.[5]

When Catherine the Great granted the nobility the right of property in the Charter of 1785 and other laws of her reign, she was using a western concept without historical roots in the Russian past. From its inception, the right of property became associated with the consolidation of the nobility's power over their peasants and the abuses of the serf system. The Charter of the Nobility of 1785 uses the word "right" (*pravo*) only in regard to property. The word *pravo* approximated property to the other noble right, which was not mentioned in the charter, "bondage right" (*krepostnoe pravo*), or serfdom. Other concessions in the charter were termed the "personal privileges" (*lichnye preimushchestva*) of noblemen. In the vocabulary of early nineteenth-century autocracy, the word "right" meant merely a firmer and more important form of privilege.

The property rights bestowed by the tsarist state became identified with its despotic authority. The serf owner served as an agent of the state, performing police, judicial, and fiscal functions. The government, in turn, used the army to protect the landlord from peasant unruliness and violence. Property, in this sense, remained an attribute of authority. It carried none of the redeeming sense of autonomy that it held in the west. It could not promote the liberal values of individualism and self-reliance. Herzen sneered at Russian conceptions of property: "What really can be said on behalf of the inviolability of the landlord's private property—the landlord, the whipper-of-men, who mixes up in his concept of property, the garden plot and the peasant woman, boots and the *starosta*."[6]

Noble property rights remained a troubling inconsistency in the system of official values. During the first half of the nineteenth century, Alexander I and Nicholas I sought to limit the landlords' power over their serfs and extend property rights to peasants as well. Such efforts aroused

5 A. V. Romanovich-Slavatinskii, *Dvorianstvo v Rossii ot nachala XVIII veka do otmeny krepostnogo prava* (St. Petersburg: Ministerstvo Vnutrennykh Del, 1870), 238-9.

6 Quoted in V. Chernov, *Zemlia i pravo* (Petrograd: Partiia Sotsialistov Revoliutsionnerov, 1917), 17.

the fears not only among the gentry, but also among many officials: peasant property independent of state authority might threaten the political order. Thus, in the deliberations of the Secret Committee (1839-1842) Count Kiselev recommended giving peasants land in use rather than as property. Peasants owning land in hereditary tenure, he warned, might demand a role in government. As "an unrestrained majority," they would "destroy the equilibrium of the parts of the state organism."[7]

During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, service continued to provide the ethos of the Russian nobility and state, even when honored mainly in the breach. "Service became the expression of a social and moral ideal," Marc Raeff wrote.[8] Noblemen and their ancestors had earned their rank and land by service, predominantly in the army, and their raison d'etre continued to be service to the state rather than their own independence or honor. The notion that private property provided the basis of political virtue, which proved to be so crucial in the evolution of western political theory, was weakly developed in Russia. The nobility's virtue was expressed in their acts of sacrifice for the fatherland, not in their possession of land. Nikolai Karamzin wrote in his famous *Memoir* that the Russian gentry "were never anything except a brotherhood of outstanding men serving the grand princes or tsars."[9]

Service to the state also provided the principal secular legitimization of the monarch's power in Russia. From Peter the Great onward, Russian emperors and empresses were depicted as servants of the state who sought "the general welfare."[10] The tsar represented the general good, and his absolute power enabled him to remain above the interests of particular groups and individuals. After the Decembrist uprising of 1825, these claims assumed moral and religious overtones. Michael Speranskii taught the tsarevich Alexander Nikolaevich that the aim of society was not the mere satisfaction of particular interests. Life in society should be a preparation for the supreme truth, "the

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7 Leontovitsch, *Geschichte des Liberalismus in Russland*, 108. On the Secret Committee, see S. V. Mironenko, *Stranitsy tainoi istorii samoderzhaviia* (Moscow: Mysl', 1990), 112-95.

8 Marc Raeff, *Origins of the Russian Intelligentsia* (New York: Harcourt Brace, Jovanovich, 1966), 119.

9 Richard Pipes, *Karamzin's Memoir on Ancient and Modern Russia: A Translation and Analysis* (New York: Atheneum, 1969), 200.

10 N. I. Pavlenko, "Idei absolutizma v zakonodatel'stve XVIII v.," *Absoliutizm v Rossii XVII-XVIII vv.* (Moscow: Institut Istorii A. N. SSSR, 1964), 389-427.

threshold of the highest being." The government was the conscience of society, introducing ideas of justice and duty and ensuring their observance. "Just as conscience in the internal moral order is the organ of divine justice, so the supreme authority is the organ of eternal truth in the social order when it is pure and correct."[11] The emperor was to live not for himself or particular interests, but for the nation. From his religious instruction, Alexander Nikolaevich learned that "the ruler should have no purpose but the welfare of his subjects and he should not distinguish between his advantage and theirs, not to speak of allowing the two to come into conflict." Christ was to be his example.[12]

Later in the century, the tsar's mission as the secular embodiment of the truth was emphasized all the more by monarchist writers. Lev Tikhomirov, the former populist, stressed the ethical essence of autocracy, which placed social good above individual interest, and obligation above right. He cited Mikhail Katkov's description of "the psychology of right: Only that right is fruitful which reflects nothing but an obligation.... There is no benefit in the fact that I have the right to do something if I do not feel obliged to do what I may." The tsar had to act as an instrument of divine justice. "Most important, the tsar must not have personal motivations. He is the executor of the Supreme Will. Where the Supreme Will indicates the need for punishment and severity, the tsar should be severe and should punish. He is only the instrument of justice."[13]

The tsar's presumed power to transcend human weakness provided grounds for critiques of parliamentary government, which monarchist writers claimed defended only the material interests of particular groups. Speranskii taught Alexander II that constitutional government inevitably fell into the hands of the monied classes and advanced their interests to the detriment of the good of all. Alexander III's tutor and adviser, Constantine Pobedonostsev, claimed that representative institutions turned into the despotism of unprincipled politicians and the mob and could not attain the lofty moral plane of autocracy.[14]

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11 *Gody ucheniia ego Imperatorskogo Vysochestva Naslednika Tsesarevicha (Sbornik Russkogo Istoricheskogo Obshchestva,* No. 30 [St. Petersburg: Russkoe Istoricheskoe Obshchestvo, 1880], 342-4, 366-7, 436-8.

12 Ibid., 100-1, 106.

13 L. A. Tikhomirov, *Monarkhicheskaia Gosudarstvennost'* (Buenos Aires: Russkii Imp. Soiuz-orden, 1968), 454, 612.

14 *Gody ucheniia*, 366-7; C. P. Pobedonostsev, *Reflections of a Russian Statesman* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1968), 266.

The ethos of autocracy asserted the supremacy of the moral and political sphere over the economic. The tsar's role as the moral guardian of Russian society endowed him with obligations to preserve equity in the relations between groups in Russian society. As an impartial arbiter, he was supposed to stand above economic interest and social conflict, and enforce equity and justice.[15] During the eighteenth century, the tsarist state regulated and closely supervised economic relationships between estates. What Reinhard Bendix described as "the ideology of the masters" implied that the authorities must ensure that the good of the state and the preservation of authority take precedence over the interest of the individual producer. The state administration intervened in disputes between labor and management as the protector of the interests of all the people; it both reinforced the authority of the managers and on occasion rectified workers' grievances.[16]

This perspective led tsarist officials in the nineteenth century to view the peasant commune as an embodiment of the values of the state, ensuring both equity and order. The commune guaranteed each peasant a plot of land, and presumably served as a safeguard against impoverishment and the rise of a potentially restless proletariat.[17] The commune encouraged the subordination of individualistic impulse to the good of the group and promoted the ethical principles of the autocracy. The Minister of Finance, Egor Kankrin, expressed this sentiment when he wrote in 1837, "The people's custom of equal division of the land among all settlers and inhabitants of one area is a sign of popular good will and fraternal union in which one should take pride, and which bears the splendid imprint of deep Christian feeling."[18]

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15 Contrast this view with the dominant attitude in the United States in the nineteenth century: "It was a century which put all the energy and attention it could into economic interests…. In most affairs one senses that men turned to non-economic issues grudgingly or as a form of diversion and excitement or in spurts of bad conscience over neglected problems (J. W. Hurst, *Law and the Conditions of Freedom in the Nineteenth-Century United States* [Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1956], 29).

16 Reinhard Bendix, *Work and Authority in History: Ideologies of Management in the Course of Industrialization* (New York: Wiley, 1956), 166-74.

17 Alexander Gerschenkron, "Russia: Agrarian Policies and Industrialization, 1861-1917," *Cambridge Economic History*, vol. 6, Part 2 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1965), 750.

18 M. Tugan-Baranovskii, *Russkaia fabrika v proshlom i nastoiashchem* (Moscow: Moskovskii rabochii, 1922), 222.

The justification for the emancipation of the serfs in 1861 followed the traditional pattern of subordinating the interests of the individual estates to the good of all. The state clearly encroached on the property rights of the landed nobility by assigning lands, with compensation, to the peasantry. Alexander, however, maintained the fiction that property rights remained sacrosanct by presenting the emancipation as a response to the initiative of the nobility itself. The initial rescripts were issued in response to contrived or intentionally misinterpreted "requests" from provincial noble assemblies. Official statements then described the reform as a great act of national sacrifice. The Emancipation Edict referred to the nobility's "sacrifice for the benefit of the fatherland," asserting that they had "voluntarily renounced their rights to the persons of the serfs." The emancipation, thus, tampered with noble property rights in order to defend them.[19]

With the emancipation, the government began strenuous efforts to convince the peasantry that they should not expect a redivision of all the lands, the "black partition" that they longed for. The Emancipation Edict, composed by the Metropolitan Filaret, referred to "misunderstandings" that had arisen in the countryside and reminded the peasants that "he who freely enjoys the blessings of society should mutually serve society by fulfilling certain obligations." After quoting Paul's admonition in the Letter to the Romans to "obey the powers that be" and to give everyone his due, it added that "the legally acquired rights of the landlords cannot be taken from them without proper compensation or voluntary concession." In subsequent years, Alexander made it clear that he considered the defense of property rights to be inseparable from the autocratic order. In his rescript to the Chairman of the Committee of Ministers, Prince P. P. Gagarin, he emphasized the importance to the welfare of the state and each of its citizens of "the complete inviolability of the right of property in all its forms, defined by the general laws and the statute of February 19, 1861.[20]

The emancipation of the serfs involved an effort to enhance respect for private property. However, this goal was not pursued consistently.

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19 On the nobility's "initiative" see Daniel Field, *The End of Serfdom: Nobility and Bureaucracy in Russia, 1855-1861* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1976), 77-83; S. S. Tatishchev, *Imperator Aleksandr II: Ego zhizn' i tsarstvovanie* (St. Petersburg: A. S. Suvorin, 1903), 1: 380-1.

20 Tatishchev, *Imperator Aleksandr II*, 1: 380-2.

The maintenance and strengthening of the land commune ensured that the great majority of the peasants would not receive rights of individual property. Recent studies have shown that reformers in the Editing Commission hoped to extend the right of property to the peasantry as well and bring about the dissolution of the commune. But the reformers thought it premature to embark on a forcible dissolution of the communal system, especially since the peasantry lacked other institutional structures in the countryside. In any case, it is doubtful whether their viewpoint could have triumphed, given that both the conservative bureaucracy and most of liberal public opinion believed in the commune as a fundamental institution of Russian society and culture. Another effort to dismantle the commune led to Alexander II's approval in 1874 of a resolution to seek ways to introduce individual land-holding among the peasantry. However, the imminent international crisis and revolutionary menace precluded so drastic a reform, and the matter was dropped. After Alexander II's death, the government defended the commune as a mainstay of the autocracy and took measures for its defense.[21]

Nor did the state extend political rights to proprietors. The emperor came to the defence of noble property rights, but insisted on maintaining his monopoly of power. In 1862, the Committee of Ministers issued a warning to the nobility, reminding them that "the Government, at present concentrating all its attention on the reforms in various parts of the administration for the general welfare, reserves for itself the further conduct of these reforms toward their ultimate goal." In 1865, indignant at the nobility's continued requests for participation in government, Alexander issued a rescript that asserted his own "concern to improve and perfect … the various branches of state administration," and his own exclusive right of initiative in reform. "No class

21 V. G. Chernukha, *Krest'ianskii vopros v pravitel'stvennoi politike Rossii* (Leningrad: Nauka, 1972), 124-64. The movement in the administration to dissolve the commune is explored by David Macey, *Government and the Peasantry in Russia: The Prehistory of the Stolypin Reforms* (De Kalb, IL: Northern Illinois Univesity Press, 1987). See also L. G. Zakharova, *Samoderzhavie i otmena krepostnogo prava v Rossii, 1856-1861* (Moscow: Moskovskii Universitet, 1984), 158-9. The most complete discussion of the implications of the emancipation for the peasant's right to property is M. D. Dolbilov, " Zemel'naia sobstvennost' i osvobozhdnie krest'ian'," in *Sobstvennost' na zemliu v Rossii: istoriia i sovremennost'*, ed. D. F. Aiatskov (Moscow: Rosspen, 2002), 45-153.

has the right to speak in the name of other classes. No one is called to take it upon himself to bring before ME petitions about the general welfare and the needs of the state."[22]

By defending the property rights of the nobility, Alexander impugned the ethical supremacy that justified his autocratic prerogatives, and the leaders of the intelligentsia now claimed the title to ethical leadership that the tsar had relinquished. Alexander Herzen looked towards a "social monarchy" in which the tsar promoted the cause of equality. Chernyshevskii wrote, "Only one thing is necessary: let our autocracy take to the path of economic improvement, let Alexander II finish the work begun by Alexander I and by Nicholas." Chernyshevskii envisaged a system of agricultural and industrial co-operatives introduced and operated by the state; the state would work to transform the commune into a truly socialist institution.[23]

The leaders of the intelligentsia rose to the task of replacing the tsar as ethical leader of the nation. Herzen could not drink the toast he had prepared to the Tsar-Liberator. "The Tsar has cheated the people," he wrote in *The Bell*. Serfdom had not been completely abolished. Nikolai Ogarev and N. N. Obruchev wrote an appeal called "What Do the People Need?" Their answer to the question was replied that the people needed land, freedom, and education, "The land belongs to no one but the people." The peasants should receive the land that they held at the moment, and they should be governed by their own representatives, who would apportion taxes fairly and not oppress them like the tsar's officials.[24]

Radical writers shared the premises of official doctrine, and contended that the tsar had violated his own fundamental principles. Their propaganda portrayed him as selfish and callous. The pamphlet "A Conversation between the Tsar and the People," written in the early 1870s, presents Alexander as indifferent to the people's pleas for help, concerned only about the collection of tax arrears. He impatiently urges the peasants to have faith in God and

22 Terence Emmons, *The Russian Landed Gentry and the Peasant Emancipation of 1861* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968), 396-7, 410-11.

23 Theodore Dan, *The Origins of Bolshevism* (New York: Harper and Row, 1964), 33-4; Franco Venturi, *Roots of Revolution* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1960), 173-4.

24 Venturi, *Roots of Revolution*, 108-10; N. P. Ogarev, "Chto nuzhno narodu?" in *Izbrannye sotsial'no-politicheskie i filosofskie proizvedeniia* (Moscow: Politicheskaia Literatura, 1952), 1: 527-36.

to learn to accept their lot. He is unable to understand the peasants' condition or to act as their guardian.[25]

Populist writers influential during the 1870s asserted that property and wealth had silenced the ethical imperatives of government in Russia. Economic concerns had become paramount, as they had in the bourgeois societies of the West, which Russia had now begun to resemble. From this perspective, constitutional government and the civil rights of a liberal order seemed little more than weapons of the propertied classes. Peter Lavrov wrote in his *Historical Letters* that American democracy had one feature in common with the Russian Empire or Asian khanates, "the subjection of a considerable number of individuals to a juridical contract or to a class domination that these individuals have not discussed or stated their disagreement."[26] The most complete statement of populist views of government, Lavrov's *The State Element in the Society of the Future*, curtly dismissed the institutions of representative government, "The Lords and Commoners of England, her judges, and her coroners have become the juridical organs of the ruler of wealth over the masses. The bourgeoisie reigned in French chambers and courts after the great revolution."[27]

The state, according to Lavrov, had now relinquished its role as protector of the security of the individual and society and now was "the preserver of the economic order" that had resulted from "international competition among monopolistic property owners." It assisted the exploiting classes and acted as "a vampire of society." Ethical principles could triumph only with the coming social revolution, which would usher in an era of human solidarity. Then property would belong to all, and people would labor for the general welfare. Egoistic feelings would weaken; altruistic sentiments would grow stronger and form the bases of a common life.[28]

Populist writers looked to the peasant commune as the mainstay of altruistic feelings in Russia and rallied to its defense against government policies that they claimed encouraged private ownership. They, like the

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25 *Agitatsionnaia literatura russkikh revoliutsionnykh narodnikov* (Leningrad: Nauka, 1970), 462-3.

26 Peter Lavrov, *Historical Letters* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1967), 245.

27 Peter Lavrov, *Izbrannye sochineniia na sotsial'no-politicheskie temy v vos'mi tomakh* (Moscow: Vses. ob-vo politkatorzhan i ssyl'no-poselentsev, 1935), 4: 239.

28 Ibid., 4: 243, 245, 264-5.

Slavophiles and Herzen, found the collective spirit in the people themselves, not in the state. Just as the Slavophiles had discerned a religious principle in the commune, the populists discovered a social ideal that they projected into the future. The absence of private property in the commune represented a potential deterrent to the prevalence of private interests. The communes' practice of repartition of the land, they believed, provided the grounds for a socialist law based on use rather than possession. The revolutionary tracts of Michael Bakunin promoted the communal system as the ideal of the people; inequality and oppression in existing communes resulted from the domination of the autocratic state.[29]

At the end of the 1870s the revolutionary populists recognized the importance of winning political and civil rights. These rights were an addition to their program and fit uneasily with their principles of social and economic justice.[30] The program of the People's Will in 1879 announced the revolutionaries' plans to introduce democratic suffrage and freedom of religion, speech, press, and assembly. However, their principal goal remained the elimination of private property in land. The land was to belong to the people, they declared, but as a strategic concession they promised to regard as inviolable the persons and property of those who remained neutral to the revolutionary struggle.[31]

Nikolai Mikhailovskii presented the populists' argument for parliamentary government and individual rights in a series of articles he wrote for the illegal press. The tsarist government could no longer protect the population from the bestial oppression of the bourgeoisie, he argued. Only by transferring "public matters" into "public hands," by convening an "Assembly of the Land," a *zemskii sobor*, could the citizen's security be protected. Although Mikhailovskii assumed that democratic government would ensure political freedom, he made no mention of civil rights per se, nor of the institutional means of guaranteeing them. Indeed, he thought political freedom in Russia

29 For a comparison of populism and Slavophilism, see Abbott Gleason, *Young Russia: The Genesis of Russian Radicalism in the 1860s* (New York: Viking, 1980), 49-53; S. N. Valk, ed., *Revoliutsionnoe narodnichestvo 70-kh godov XIX veka* (Moscow: Nauka, 1965), 1: 45, 51. On peasant legal norms, see Chernov, *Zemlia i pravo,* 19-21, 24-5, 44-5.

30 See my book, *The Crisis of Russian Populism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967), 82-4.

31 Valk, 2: 170-4.

presumed expropriation: a constitutional system could gain support from the peasantry only by promising them land. "The Russian people to a man will rise up only for that kind of freedom that guarantees them land." A social revolution, he suggested, was also more probable against an assembly than against a tsar, "When is a popular uprising more likely? When at the summit of the political system sits a remote, semi-mythical tsar, whom the people in their ignorance still believe in according to custom, or when the country is being governed by elected individuals, ordinary people, without any mystical aura."[32]

Populist writers thus introduced the notion of political rights into programs that continued to express an egalitarian and collectivist social vision. Unlike Russian Marxists, who insisted on a bourgeois phase of development before the advent of socialism, they provided no historical precondition for these rights. They assumed that they could be imposed by a triumphant revolutionary leadership. But the decline of the revolutionary movement in the 1880s and the spread of the historical and deterministic doctrines of Marxism undermined the earlier faith in the power of the vanguard.

In the first years of the twentieth century, the resurgence of the opposition movement and the spread of peasant insurrections rekindled the revolutionary faith of the populists. Viktor Chernov provided new intellectual grounds for their assumption of the role of ethical leader of the nation. Chernov cited European critiques of Marxist theory which showed that capitalism did not always lead to economic growth. He drew the conclusion that in many countries like Russia capitalism would not develop new forms of social cooperation, as it had in the west "as a result of the blind play of particular interest." In Russia it would bring only destruction and suffering. This eventuality allowed the leaders of the intelligentsia to intervene and shape the economy according to their ideals. Chernov summoned them to "the vigorous work of taming and harmonizing egoistic tendencies, smoothing out of rough spots, the submerging of individual wills, the elimination of dissonances, the working out of an internal harmony. It is a labor of massive conscious creation."[33]

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32 N. K. Mikhailovskii, *Revoliutionnyia stat'i* (Berlin: Gugo Shteinits, 1906), 9-10, 18, 21.

33 Victor Chernov, "Tipy kapitalisticheskoi i agrarnoi evoliutsii," *Russkoe bogatstvo*, No. 10 (1900): 243-4.

Chernov's writings expressed the populists' voluntarist faith in the possibilities of subordinating economic processes, viewed as ineluctable by Russian Marxists, to ethical imperatives.[34] The program of the Socialist Revolutionary (SR) party, adopted in January 1906, incorporated this central populist belief. It reaffirmed the intelligentsia's role as ethical leader, using words borrowed from Lavrov and Mikhailovskii. The destructive impact of capitalism in Russia had left the field open for moral leadership. Social progress manifested itself in "the struggle for the establishment of social solidarity and for the complete and harmonious development of human individuality." The struggle presumed the evolution of impersonal class antagonisms, but above all it required "the intervention of conscious fighters for truth and justice."[35]

The political section of the program developed the principles advanced by the revolutionaries of the 1880s. Political freedom would be a necessary preliminary stage for the achievement of socialism. The party recognized the inalienable rights of man and citizen: freedom of conscience, speech, press, assembly, and unionization. There would be freedom of movement, choice of work, collective refusal to work, and inviolability of person and dwelling. The agrarian section of the program, however, reaffirmed the populists' determination to do away with private property in land. "In the interests of socialism and the struggle against bourgeois-proprietorial principles" the party would rely upon the communal views and forms of life of the peasants. This meant the dissemination of the notion "that the land is no one's, and that right to its use is given only by labor." As a result, the party would work for the socialization of the land, which would be removed from commercial exchange and turned "from the private property of separate individuals or groups into the possession of the whole people (*obshchenarodnoe dostoianie*)." Under the management of central and local organs of popular self-government, the land would be allotted equally, on a labor principle, "to secure a norm of consumption on the basis of the application of one's own labor, either individually or in a cooperative."[36]

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34 On the voluntarist strain among the Socialist Revolutionaries, see Manfred Hildermeier, *Die Sozialrevolutionäre Partei Russlands: Agrarsozalismus und Modernisierung im Zarenreich (1900-1914)* (Cologne: Bühlau, 1978), 81-3.

35 *Protokoly pervago s"ezda partii sotsialistov-revoliutsionnerov* (n. p., 1906), 355, 359.

36 Ibid., 361, 363.

The SRs' program thus retained the earlier populist view that property did not belong to the sphere of natural rights, but derived from the values and vocabulary of the system to be overthrown. Their political and legal program anticipated that the revolution would establish civil rights and the inviolability of the individual, while their agrarian program foresaw the swift end to individual property rights in land. The program did not recognize a discrepancy between the introduction of freedom and civil rights and the attack on the right of property. The socialization of the land was to take place according to the peasants' own concepts of land tenure. The leadership assumed that the peasants shared their views, and would continue to hold land collectively. They made no provision for dissenting opinions. Moreover, the SRs both countenanced and encouraged seizures of land from the nobility, which were to take place under its own direction in order to ensure the socialization of the land. Mikhail Gots even attacked the Bolsheviks' strategy of confiscation for failing to ensure that the agrarian revolution brought the village as close as possible to socialism.[37]

The moderate populists of the *Russkoe bogatstvo* group and the Popular Socialists (*narodnye sotsialisty*) shared the same determination to abolish private property in land, though they advocated more gradual and less violent methods. Aleksei Peshekhonov, the principal writer on the land question for *Russkoe bogatstvo* and a leader of the Popular Socialists, saw private land-holding as the major obstacle to the economic well-being of Russia. Individual rights, he emphasized, were not absolute, "Perfecting social forms, [humanity] strives not only to extend and secure the rights of each individual, but to limit them in the interests of the collectivity." His review of the reports of the gentry Committees on Agriculture made clear that noble property rights conflicted with the rights of man as he understood them, "The 'rights' that [the nobles] are storming about are, first, the right of individuals to turn fruits of the labors of all society to their own advantage and, second, the right of the strong classes to exploit 'the very weakest' part of the population."[38]

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37 Maureen Perrie, *The Agrarian Policy of the Russian Socialist-Revolutionary Party from its Origin through the Revolution of 1905-1907* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), 102-4.

38 A. V. Peshekhonov, *Zemel'nyia nuzhdy derevni* (St. Petersburg: N. N. Klobukov, 1906), 66-7, 70-1.

Peshekhonov repeated John Stuart Mill's argument that property rights derived from the labor applied to the land, and could not justify excluding others from the possibility of devoting their time and energy to that land. Nor could property rights be defended on the grounds of productivity in Russia, where it had led to impoverishment and destruction of the agricultural resources of the country. Only the transfer of land to the peasants could remedy this situation. Those who labored, he concluded, should have exclusive right to the land, "The management of these lands should be transferred to the people through the agency of central and local representation, organized on democratic principles."[39]

The moderate populists favored nationalization of the land. Nationalization represented a more controlled form of land transfer than the socialization advocated by Chernov and the Socialist Revolutionary party—the Popular Socialists even supported the redemption of noble land—but they did not allow private ownership, even for peasants. Indeed, they opposed seizures and control by local committees, partly because they feared that local initiative without central control might result in *kulak* ownership in many areas. They were bitter critics of the Stolypin land reform.[40]

The 1906 program of the Popular Socialist party was based on the populist goal of the good of the whole, attained through gradual methods. The party spoke for "all laborers," and strove for the "welfare of the people" (*narodnoe blago*), which it would determine through "the people's will." "The people's will" would be expressed by a democratic government, which would protect individual rights. Their political program, V. N. Ginev remarks, could have been endorsed by the Constitutional Democrats. Their goal was nationalization of the land, but the means were to be peaceful, involving redemption of private property. Those lands that were being worked, *trudovye khozyaistva*, would remain temporarily in their owners' possession, and could be inherited on the principle of labor use.[41]

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39 Ibid., 67, 71, 154-5.

40 Perrie, *The Agrarian Policy of the Russian Socialist-Revolutionary Party,* 161-2; V. N. Ginev, *Bor'ba za krest'ianstvo i krizis russkogo neonarodnichestva, 1902-1914 gg.* (Leningrad: Nauka, 1983), 194-6, 210. The Popular Socialists' consistent opposition to all private landowning belies the view that they represented the interests of rural bourgeoisie or farmer class, as suggested by N. D. Erofeev in his *Narodnye sotsialisty v pervoi russkoi revoliutsii* (Moscow: Moskovskii Universitet, 1979), 62-3, 71-2.

41 Ginev, *Bor'ba za krest'ianstvo*…, 204-5.

Populist views of private property reached far beyond their own circles and influenced many members of the Constitutional Democratic party, the principal champions of a constitutional regime in Russia. An articulate contingent of Kadet leaders, among them I. I. Petrunkevich, V. P. Obninskii, and V. E. Yakushkin, argued for reform leading to national ownership of land. Petrunkevich thought agrarian reform would eliminate the consciousness of private property in land. He was opposed by figures such as N. N. Kutler and L. I. Petrazhitskii, who opposed communal land tenure and favored private homesteads. The party had difficulty resolving these differences and formulating a unified approach to land tenure. Its leaders rejected the populist concept of a "labor norm," and advanced instead the notion of a "consumption norm" for determining future allotment quotas, based on each family's needs rather than the number of workers. The delegates at the Kadet party's second congress in January 1906 finally agreed to Peter Struve's proposal that land be given "in use" rather than as private property. They adopted the goal of an "inalienable" state land fund, which would allot land according to the principle of equality.

Stolypin's measures to promote separations from the peasant commune and the development of individual homesteads posed difficult problems for Kadet leaders, who were divided on the question of land tenure. In the Second Duma, the Kadet group proposed measures that would provide the commune with more protection from individual peasants than those in the Stolypin projects. When Stolypin introduced the laws on the basis of the emergency provision of the Fundamental Laws, article 87, the Kadets united in opposition to the Prime Minister's arbitrary methods of enactment rather than to the substance of the measures.[42]

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42 On the Kadets' debates on agrarian policy in 1905 and 1906, see J. E. Zimmerman, "Between Revolution and Reaction: The Constitutional Democratic Party, October 1905 to June 1907 Ph. D. thesis Columbia University, 1967)"; see also idem, "The Kadets in the Duma," in *Essays on Russian Liberalism*, ed. Charles Timberlake (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 1972), 136-7; William Rosenberg, *Liberals in the Russian Revolution* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974), 12-19. On populist influences on the liberals in the Provisional Government, see Leonard Schapiro, "The Political Thought of the First Provisional Government," in *Revolutionary Russia*, ed. Richard Pipes (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1968), 97-113.

A consistent approach to the right of property eluded the liberal intellectuals of the Kadet party. While most believed in private ownership in general, they refused to defend it as a right, for this would have meant the acceptance of noble land-holding and inequality of distribution in the countryside. Thus Kadet leaders, who looked upon themselves as heirs of the French Revolution, could not accept a transition between old and new forms of property, like that formulated by the National Assembly. In the end, many placed their faith in the Russian state—not the autocracy, of course, but a state based on acceptable, egalitarian, ethical principles. As westernized an intellectual as Pavel Miliukov branded the Stolypin reforms a "Europeanization" of the land, which, he claimed, violated Russian tradition, "The idea of private property has had a stunted development here … the idea [of the nationalization of the land] is no novelty for Russia … the principle of the nationalization of the land, in the sense of a recognition of the supreme right of the state to land, is an ancient Muscovite principle."[43]

Among the political groups that formed before 1905, only the Marxists expressed support for the notion of private property, at least during the bourgeois stage that most of them believed must precede the socialist revolution. But this regime of private property was more of a doctrinal obligation for them than a concrete objective, and they had difficulty placing it in Russian historical development. Both Plekhanov and Lenin at first anticipated that the bourgeois revolution would lead only to a moderate reform in the countryside, the return of the *otrezki*, the lands taken by the landlords at the time of the emancipation. However, Marxist doctrinal constraints gave way to revolutionary and egalitarian imperatives.. When the peasants rose up in the first years of the twentieth century and demanded lands, the Social Democrats could hardly pose as the defenders of noble private property. At its second congress, the party pledged its support for the peasant movement. Lenin gave up his insistence on the return of the *otrezki* and his *Two Tactics of Social Democracy* developed the concept of a democratic alliance of workers and peasants, which presumed the seizure of landlord property. To salvage the notion of a bourgeois stage, Lenin advanced his notion of "nationalization" of the land, and the Mensheviks of "municipalization" of the land. Whether the land was under the disposition of the central state or of the localities,

43 Leontovitsch, *Geschichte des Liberalismus in Russland*, 196-9.

it was clear that the Marxists' "bourgeois" stage would scarcely bring the protection of the right of private property in Russia.[44]

In 1905, the defense of the right of property in Russia was left to the pillars of the old order, the landed nobility and the tsarist government. As peasant insurrections swept across the country, the nobility began the work of political organization and formed the United Nobility and such political parties as the Octobrists to act on behalf of their interests. The tsarist government made the defense of noble landowning its principal goal. The identification of private property with despotism, arbitrariness, and oppression became overt as the tsar's ministers explicitly presented private property as the mainstay of the existing order. In his speech to the First Duma, the Prime Minister, Ivan Goremykin, declared that the state could not deprive some without depriving all of their rights of private ownership, "The inalienable and inviolable right of private property is the foundation stone of the popular well-being and social progress at all stages of development. Private property is the fundamental basis of a state's existence: without the right of private property there would be no state."[45]

In the west, property rights have historically provided the basis for other civil and political rights. Ultimately, the person has assumed the inviolability granted to property. In those western nations that have suspended the right of property selectively, there has been a respect for property rights when they are not abused, an unspoken, informal respect for property as the basis of security and limitation on the power of the state. Whether it is possible to create a society that protects civil and political rights without protecting the right of property is a question sharply disputed by political theorists. Those with liberal or conservative views tend to answer the question in the negative. They point to the historical role of private property and its effect in limiting the untrammeled exercise of governmental power. Those of a radical or socialist persuasion believe that property rights are often used to violate the rights of those without property.[46]

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44 Dan, *The Origins of Bolshevism*, 310-22; Esther Kingston-Mann, *Lenin and the Problem of Marxist Peasant Revolution* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 66-73, 92-3, 183-8.

45 *Readings in Russian Civilization*, ed. Thomas Riha (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969), 451-2.

46 For a sample of the various viewpoints advanced on the subject, see *Property*, ed. J. Roland Pennock and John W. Chapman (New York: New York University Press, 1980), and *Property Profits, and Economic Justice*, ed. Virginia Held (Belmont,

The Russian experience before the 1917 revolution brings to light the problem of the establishment of civil rights in a political culture that did not confer high ethical value on the right of property. In early twentieth-century Russia, property rights and civil rights belonged to antagonistic and irreconcilable political doctrines. On one hand, the concept of property rights had become attached to the fate of the tsarist state, which disdained and violated all other rights. On the other, the champions of civil rights, with only a few exceptions, lacked a morally viable concept of property that could sustain individual freedom in the new society. Reflecting the deep political divisions in twentieth-century Russia, the terms of discourse precluded the continuity between old and new forms of property rights that has been achieved in the West. Whether under different historical conditions Russia might have evolved a legal order protecting the rights of all its citizens is an unanswerable question. But the Russian experience, as well as that of most of the non-western world in the twentieth century, belies the assumption that an individual's civil rights can be attained easily when they are not grounded in a prior tradition of respect for his or her right of property.

CA: Wadsworth, 1980). An interesting discussion of the role of private property as a symbol of liberty leading to paradoxes of inequality is found in Jennifer Nedelsky, "American Constitutionalism and the Paradox of Private Property," in *Constitutionalism and Democracy*, ed. Jon Elster and Rune Slagstad (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988).