

P R E F A C E

IN THIS book I have attempted to describe the restless and extraordinary life of a woman whose career fell across one of the great formative periods of modern times. Two presuppositions may be said to underlie its pages. In the first place, I assume that such a career may have an interest in itself; and, in the second place, I assume that a careful biographical analysis will help to reveal the social currents of an age. What I have tried to do, in brief, is to follow Madame de Krüdener from one milieu to another and to make clear both her actions and the intellectual climates which successively enveloped her. To have analyzed these climates with complete thoroughness would, I think, have resulted in a work altogether too ponderous for the frailties of its subject. More than once I have been conscious of the danger which comes from surrounding a very human personality with an alarming mass of critical apparatus. And I have been very keenly aware of the perennial problem of biography—the maintenance of a correct balance between the claims of the individual and of the environment.

The literature on Madame de Krüdener is considerable. At least five biographies have appeared in German, six in French, and one each in Swedish, English, and Russian. Only three of these, the works of Eynard, Mühlenbeck, and Pypin, may be said to have made important original contributions; the rest are derivative. A surprising quantity of pamphlet literature arose from her religious activities, and her acquaintance with contemporaries was so wide that diaries, memoirs, and letters abound in references to her. Her original correspondence for the most part is lost, but the Swiss biographer, Eynard, who published her life in 1849, had access to and printed a great many letters not now to be found. I have been able to see a few surviving letters in Berlin and Paris, from which I gain the im-

pression that Eynard's documents, although subjected to a certain amount of "editing," are substantially correct.¹ A very considerable number of letters have turned up during the nineteenth century and have been published in various periodicals; these enable one to correct and amplify the picture given by Madame de Krüdener's early biographers. In addition to such material, I have been able to consult archival papers at Königsberg, Stuttgart, Karlsruhe, and Paris dealing principally with those unfortunate occasions when Madame de Krüdener was in trouble with the police.

In a biography of this kind one is greatly helped by special studies. The works of Eckardt and Seraphim on Baltic history; of Monglond, Viatte, Haym, Brandes, and Huch on literary problems; of Goyau, Lichtenberger, and Ritschl on religion; of Waliszewski, Schilder, Schiemann, and the Grand Duke Nicholas on Alexander; of Büchler, Schaefer, and Näf on the Holy Alliance have been of the greatest value. Particular reference should be made to A. Viatte's *Sources occultes du romantisme*, in every respect a remarkable work. With the help of this material, both old and new, I have sought to write a biography which would make Madame de Krüdener, not an angel of light or an object of amusement, but an understandable human being.

The form "Madame de Krüdener" I have used throughout in deference to a long tradition and to my subject's own inclinations. Somewhat inconsistently, perhaps, I have used the more accurate German form in writing of her husband and her family. The translations throughout are my own; I have taken some liberties with punctuation, in which Madame de Krüdener's interest was fleeting, but I have not tried to avoid the impression of formlessness and haste which many of the letters give. Russian dates have been brought into conformity with western usage. A fair number of footnotes have reference to books in which the material on Madame de Krüdener is very

¹ For an attempt to evaluate Eynard's documents see the author's article: "An Unpublished Letter of Mme de Krüdener," *The Journal of Modern History*, IX (1937), 483-92.

slight. It would seem needless pedantry to include all these titles in the Bibliography which is, therefore, selective. In the case of works not given in the Bibliography full citations will be found in the footnotes.

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