

Thesis  
1967  
B218a  
cop. 2

OKLAHOMA  
STATE UNIVERSITY  
LIBRARY  
JAN 9 1968

ALEXANDER II AND THE GREAT REFORMS: THE  
TSAR-LIBERATOR'S PERSONAL DISPOSITION  
TOWARD REFORM, AS INTERPRETED BY  
BRITISH AND AMERICAN SCHOLARS  
FROM 1870 TO 1964

Thesis Approved:

*Oliver D. Hoover*  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Thesis Adviser

*Howard L. Knight*  
\_\_\_\_\_

*D. D. Durbin*  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Dean of the Graduate College

658321

## PREFACE

Probably few men have stimulated the diversity of interpretation that clouds the figure of Alexander II, the Tsar-Liberator who ruled Russia during the crucial decades following the Crimean War. Much has been written about the "Period of the Great Reforms", 1855 to 1874. But the over-all scholarship has never been studied systematically to discover what actually is known about Alexander II's personal disposition toward the progressive measures enacted during his reign. The student who falls prey to the alluring concept of the Great Reformer must struggle through volumes of disconcerting facts and conclusions. In the process the enchantment fades, perplexity grows and interest tends to die by indecision.

To help ameliorate some of the frustration, this study has attempted an examination of Alexander's fate at the hands of a specific group of historians, British and American writers whose works include interpretations of the Tsar's disposition and actions during the reform period. The limitations of the thesis identify it as only a first, cautious step toward a comprehensive historiography.

The subject of the study has been limited to Alexander's attitudes through the year of the last major reforms, 1874. After that date the Tsar's interests clearly centered on foreign affairs and the international and domestic threat of socialism. The Tsar of the 1870's operated in a different setting than the Tsar-Liberator of preceding decades, and must be dealt with in a separate study.

Another limitation of the investigation was, as stated above, the number of interpretive works published by British and American writers since the reform period. This study endeavors to include all publications through 1964, a reasonable terminal date. Some of the earliest works were not available, including the first biography of Alexander II, published in 1883. No periodical literature qualified as an interpretive study of the Reformer.

Any broad examination of scholarship carries a momentum toward constant expansion of the scope of treatment, and thereby tends to extend into a diffusive and always incomplete essay. Thus the study was limited to internal criticism of the subject matter, examination of authors' conclusions, comments and supporting data. This should have revealed three things: each writer's over-all attitude toward the Tsar-Liberator --his character and policies; the availability of basic facts relating to the character of the Tsar, and the primary influences that have helped shape the interpretations offered by various scholars.

A question arose about the propriety of treating British and American scholarship as a unit of study, since domestic and international circumstances might have influenced varying attitudes in the two countries. The consideration was extraneous to this thesis except in cases where the content of a work might have tended to reflect such influence. This restriction to internal criticism had to be maintained, or the study would have sprouted trails into a wilderness of biographical and psychological rationale. The primary emphasis would have shifted, unconsciously perhaps, from the Tsar-Liberator to those who wrote about him.

Obviously it would have required a separate paper to explore the many influences affecting each author's treatment of Alexander II. This

is particularly true of some of the works published from 1870 to 1918. This initial period of British and American scholarship comprised writers of diverse backgrounds and interests, many of whom became personally involved in Russian affairs. To complicate the matter further, professional scholarship lacked the uniformity and exclusiveness it generally enjoys today. The field was open to almost anyone who could write well and secure a publisher. Because of this variation in personal skills and in personal involvement in Russian affairs, the text and footnotes of the first chapter include considerable comment about different writers. Those publishing between 1905 and 1918 received special attention. This was the critical period of the historiography. Publications after 1918 received only limited biographical commentary, since after that date the scholarship assumed rather uniform patterns.

Recent scholarship did, however, present a new category: British and American historians of Russian origin. These have published profusely since post-Bolshevik emigration, and some bias might be expected in their attitudes toward both the Old and New Regimes. Also, some émigrés had published while still in Russia and then later adopted their works, perhaps with some modification, into British and American scholarship.

The studies of Russian-born and native scholars are not segregated since the basis format of this thesis automatically reflected any tendency by a group of writers to allow a bias to influence their studies. Excluded, however, were those works that were published in Russia before emigration and later reclaimed. Although this omitted a few well-known studies, it seemed apparent they did not qualify as British or American scholarship.

A practicable format for the thesis was established by the

interpretive patterns of the various studies. Two broad schools were apparent: those writers interpreting Alexander as a "reformer by nature"<sup>6</sup> and those maintaining that he was simply a "reformer by necessity," a Monarch forced to act by events of the time. These two divisions were employed as a basic format to achieve maximum conciseness without misrepresentation of any author's scholarship.

Adapting the schools of interpretation to chapters of the thesis presented a problem of format. The decision on the first chapter rested on three factors: the harmony of attitude among most of those writing before the Bolshevik triumph of 1917; the uncertain qualities of the scholarship produced during the unstable decades between the reform period and the Revolution, and the decline in publications related to the subject between 1918 and 1925. For this reason Chapter I comprises works produced from 1870 to 1918.

Chapters II and III cover the publications of 1919-1964. And again, a natural division exists in the works themselves. General histories of Russia, adhering almost exclusively to one particular school of interpretation, compose the second chapter. Specialized studies, which lean mostly toward the other school, were included in the last chapter, which also contains some general observations about the full range of British and American scholarship on the subject at hand.

I wish to acknowledge gratitude to many whose efforts have produced whatever merit inheres in this study. Its faults are my responsibility; its value is a common property, shared by many. Dr. Gerlof Homan, now at Kansas State College at Pittsburg, provided the stimulation and substance for an academic foundation. Dr. Mort Sloan, formerly at Central State College, Edmond, Oklahoma, convinced me that the life

of a scholar can be exciting if he wishes to make it so. Then, there are the numerous fellow students who provided that invaluable exchange of ideas and attitudes--and were patient when I grew overenthusiastic about my own ideas. Thanks is also due to the excellent staff of the Oklahoma State University Library and to those who have developed the library's service and resources. And then there is the History Department of Oklahoma State. I have learned much from Dr. Knight, Head of the Department, and the Staff. Dr. Alfred Levin, my adviser and my mentor in Russian History, shall always own a considerable part of whatever scholarly character I may possess. His hand was light enough to allow my mind to work, and firm enough to assure direction. His guidance is reflected in any merits of this thesis. Last, I acknowledge that feeling that surpasses precise definition to one who already knows she possesses it--Mrs. Mamie Baird, my Mother.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
I. FROM CRIMEAN WAR TO BOLSHEVIK REVOLUTION: ERA OF THE SYMPATHETIC SCHOLAR . . . . .	1
Alexander, Reformer by Nature . . . . .	2
II. AFTER THE REVOLUTION: INDECISION IN THE BROAD PERSPECTIVE . . . . .	34
Alexander, Reformer by Necessity . . . . .	35
Alexander, Reformer by Nature . . . . .	55
III. AFTER THE REVOLUTION: NARROWING THE SCOPE . . . . .	62
Alexander, Reformer by Necessity . . . . .	63
Alexander, Reformer by Nature . . . . .	76
BIBLIOGRAPHY . . . . .	88

## CHAPTER I

### FROM CRIMEAN WAR TO BOLSHEVIK REVOLUTION: ERA OF THE SYMPATHETIC SCHOLAR

The Crimean War brought an end to the regimentation of Nicholas I and sounded the advent of unprecedented internal flux under the man who later gained the title of Tsar-Liberator. Fundamental reforms followed in the 1860's and early 1870's, along with varying degrees of Governmental reaction as unbridled zeal for reform seized some groups. This basic "reform and reaction" pattern is fairly clear. But the records show no small amount of disagreement about Alexander II's personal role during the period of reform and reaction.

Interpretations of the Tsar-Liberator's character range from unrestrained eulogy to bitterly critical condemnation. Many shades lie between the extremes, but two broad schools of thought can be extracted. First is that group whose works portray Alexander as basically humanitarian, a Monarch whose sensitive disposition blended with other reform ingredients of the time. The second school takes the opposing position: the Tsar was no reformer by training or disposition, but simply responded to the demands of the period. This latter interpretation dominates the scholarship of post-Bolshevik decades, while the sympathetic school monopolizes the first half-century after the Crimean War.

The repercussions of the War stimulated a desire for understanding among a considerable number of Western writers. They were a sympathetic lot, those first observers who looked Eastward, eager to scale

intellectual barriers separating the Lumbering Giant and the West. The new romance with Russia, kindled by the reforms of the Tsar-Liberator, remained passionate throughout some of their lives. With few exceptions the British and American writers who published from 1870 to 1918 left an impressive record of Alexander and his reform character.

#### Alexander, Reformer by Nature

One of the first studies of the "new" Russia is without doubt also the most laudatory and understanding. William Hepworth Dixon, an English writer specializing in "travel accounts", visited throughout Russia in the 1860's, peering into Siberian exile conditions as well as other aspects of the reformed State. The result of his observations, Free Russia, was published in 1870.<sup>1</sup>

Although Dixon praises Alexander throughout his work, he consistently notes both the positive and negative effects of the reforms. In the process the reader glimpses the complexities of national structure and becomes aware that the Tsar had very limited control over the final results of his reform efforts. Dixon points, for example, to a minor reform, Alexander's new law against flogging women in public. The males

---

<sup>1</sup>William Hepworth Dixon, Free Russia (2 vols; London, 1870). One biographical reference cautions the reader that Dixon's work, though "lively, open-minded, and interesting," is usually inaccurate (Stanley J. Kunitz, ed., British Authors in the Nineteenth Century /New York, 1936/, p. 190). See also Moritz Busch, Bismarck: Some Secret Pages of His History (2 vols.; New York, 1898), II, 79-80: Busch refers to Dixon's anti-German articles appearing in a Russian newspaper in 1872. Dixon wrote for popular consumption, and his study, like most popularly oriented works, is considerably lacking in specific detail. Many of his facts are neither dated nor documented, and his conversations with the Russian citizenry are not subject to documentation--this latter point is true of many works covered in this study. Yet, Dixon's main points appear to be valid.

regarded this as invasion of their private rights, and proceeded to devise new methods of publicly shaming rebellious females. In subsequent cases of adultery, women were condemned by a meeting of village patriarchs to be "walked through the village stark naked, in broad daylight . . . . That sentence is executed on a frosty day."<sup>2</sup>

Again, in discussing university reforms, Dixon provides ample illustrations of Alexander's benevolence. Then he observes that even after the abolition of corporate student life (wearing uniforms, appearing en masse for public functions, and the general regimentation involved), many students rebelled against the idea of becoming ordinary citizens. "Some of these young men, professing all the while republican and communistic creeds, are clamoring for their class distinctions, and even hankering for the times when they were 'servants of the Tsar.'"<sup>3</sup>

The author provides a detailed treatment of Alexander's exile policy, insisting that by any standard the Tsar was lenient toward political offenders. Governors were instructed to resort to exile only in flagrant cases, and then only after submitting all facts to St. Petersburg.<sup>4</sup> Those exiled were required, ordinarily, only to report periodically to police headquarters; otherwise they enjoyed freedom to work and carry on normal social functions. One Polish exile in Siberia explained to Dixon that "'No one doubts that the reigning Emperor is a good and brave man; high enough to see his duty, strong enough to face it, even though his feet should have to stumble long and often on the rocks. But God is

---

<sup>2</sup>Dixon, II, 43. Also see pp. 68-69.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 243. Also see p. 245.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 254.

over all, and his Son died for all; Alexander is but an instrument in his hands."<sup>5</sup>

Though Dixon remained sympathetic toward all reforms, he saw the best reflection of the Tsar-Liberator in his capacity to carry through the grinding task of refurbishing a stagnant, stifling Church. In the late 1860's Alexander initiated a fundamental alteration of the increasingly unpopular Church hierarchy. Clerical careers were opened to all, ending the arrogant, closed society created by customary inheritance of clerical positions. The Reformer thus abolished the system by which many youths had been forced into a disagreeable career. In addition he granted full rights of citizenship to priests who wished to abandon the Church and return to secular life. Members of the married clergy were appointed to top Church positions. To round out clerical reform, Alexander approved a law giving the power to boards of teachers and professors to nominate Rectors of Seminaries and Academies.<sup>6</sup>

Dixon outlines Alexander's liberal attitude toward reconciliation of the schism. The Tsar, aware of the extensive influence of the Old Believers in all levels of society, responded as usual to the facts of national life, and not to tradition or Nicholas' policy. Thus in 1858 he presented the Council of Ministers with guidelines for future relations with dissenters, suggesting that everyone be given the benefit of the doubt on points of law.<sup>7</sup> But, Dixon adds, "the Emperor has checked

---

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 100.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., pp. 227ff.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., pp. 339-340.

the persecutor's arm; he has not checked the persecuting spirit."<sup>8</sup> The Holy Synod was quite displeased with Alexander's measure of 1864, which officially recognized the civil and religious rights of dissenters, and obstructed its execution in every manner possible.<sup>9</sup>

Dixon was not disturbed by the fact that the law of 1864 distinguished between the right to believe what one wished and the right to preach that belief and stir the public mind. "Some men may fancy," he says, "that little has been gained so long as toleration stops at free thought, and interdicts free speech. In England or America that would seem true and even trite; but the rules applied to Moscow are not the rules which would be suitable in London or New York. The gain is vast when a man is permitted to say his prayers in peace."<sup>10</sup> As an example Dixon notes that he once remarked to a Russian companion who was a dissenter that a particular church was empty at the time for regular services. The dissenter replied: "'We were driven to church by the police. When God gave us Alexander, we left off going to mass."<sup>11</sup>

The author records that Alexander had gone so far as to propose removal of the ancient ban on dissenters imposed by the Council of the Eastern Churches; but the dissenters felt that any such move had to come from the Council which imposed the ban, not from the Tsar.<sup>12</sup>

By no means did the Reformer's good intentions always assure a good

---

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., pp. 341-342.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., pp. 341-343.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., p. 347.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., p. 348.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., pp. 351-352.

and direct result. That was Dixon's principal thesis in presenting to his readers a Tsar considerate of the self-interests of his subjects and a ruler separated from those subjects by a complex governmental structure through which he had to operate.

With a more-restrained sympathy than that displayed by Dixon, the first landmark in British scholarship concerning Alexander II appeared in 1878 with publication of Donald Mackenzie Wallace's Russia. An expanded edition of the work was published in 1905, with changes consisting almost entirely of new chapters on the revolutionary movement that reached a climax early that year. Throughout his comprehensive study Wallace displays a sympathetic, but scholarly attitude toward Alexander the Reformer, a man about whom he learned much while in Russia from early 1870 to late 1875.<sup>13</sup>

Wallace credits Alexander with the first significant change in the moral character of Imperial Government. But he carefully points out that the Tsar-Liberator entertained no concept of direct popular participation in national government. The impetus for reform came as it had traditionally in Russia--from above. Alexander, an intelligent, fair-minded Emperor, tried to allow as much local initiative as possible in the reform movement. He never lost his conviction, however, that the autocratic power was essential to national stability, and had no intention of establishing any form of Constitutional Monarchy.<sup>14</sup>

---

<sup>13</sup>Sir Donald Mackenzie Wallace, Russia (New York, 1878); Wallace, Russia (2d rev. ed., New York, 1905). "My intention," Wallace states, "was to spend merely a few months in Russia, but I unexpectedly found so many interesting subjects of study that I remained for nearly six years . . . ." (Wallace, Russia /New York, 1878/, p. iii).

<sup>14</sup>Wallace, Russia (1905), pp. 334ff, 394ff, 440ff, 474, 499, 638, 640.

Alexander was without doubt humane, kind-hearted and "imbued with no fanatical belief in the drill-sergeant system of government." At the same time he had no sentimental enthusiasm for liberal institutions, a dispassionate quality which helped him maintain good common sense and detachment in the midst of prevailing excitement.<sup>15</sup> As Wallace traces the reforms, which he ascribes directly to the obvious lessons of the Crimean War, he underscores Alexander's primary traits of restraint and deliberation.<sup>16</sup> The radical forces, the impulsiveness of Russia's educated classes--these, he maintains, were mostly to blame for the restrained reaction that gradually set in from the early 1860's.<sup>17</sup>

A good example of Wallace's consistently sympathetic attitude toward his subject is the treatment of Dmitry Tolstoy's educational reforms after the attempt on Alexander's life in 1866. The author devotes the equivalent of one page to the extremely conservative Minister of Public Instruction who drew considerable criticism from the educated classes and the Russian Council of State. Tolstoy, though identified as a known "pillar of Conservatism," emerges as a rather practical administrator; the overly zealous students are seen as undisciplined, unrestrained idealists.<sup>18</sup>

Wallace displays the same sympathetic understanding toward the dominance of the Zemstvo Provincial Assemblies by the nobility. One District Assembly he attended had a large majority of peasant

---

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., pp. 394-395.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., pp. 402, 450, 526.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., pp. 401, 533ff.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., p. 548.

representatives, while at the Provincial Assembly he found only a few peasant deputies. "The explanation is," Wallace reports, "that the District Assemblies choose their most active members to represent them in the Provincial Assemblies, and consequently the choice generally falls on landed proprietors. To this arrangement the peasants make no objection, for attendance at the Provincial Assemblies demands a considerable pecuniary outlay, and payment to the deputies is expressly prohibited by law."<sup>19</sup>

Comparison of the first and second editions of Russia raises some interesting questions. The second edition fails to repeat some comments on Alexander's character which appeared in the original work. One of these is especially worth noting. When explaining Alexander's attitude toward the Pan-Slavist movement, Wallace concludes:

Alexander II is not only naturally a pacific man, but he is endowed with such a large amount of sober common-sense, and is at the same time so deeply conscious of the enormous responsibility of his position, that he is one of the last men in the world to embark on any grand, fantastic schemes. He has already done great work in his time--work that must forever give his name a very prominent place in European history. . . . He is reported to have said that there will be no more grand reforms in Russia during his reign, and this prediction, whether made by him or invented by others, will in all probability be fulfilled.<sup>20</sup>

Again, in the first edition the author writes candidly of the popular anticipation of Zemstvo political activities. "The government," he declares, "had no intention of conferring on the new institutions any political significance, and very soon showed that it would not allow the assemblies to exert even a moral pressure by means of petitions and

---

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., p. 494.

<sup>20</sup>Russia (1878), p. 607.

political agitation." When the Provincial Assembly of St. Petersburg started to do just that, it was immediately closed by Imperial command, with leading members subsequently "banished for a time from the capital."<sup>21</sup>

In the second edition Wallace takes great care to soften the critical attitude toward the Government evident in his first statements about the Zemstvos. Problems with Zemstvo organizations arose, he explains, from a misunderstanding created by the use in ruling circles of liberal phrases which were fashionable during the post-War enthusiasm. But the Government never seriously considered giving "the child which they were bringing into the world a share in the general government of the country." Wallace now observes that after the closing of the St. Petersburg Assembly, referred to above, some members "were exiled for a time to their homes in the country." And he goes on to explain that in Russia the concept of "His Majesty's Opposition" naturally does not pertain.<sup>22</sup>

The alteration, though slight, serves as the best example of a probable tendency among writers of this period to exercise some degree of self-censorship while striving to promote understanding between England and Russia. Nevertheless, Wallace, through his penetrating study of Russian society and institutions, plunges the reader into a complex world quite different from his own, and thus helps him understand the

---

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., p. 222.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., pp. 498-499. Although the direct influences that prompted Wallace's careful rephrasing are not evident, it seems sufficient to note that he was still active inside Russia in the first decade of the twentieth century. Bernard Pares records that Wallace served as an equerry of King Edward VII in Russia during the Duma period (Sir Bernard Pares, A Wandering Student: the Story of a Purpose /Syracuse, 1948/, pp. 140, 172, 183). Popular political participation in Russian Government would have been an especially sensitive issue in early 1905.

Tsar-Liberator and the undercurrents of the reform period.

Between Wallace's work and Bernard Pares' Russia and Reform, published in 1907, there are several studies containing only brief sketches of the reform period. Russian studies moved toward specialization, and in the process Alexander II gained little attention. Some writers were enthralled by the revolutionary movement and Western influence on that critical development. Other authors began concentrating on Russian foreign affairs and expansion.<sup>23</sup>

The first to follow in Wallace's warm, broad tracks was Bernard

---

<sup>23</sup>Edmund Noble's Russian Revolt, 1885, deals primarily with the influence of the Western enlightenment and the rigid response of autocracy in the pre-reform period. In the work there is only a brief reference to Alexander: progressive events of his reign "seemed to bring Russian civilization to its highest point" (Edmund Noble, The Russian Revolt: Its Cause, Conditions, and Prospects /Boston, 1885/, p. 155). Noble's second work is basically a history of the reform movement, stressing the reaction of the late 1800's. In this study Noble offers a clearer interpretation of Alexander. The Tsar employed "thoughtful habits acquired during a careful course of training, as well as a plan of action not wholly uninspired by the humanitarian ideas of his time. . . . Russia looked to the new monarch for prompt action, and Alexander II (1855-81) began a reign of which the first half was to be liberal and the second reactionary . . . ." (Edmund Noble, Russia and the Russians /New York, 1900/, p. 123). Noble generally ascribes reform to a broad progressive momentum: "Russian progress may be slow . . . . But it will be none the less inevitable. The great movements of sociological advance, retarded as they may be by individual interest, finally carry Tsars as well as nations along with them," providing hope for a Russian "'government for the people, of the people, and by the people . . . ." (ibid., p. 273; also see pp. 136, 140-154). Elizabeth Latimer, an American authoress specializing in popular "histories of the nineteenth century," leaves no doubt that Nihilism was responsible for any reaction during Alexander II's reign. The writer declares that when Alexander ascended the throne, he "wanted to make everyone about him happy . . . ." (Elizabeth Wormeley Latimer, Russia and Turkey in the Nineteenth Century /5th ed., Chicago, 1899/, pp. 170, 182). Albert Beveridge's Russian Advance deals chiefly with eastward expansion in the late nineteenth century, but its background sketches reflect sympathy for the Russian Government and people. The Emancipation Act is viewed as a stupendous feat of autocratic statesmanship in the interest of human liberty, which expressed through Alexander II the thought of the Russian nation (Albert J. Beveridge, The Russian Advance /New York, 1903/, pp. 9, 320-321).

Pares, the Englishman whose extensive involvement in Russian affairs after the turn of the century provided access to the vital substance that permeates his work. The excellent organization of Pares' first publication, Russia and Reform, enables the reader immediately and unmistakably to classify the author as a Russophile in his attitudes toward Alexander II:

The Emperor Alexander, who had learnt /sic/ his ideas of humanity from his tutor, the kindly poet Zhukovsky, was by nature a man of generous heart and vague but noble aspirations. Devoted to the memory of his father, he was yet open to the impressions which might reach him from all sides; and even his lack of strong personality made him all the more able to reflect the mood of the nation. He continued the war until peace could be made with honour, and then had the moral courage to put himself at the head of his people as he found it.<sup>24</sup>

The reform, Pares continues, grew out of apparent national weakness, and was carried through by the Tsar and a small, enlightened minority. Then as reform energies dissipated before an irresponsible press and "Nihilism", the reformers, including Alexander, grew less resolute.<sup>25</sup> Still, "Alexander II gave to Russia her first education in responsible freedom."<sup>26</sup> Reforms were generous and practical in scope, but simply could not continue in full strength against "Nihilism", a "form of hysteria" which finally led to Alexander's murder and thus "pushed Russia back from the path of progress into the stupid cycle of revolution

---

<sup>24</sup>Bernard Pares, Russia and Reform (London, 1907), pp. 49-50. In Pares' case there are three publications to consider. Although two fall into the scope of the first chapter, one exhibits a change of attitude toward the reforms and cannot be included in the Reformer-by-Nature school. It should be noted that Pares depended to a great extent on broad studies by other writers for his information on the reform period. This is true of all scholars after Wallace.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid., pp. 50ff.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid., pp. 197ff.

and repression."<sup>27</sup> Reaction began with Alexander III.

Pares severely criticizes the censorship of the press that began in 1861, but tones down his disappointment with a detailed analysis of the complexity of censorship operations in Russia during the period of unrestrained enthusiasm for reform. Again the final verdict is that radical events of the 1860's were primarily responsible for the severity of censorship.<sup>28</sup> Alexander realized that publicity was indispensable; but he also felt that in Russia discussion in a free press usually took "'a bad direction,'"<sup>29</sup>

Pares rarely deviates from a positive evaluation of the reforms. For example, he felt that Alexander's Zemstvo law implied "a policy of trust and of hope." It was only natural that primary direction of the Zemstvo would be placed in the hands of the nobility. Peasant representation was entirely just, but peasants who might involve themselves in District Assemblies "would not be likely to wish to serve" at the more distant Provincial Assemblies.<sup>30</sup> Pares reaches the same general level of optimism in examining the effects of emancipation on the peasant.<sup>31</sup>

As with Wallace's Russia, Pares' work provides a comprehensive view of Russian traditions, institutions, and profound sense of

---

<sup>27</sup>Ibid., pp. 290-291.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., pp. 280ff.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid., p. 282.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid., p. 368. Pares does not document this explanation, but its similarity to Wallace's is quite apparent. *Supra* pp. 7-8. Pares was familiar with Wallace's work.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid., pp. 418ff.

morality. All this aids in an understanding of the man Alexander II. Pares, for example, includes information about the sport of love-making in which the educated male society boisterously indulged. This offers a better perspective of Alexander's affair with Catherine Dolgoruky, a central event which tends to cloud the character of the Tsar-Liberator.<sup>32</sup> Through Pares' lucid examples of normal human passion and weakness, he consistently reveals his sympathy for Tsar and people who struggled to control the pace of change in Russia and to adapt to it. The author's feeling runs so strongly he does not hesitate to castigate England for her distrustful attitude and lack of understanding toward Russia.<sup>33</sup>

The works of Dixon, Wallace and Pares provide a soothing panorama of Russia during the period of reform, but, in general, they fail to reveal the personal attitudes of Alexander II through specific detail. Alexander seems, as yet, too much a part of a "movement," too integrated into the reforms themselves. The man barely stands out. He does begin, however, to assume a personality in 1908, with publication of the first attempt at a biographical study of the Tsar-Liberator.

E. A. Brayley Hodgetts' Court of Russia renders two basic services. First is the insights it offers into the extensive court intrigue of the period and into its influence on the Tsar. Next, Hodgetts exposes, for the first time in British and American scholarship, Alexander the boy

---

<sup>32</sup>Ibid., p. 322ff.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid., pp. 56, 419. The urge to berate the mother country for her attitude toward Russia was strong among British scholars. One, in fact, accused the entire West of engaging in "a conspiracy of slander" against progressive, liberal Russia (Charles Sarolea, Great Russia, Her Achievement and Promise /New York, 1916/, p. 215).

and heir.<sup>34</sup>

The precocious heir, Hodgetts relates, assumed royal duties on his sixth birthday in April, 1818 by announcing the amounts of gratuities given at his military birthday review. From that time his active involvement in government never ceased. Nicholas ascended the throne when Alexander was eight, and took great care to develop in his heir those qualities essential to the times: self-reliance and lack of egotism. At the same time Alexander's mother, through Zhukovsky, "a liberal poet," instilled in him refinement and dedication to humanity.<sup>35</sup> While Hodgetts quotes numerous witnesses to show that Alexander did develop into a sensitive, intelligent youth, he also reveals that the austerity of

---

<sup>34</sup>E. A. Brayley Hodgetts, The Court of Russia in the Nineteenth Century (2 vols.; New York, 1908). Hodgetts was not a well-known scholar, although his work extends back to the 1880's, when he translated the memoirs of a Russian official (see Allibone's Dictionary of English Literature and British and American Authors, A Supplement /3 vols.; Philadelphia, 1908/, II, 832). Hodgetts' reviewers gave the Court of Russia a rather low rating, pointing out the author's minor errors, his inconsistency and particularly the fact that he had added nothing new to the over-all record. But this evaluation is misleading to a great extent. In 1908 Hodgetts work was overshadowed by those of the giants--Pares, Wallace, Baring, and others--who were calling attention to the sensational issue of the decade, the revolutionary movement in Russia. Unfortunately, Hodgetts' work failed to emphasize the revolutionary atmosphere, although it did take his readers through the Russo-Japanese War. As for the work's error, those evident in sections covering the reform period are quite minor. In some cases the dating is wrong, in others the actors of the period appear to be misrepresented--e.g., it has been pointed out by other scholars that Zhukovsky was no "liberal." It is true, as the critics note, that Hodgetts employed a popular style; in fact the general tone is rather gossipy. But it should be considered that the popular style was quite common at the time, and that the exact meaning of the word "liberal" was still subject to debate. Above all, it should be noted that Hodgetts, for the first time, integrated considerable non-English language data into British and American scholarship--and footnoted his use of sources, a rare practice at the time. It would appear that Hodgetts deserved a better fate than he met at the hands of his peers. His work has been ignored completely by subsequent scholarship.

<sup>35</sup>Hodgetts, II, 3ff.

Nicholas' training program had a significant impact on the heir's health and temperament.<sup>36</sup>

The author gives special attention to the underlying philosophy of Zhukovsky's educational plan for Alexander, which was accepted by Nicholas. This is the basic guideline to which the youth was exposed during his formative years:

Opinions may be rebellious when the Government is oppressive or indifferent; but public opinion will always be on the side of the just sovereign. Love liberty, that is to say, justice, for therein lies the mercy of Emperors and the freedom of peoples; freedom and order are one and the same thing; the Emperor's love of freedom will confirm his subjects in their loyalty. Rule by order, not by might; the true power of a sovereign does not consist of the number of his warriors, but in the well-being of his people. . . . Do not allow thyself to be deceived, but keep within thee the idea of the beautiful--have faith in virtue! That faith is the faith in God! It will protect thy soul from becoming contemptuous of mankind, which is so disastrous for a ruler of men!<sup>37</sup>

After the Tsarevitch ascended the throne, according to Hodgetts, he continued to be fair-minded, resolute and composed, following the course he had set for himself. His "calm, unruffled, slightly dreamy composure" tended, however, to evoke distrust and resentment in some.<sup>38</sup> Hodgetts

---

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., pp. 17ff, 222.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., pp. 11-12.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., p. 46. Here Hodgetts refers to a common theme in literature concerning Alexander: he often is characterized as "indolent." Although his appearance usually conveys a somewhat dreamy composure, it is doubtful that this is the source of the theme. The idea can be traced back to the comments of various European diplomats, some of whom apparently adhered to the "science" of phrenology. Vitzthum von Eckstaedt, the Saxon Minister to St. Petersburg, for example, met Alexander in the summer of 1853, and reports that he was "an amiable, good-hearted man, whose weakness of character was revealed in his large but expressionless eyes. The contour of his head seemed to me to betoken even less promise than did that of his father's. For natures such as his, a greater misfortune can scarcely happen than to be called to rule a State like

quotes witnesses to bear out his statements about Alexander; the same thorough documentation continues as he examines the Tsar's reform activity.

The study reflects a practical, skillful director of reform measures. Throughout the period Alexander carefully balanced opposing factions to assure moderation and continuing progress. Hodgetts, in a detailed examination of liberal and conservative court cliques, stresses the role of prominent liberals in Alexander's achievement of meaningful reform. But he holds that conservative court influences had little to do with any suppressive measures employed by the Tsar; these were simply traditional methods, usually the only solutions to problems confronting the Reformer. Reaction in a real sense set in only after Alexander's assassination.<sup>39</sup>

Noting that the "Nihilists" comprised little more than "a mob of immature school boys and girls" trying to assume sophistication, the author points out that Alexander, with his understanding nature, rarely treated even his most radical opponents as criminals. Those arrested or exiled usually lived quite normal lives. Even in Peter-Paul fortress "one of the finest libraries in the world was at their disposal."<sup>40</sup> It

---

Russia" (Count Charles Vitzthum von Eckstaedt, St. Petersburg and London in the Years 1852-1864, tr. Edward F. Taylor /2 vols.; London, 1887/, I, 50). In discussing Nicholas I, von E. observed that "the occiput, where the phrenologists look for strength of will, seemed unusually developed . . ." (Ibid., p. 15).

<sup>39</sup>Hodgetts, II, 98ff, 110ff, 120-121, 200, 240ff, 250ff.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid., p. 130. Hodgetts seems to contradict himself in a few sentences describing Alexander's lack of concern about others' attitudes. The Tsar "had too little of the Panslavist about him to be seriously affected. When you start by despising your subjects, and regarding them as half-witted and untrustworthy savages, you can scarcely feel much

was not Alexander's lack of understanding that impeded reforms, but that of the radicals.

The interest in specialization, as displayed by Hodgetts, intensified during the first decade of the twentieth century. The revolutionary trend continued to command the attention of most scholars as the conservative reaction succeeded in controlling the Duma. A few writers, however, managed to detach themselves from the excitement, or disappointment, surrounding the Duma and dig further into the foundations of emerging Russia.

Robert Latimer's Under Three Tsars and Thomas Darlington's Education in Russia appeared in 1909. James Mavor's Economic History followed in 1914. The three works brought new perspectives of the reform legislation by delving more thoroughly into three of its components, religious freedom, educational change and economic development.

Latimer was highly laudatory of Alexander II: "Hideously dark was the night, before the welcome morning of Alexander II's Coronation broke over the realm."<sup>41</sup> The Tsar-Liberator brought personal conviction to the throne and slowly effected religious freedom for dissenters. Despite the reaction following the assassination attempt of 1866, the new

---

disappointment if they behave as you imagined you had reason to believe they would" (Ibid., pp. 120-121). These statements fit uncomfortably into Hodgetts' general evaluation of Alexander. What he seems to say at this point is that the Tsar remained emotionally detached from his subjects, and thus could operate dispassionately. In any case, however, the reader is assured that this attitude does not detract from the Tsar's kind, fair nature.

<sup>41</sup>Robert Sloan Latimer, Under Three Tsars: Liberty of Conscience in Russia, 1856-1909 (New York, 1909), p. 48. Latimer, A British religious Fundamentalist, based his study on personal relations with Russian religious leaders, secondary sources and extensive use of Russian periodical literature. He documents his statements.

liberty of conscience continued until 1881, "when the nation was plunged again into the hideous night."<sup>42</sup>

The author carries this theme through some seventy-five pages while tracing the development of religious freedom among minority groups, and offers numerous specific examples of Alexander's humane character.<sup>43</sup>

"Inspired by noble sentiments and gifted with a practical mind," the Tsar allowed the fullest possible extent of toleration.<sup>44</sup>

Besides the additional illustrations of Alexander's attitude and personal actions, Latimer's examination of the various sects and their relationships with the Tsar further elaborates the disconcerting effects of the activities of the bureaucracy situated between the Crown and implementation of Imperial reform. Alexander emerges as an Emperor with whom many had to deal personally to secure justice. Latimer gives the reader a rare glimpse of the sense of attrition that Alexander apparently experienced during the reform period.<sup>45</sup>

Thomas Darlington's findings closely parallel those of Latimer, but the latter can hardly compare in depth of scholarship with the author of Education in Russia. Darlington's exhaustive study of Russia's long, trial-and-error development of educational policy still remains one of

---

<sup>42</sup>Ibid., p. 123. Also see p. 52.

<sup>43</sup>Ibid., pp. 64, 67, 89ff, 99.

<sup>44</sup>Ibid., p. 52.

<sup>45</sup>Latimer's general theme resembles the Slavophil concept of the Little Father, mediator and protector of the masses; but Latimer reflects a reality of the time, not Slavophil ideology. Alexander fully realized his position as the stabilizing arbiter among the various levels of society during the uncertain transitory stage through which Russia was passing.

the few good histories of the subject.<sup>46</sup>

The Alexander who takes shape behind the flow of Darlington's pen is a capable, progressive leader in modernization of Russia's most crucial institutions. To accent this fact, the author periodically compares Russian educational innovation with that of other countries to place it in proper perspective. The impression is quite favorable toward Alexander's reform measures and the manner in which they were effected.<sup>47</sup> While thoroughly examining the reactionary response to the radicalism of the early 1860's, Darlington continues to stress over-all positive reform. He underscores the considerable freedom of public and official debate over educational matters.<sup>48</sup>

The University Statute of 1863, the author notes, was the first in Russia to lay real stress on "learning for its own sake," rather than to prepare youths for certain stations in life.<sup>49</sup> The liberal measure, signed by Alexander in June, 1863, was implemented despite the university disorders, widespread arson, revolutionary literature and Polish Rebellion of the early 1860's. Even after 1866 and Dmitry Tolstoy's ascension, Alexander did not approve alteration of the 1863 Statute until student disorders in the autumn of 1874 forced his hand.<sup>50</sup>

---

<sup>46</sup>Thomas Darlington, Education in Russia (Great Britain Board of Education, "Special Reports on Educational Subjects," Vol. 23 /London, 1909/). Darlington, an English Inspector of Schools, became familiar with the Russian language, historical resources and officialdom through several long visits to that country. His study is based on both primary and secondary materials.

<sup>47</sup>Ibid., p. 112.

<sup>48</sup>Ibid., pp. 87-89, passim.

<sup>49</sup>Ibid., p. 92ff.

<sup>50</sup>Ibid., pp. 97-98.

With frequent minor criticism, Darlington carries the same enthusiasm throughout his examination of the Elementary School Act of 1864 and the extensive reform of education for females.<sup>51</sup> Tolstoy's activities, especially his promotion of classicism, receive thorough, dispassionate treatment. Though Darlington admits that classical education could have been used as mere intellectual gymnastics, he also holds that study of classical antiquity could have acted as the government intended, as a sophisticating restraint on the impulsive abstractionism prevalent among university youths.<sup>52</sup>

From prolonged immersion in his subject, Darlington draws an explicit conclusion about the role of Alexander II:

The accession of Alexander II inaugurated a new era in the educational as well as in the social and political history of Russia. The 'Tsar Liberator' was cast in a very different mould from his predecessor. Broad in his sympathies, enlightened and progressive in his policy and devoted to humanitarian ideals, he was in every respect a fit instrument for the accomplishment of the epoch-making changes which will ever remain associated with his name. He ascended the throne in the very crisis of the need, as well as of the opportunity, for reform.<sup>53</sup>

James Mavor's Economic History is no less sympathetic. This is a penetrating analysis of socio-economic complexities of reform. Only in the process of emancipation does the author provide insight into Alexander's character, but this is to be expected since the work concentrates on economic reform and is concerned only secondarily with other developments of the period. The writer refers briefly to the Tsarevitch Alexander's participation in peasant reform efforts in the early 1840's,

---

<sup>51</sup>Ibid., pp. 102ff, 124ff.

<sup>52</sup>Ibid., pp. 106, 111-124, 400.

<sup>53</sup>Ibid., p. 87.

identifying the young heir as a "liberal influence," but providing no examples for substantiation.<sup>54</sup> From this point Mavor skips to the post-Crimean War period. In court circles, he relates, Alexander was recognized as a defender of the nobles' privileges, specifically as an opponent of the application of inventories to the western provinces. Outside the court, however, the public usually regarded the new Monarch as a person of "liberal tendency."<sup>55</sup>

Mavor draws heavily from Kornilov's study of emancipation while pursuing the advancement toward the Act of 1861. Alexander emerges very clearly as a man determined to achieve a practicable reform measure, balancing conservative and liberal factions to assure progress, and commanding progressive resolution when necessary. Once, in response to a lack of desired initiative from the nobility, Alexander "found it necessary to attempt to counteract their influence by going into the provinces and delivering a series of speeches urging the completion of the task to which he had set himself."<sup>56</sup> In committee deliberations, the Tsar allowed almost unrestricted freedom of discussion and resolution. He was, as the author depicts him, a skillful Monarch.<sup>57</sup>

Mavor's account of revolutionary trends after 1861 is thorough, but

---

<sup>54</sup>James Mavor, An Economic History of Russia (2 vols., 2d rev. ed.; New York, 1925), I, 372. The History contains minor errors, but these hardly detract from the value of the massive detail it incorporates into British scholarship. The work represents an attempt at an exhaustive search through Russian sources. Mavor was, at the time, at the Univ. of Toronto; his work can be classified as British in the broad sense.

<sup>55</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 376. "Inventories" were regulations specifying the mutual obligations of serf and landlord.

<sup>56</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 397.

<sup>57</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 405ff, 411-414.

provides no information about direct actions of the Tsar. After the Polish Rebellion of 1863 there ensued "two years of extreme reaction, during which the ameliorating influences of the emancipation were largely neutralized . . ."<sup>58</sup> After the attempt on Alexander's life in 1866, "reaction with suppression, voluntary or compulsory, of all oppositional forces, whether revolutionary or otherwise, intervened for nearly three years; and, as before, once again ardent and reckless spirits made their appearance to continue the attack against the Government."<sup>59</sup> To Mavor, as to others of the sympathetic school, radical activities were basically responsible for undermining the reform movement.

The further the Era of Sympathetic Understanding progressed toward the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917, the more repetitive it became in presenting detail about the character of the Tsar-Liberator. The reservoir of facts, both favorable and unfavorable, seems to have been nearly drained by the first decade of the new century. Scholars turned increasingly from exploration of the reform period and the reform character of the Tsar to analysis of the twentieth-century struggle for popular control of government in Russia. The people of Russia, not the autocratic Government, began to command the attention, and the sympathy, of Western writers.

Many scholars were on the scene in Russia, observing the defensive manipulations of Nicholas II. And very few held any affection for the last Tsar. Previously, the writers had championed Russia, the Nation, against Western hostility, or at least Western distrust. Now they began

---

<sup>58</sup>Mavor, II, p. 74.

<sup>59</sup>Ibid.

to champion the Russian people in their struggle with the Government.

The last comprehensive sympathetic study of the pre-Bolshevik era, Maurice Baring's The Russian People, reflects the shift in sympathy. Baring observed the disappointing Duma movement of 1906, and according to his astute companion, Bernard Pares, he gained a "more acute understanding of Russian nature and character than any foreigner I have known and almost any Russian. Baring's simple and clear vision had made the discovery that the greatest gentleman in Russia is the underdog soldier or peasant, and that was where he found his natural mates."<sup>60</sup>

Baring introduces Alexander II as an Emperor who began to rule with the firm purpose of completing the peasant reform initiated by his predecessors. But he was equally firm in insisting on the voluntary cooperation of the nobility. Essentially the picture Baring paints of the Reformer is that of an open-minded, fair leader responding willingly to the needs of the time and to a broad concensus of public and governmental opinion.

In a detailed treatment of emancipation, Baring provides the familiar details of Alexander's role--his initiation of reform deliberations, the application of pressure when needed to secure cooperation of the nobility, the Tsar's trip through the interior in late 1858 to stimulate reform sentiment, and the strategic appointment of various individuals to maintain balance and compromise during deliberations.<sup>61</sup> It

---

<sup>60</sup>Pares, A Wandering Student, p. 132. Also see pp. 140, 149.

<sup>61</sup>Maurice Baring, The Russian People (London, 1911), pp. 223-231. Baring wrote several books about Russia, but this is the only one providing detail on the reform period. For a better understanding of Baring himself, see his A Year in Russia (rev. ed.; London, 1917). Baring also provides a concise statement of his sentiment in the Introduction to

is emphasized, however, that "the emancipation reform, the manner in which it was drafted and modified during the process of drafting, affords us striking evidence that at the crucial moments of Russian history it is public opinion which is ultimately the real sovereign power."<sup>62</sup>

Baring analyzes the results of emancipation by thoroughly examining the mir, Zemstvo and revolutionary movement, but includes few direct references to Alexander. Throughout, he maintains sympathetic understanding of governmental policy while pointing out reform weaknesses.<sup>63</sup> In creating the Zemstvo, Baring concludes, Alexander simply returned to the old idea initiated by Catherine II and developed it.<sup>64</sup>

Citing the broad studies of other scholars, the author introduces the idea that "the legislators . . . distrusted the landed proprietors, and so greatly feared that they might retain their local power that the Zemstvo was not allowed a free hand, even in its own area of jurisdiction." Baring remarks that this idea may or may not be true, but he maintains that the Zemstvos were "meant to culminate in central political representation. But . . . the brutal murder of Alexander II, the liberator of the serfs, by the Nihilists, delayed all attempts to bring about this consummation."<sup>65</sup> During the 1860's, the author continues, a

---

The Russian People: "Although I cannot vie in research and erudition with my predecessors and fellow-workers in the same field, . . . I can at least claim that knowledge which arises from sympathy with the people whose story, characteristics, and significance I will endeavour to indicate" (p. xi). The author's study of the reform period draws heavily from comprehensive studies by French and Russian scholars.

<sup>62</sup>The Russian People, p. 226.

<sup>63</sup>Ibid., pp. 237-240, 255ff.

<sup>64</sup>Ibid., p. 247.

<sup>65</sup>Ibid., pp. 251-252.

weak, wavering public opinion had curtailed the movement toward central political representation.<sup>66</sup> Clearly, to Baring, Alexander remained a reformer until death.

There were, however, other scholars who were having second-thoughts about the matter. Changes in attitude began developing toward the Old Regime in general after the Revolution of 1905. The popular effort to control the Duma was thwarted by the Government of Nicholas II, and the subsequent disillusionment is reflected in the works produced during the period.

Bernard Pares' second work appeared as a chapter in The Cambridge Modern History, and his sympathy for the Old Regime had abated noticeably. Pares allied himself with the liberal political reform movement of the Duma period, becoming quite critical of what he considered the reactionary policy of the Government. His lack of detachment could hardly have failed to influence his chapter in the Cambridge History. The contrast with his earlier work is too strong.<sup>67</sup>

---

<sup>66</sup>Ibid., pp. 252-253. E. J. Dillon agrees with Baring on the point of intended central political representation (E. J. Dillon, The Eclipse of Russia /New York, 1918/, p. 38). Dillon took up residence in Russia from the early 1870's, and became actively involved in the unfolding of the revolution. Still in Russia during the Duma period, he drew suspicion from Pares and other English observers by his rather noncritical support of the autocracy--"he suddenly and unexpectedly became the mouthpiece of the opportunist Count Witte," evidently after receiving bribes from the Government (Pares, A Wandering Student, pp. 132-133). Perhaps Dillon's pro-Government position explains his sympathy for Alexander II and his antagonism toward radicalism, to which he assigns the blame for snatching Russia from the path of practicable reform (Dillon, Eclipse, p. 38ff).

<sup>67</sup>Bernard Pares, "Reaction and Revolution in Russia," The Cambridge Modern History, Vol. XII, The Latest Age, ed. A. W. Ward, et. al. (2d ed., New York, 1917). For a candid record of Pares' attitude toward the Government of Nicholas II, see A Wandering Student, pp. 119ff, 128ff, 148, 159ff, 168-169. For an excellent biographical sketch of Pares, see

Pares still felt that emancipation, a "liberal" settlement, was carried through "entirely from above and by a great effort of public spirit on the part of the sovereign." But Alexander "was not a strong man" and naturally "sank back into his old surroundings" after the ordeal of pushing through the Act of 1861. Only the strength of public opinion and the new status of the peasant produced subsequent reforms.<sup>68</sup>

In sketching the reforms, Pares accents their weaknesses and the Government's infractions of the new laws, especially the press law of 1865.<sup>69</sup> He indicates that, without doubt, severe "Government" suppression and panic set in after 1866. Tolstoy's educational reforms are interpreted as sheer stifling reaction.<sup>70</sup>

While surveying the reaction of Government officials, Pares has little to say about Alexander's personal attitude or activities. He provides a detailed summary of the revolutionary movement of the 1860's and 1870's, in which he emphasizes the general lack of compromising spirit by all elements. "While the Government became more reactionary," he asserts, "the educated classes became increasingly revolutionary."<sup>71</sup> In the 1860's the Government failed to perceive the limited extent of nihilism, for "there existed no strong body of central and moderating opinion to mediate between reactionary and revolutionary thought."<sup>72</sup>

---

the Introduction, by his son, to Pares' History of Russia; this work will be discussed in the next chapter.

<sup>68</sup>Pares, "Reaction and Revolution in Russia," p. 294.

<sup>69</sup>Ibid., p. 295.

<sup>70</sup>Ibid., pp. 295, 298.

<sup>71</sup>Ibid., p. 296.

<sup>72</sup>Ibid., p. 297.

This weakness was maintained by Alexander's refusal to grant a form of national assembly. "Thus isolated from the public the Government went on towards the great catastrophe," led by Count Dmitry Tolstoy.<sup>73</sup>

Pares admits that "this negative record does not cover the whole life of a nation full of tension after the promise and inception of far-reaching reforms."<sup>74</sup> Still, the record he presents contains little of the image of a capable, progressive Tsar-Liberator.

The change of attitude among Pares and his companions in Russia is reflected again in Harold Williams' Russia of the Russians, published in 1915. Williams, a reporter for the Manchester Guardian, was married to a Russian who was a prominent member of Miliukov's liberal Constitutional Democrat Party. The Government considered Williams unreliable, but still allowed him inside the country after publication of his book.<sup>75</sup>

Russia of the Russians concentrates on cultural developments and contains less than a half-dozen pages dealing with the reform period and Alexander II. The lack of detail makes the author's conclusions even more significant. Without apparent reason, Williams accepts the interpretation that Alexander was Conservative by nature. The Tsar's resolution in carrying through emancipation was quite remarkable, Williams holds, since he "was not a reformer by instinct or training, but was

---

<sup>73</sup>Ibid., p. 298.

<sup>74</sup>Ibid., p. 301-302. In this brief work, the reader can hardly avoid the feeling that Pares, still working for understanding between Britain and Russia and for stability and progress inside Russia, was pleading for the Russian Government to heed his points and avoid a calamity.

<sup>75</sup>Pares, A Wandering Student, pp. 181ff, 217. Pares, in describing British writers present at the First Duma in 1906, states: "Harold Williams . . . was much the most effective of all, though the humblest"; he was the greatest British scholar ever sent to Russia (Ibid., p. 132).

simply convinced of the political necessity of the measure."<sup>76</sup>

Williams provides the usual sketch of radical revelry during the 1860's, stating that Alexander soon grew weary of reform and alarmed at the social agitation provoked by the reform effort. After 1866, "no further reforms were granted, repressive measures were directed against the press and the Zemstvos, and the police powers of the governors were expanded."<sup>77</sup> Williams, even more sharply than Pares, broke away from the sympathetic school.

The final termination of the Era of Sympathetic Understanding was sealed by the last significant work produced during the period. In 1918 three British historians published the first scholarly effort in England to produce a basic text of Russian history, Russia: from the Varangians to the Bolsheviks, by Raymond Beazley, Nevill Forbes and G. A. Birkett. The title is misleading since the work extends only through the abdication of Nicholas II in March, 1917. The latter part of the study, including the reform period, was written by G. A. Birkett. Though his limited bibliography lists no important materials that had not been employed by previous authors, Birkett's conclusions contrast rather sharply with the predominant pattern of those preceding him.

The author finds that Alexander's reforms sprang entirely from the demands of the time, as revealed by the results of the Crimean War. Nicholas' successor was no born reformer, declares Birkett. He had, in fact, become "a warm admirer of his father's policy, especially after 1848, and constantly defended serf-right and the privileges of the

---

<sup>76</sup>Harold Whitmore Williams, Russia of the Russians (New York, 1915), p. 43.

<sup>77</sup>Ibid., pp. 45ff.

gentry."<sup>78</sup> Birkett provides only one illustration to support his conclusion. He notes that in the late 1840's, Alexander had opposed the extension of the inventory to the Baltic provinces and Lithuania.<sup>79</sup> No other details of Alexander's background are listed by the author.

The study traces the lifting of restrictions after the Crimean War, and observes that Alexander had no definite program through which to implement the vague reforms he began publicly suggesting. To Birkett, the Tsar simply realized that the question of serfdom had to be resolved, and began stimulating action on the matter.

The author's superficial examination of emancipation and its results is quite critical. A slightly more optimistic view of the Zemstvo appears, along with praise for legal reforms. He awards a low rating to Alexander's educational policy. Birkett gives two pages to educational reform to 1866 and three to Tolstoy's reactionary policy after the assassination attempt.

Throughout the study, Alexander plays a conservative role. He was "inspired by a sincere desire to help the country forward, and as a reformer he was enthusiastically supported by his people. But unfortunately he held firmly to the old administrative system, and by trusting bureaucratic institutions to carry out liberal reforms, and denying any share in their preparation to the people whose vital interests they concerned, he lowered very considerably the value of the reforms and came

---

<sup>78</sup>Raymond Beazley, Nevill Forbes, G. A. Birkett, Russia: from the Varangians to the Bolsheviks (London, 1918), p. 425. Pares, who carefully notes those involved in Russian studies at the time, does not include these three writers in his record. So far as I can determine, Birkett was rather inactive in Russian affairs. He does not appear to have been involved inside Russia.

<sup>79</sup>Ibid., p. 402.

into sharp conflict with public opinion."<sup>80</sup>

As examples of Alexander's traditional attitude Birkett cites the refusal to allow the gentry free expression of their views on emancipation after the Tsar summoned them to St. Petersburg in 1859.<sup>81</sup> And Alexander's subsequent response to the liberal Tver nobility receives some attention. The Tsar, Birkett concludes, began turning toward reaction in 1861. Nicholas Miliutin was dismissed to appease conservatives. The aristocratic P. A. Valuev replaced Sergei Lanskoj as the Minister of Interior.<sup>82</sup> Still, after Birkett outlines the radical movement of the early 1860's he observes that "the Government declared that its policy would be 'neither weakness nor reaction', and proceeded with necessary reforms."<sup>83</sup>

In Birkett's special section on Governmental reaction, he includes few specific details on Alexander's attitude or actions. No new facts appear. The author tends to approach the Reformer through broad conclusions about the reforms. He notes, for example, that Alexander opposed the Council of State in approving Tolstoy's educational reforms, and then states that the new secondary school system "was intended to lower the general standard of knowledge, to deaden thought, and check the development of wide cultural interests, by providing a course of mere mental drill."<sup>84</sup> As another example he cites the successful effort of

---

<sup>80</sup>Ibid., pp. 439-440.

<sup>81</sup>Ibid., p. 440.

<sup>82</sup>Ibid., p. 441.

<sup>83</sup>Ibid., p. 444.

<sup>84</sup>Ibid., p. 446.

the gentry to gain Alexander's disapproval of Tolstoy's attempt to place elementary school boards under Government control.<sup>85</sup> Thus Birkett reveals a Tsar executing his basic function of approving or disapproving certain courses of action. Logically, and legally, it follows that the Tsar can be held responsible for the consequences of all acts of government during the period.

The weakness of this whole approach is, of course, that it conceals Alexander the man, his attitudes, his deliberation. The reader sees only the hand of the Tsar sweeping, with well-worn pen, across cold documents.

Scholars of the early period, both sympathetic and critical, have revealed very little about what happened behind the scenes after the Emancipation Act of 1861. Even Darlington's exhaustive study failed to provide any clear insight into Alexander's attitudes toward educational reforms. This lack of detail after the Act of 1861 is the reason this study has utilized indirect methods of ascertaining an author's attitudinal pattern toward the concept of the Tsar-Liberator--determining the author's response toward certain aspects of the reforms themselves. Birkett, for example, reveals a degree of objective scholarship on the question of peasant representation to the new Zemstvos. He concludes that the gentry held a dominant position "since they alone, by education and previous experience were fitted to take an active part in public work." He goes on to say that even the peasants elected many of their representatives from the gentry class.<sup>86</sup>

---

<sup>85</sup>Ibid., p. 447.

<sup>86</sup>Ibid., p. 448.

The question of Zemstvo representation has been a major point of contention for those who have tried to determine the "fairness" of the Zemstvo law. A fair law, it is assumed, would indicate a fair disposition in the governing powers. But, to repeat the point for the sake of clarity, such an examination displays only a degree of objective scholarship by the particular writer involved. The fairness of Zemstvo representation reveals absolutely nothing about Alexander's personal disposition toward reform.

The most prominent example of this tendency to judge Alexander's character by broad generalization lies in the period before 1861: the question of applying the inventory to the Western provinces. On the base of this policy some writers have felt free to declare the new Tsar a defender of the nobility and a conservative by nature. Yet, not even James Mavor's specialized study offered any reasons for the heir's action. The only explanation offered by any writer is another broad generalization--Alexander was simply responding to the European Revolutions of 1848. Generally, writers of the early period present many broad conclusions based on the same limited facts.

In connection with the shift in attitude from the sympathetic to the critical, one influence in particular should be considered. It is obvious that writers who shared Pares' views enjoyed considerable freedom to criticize the Russian Government and yet remain inside the country, associating with all factions. There is no evidence that they felt constrained to exercise any self-censorship in their works, a factor that may or may not have affected those of the earlier decades.

At the same time, however, it seems apparent that writers of the Pares' dispensation were affected by their involvement or identification

with the liberal movement. The burning issue of popular participation in government permeates their studies of both nineteenth- and twentieth-century Russia. Everything became oriented toward the Revolution--a reform from below. Possibly, this overwhelming concept was projected back to the Period of the Great Reforms. In that case Alexander would have become less a reformer by nature and more a follower of public opinion. Or if he had not appeared to adhere to popular opinion, in the mind of a particular writer, then the reformer by nature would have taken on the appearance of a champion of the nobility, of the system of Nicholas I. The revolutionary movement of the early twentieth century did, without doubt, exude a mist of passion which tended to veil the events of previous decades.<sup>87</sup>

---

<sup>87</sup>For the most obvious example, see an account written by the Director of the Russian Information Service of the new Provisional Government: A. J. Sack, The Birth of the Russian Democracy (New York, 1918).

## CHAPTER II

### AFTER THE REVOLUTION: INDECISION IN THE BROAD PERSPECTIVE

After the Bolshevik upheaval of late 1917, British and American writers seem to have recoiled from a lively interest in Russian history. Not for some thirty years, until after World War II, did the enthusiasm of the pre-Revolutionary period begin to revive. During the interim, British or American scholars of non-Russian origin produced only two significant studies relating to the reform period. Besides these works, the general production of the thirty-year period consisted of several translations of Russian volumes and a few studies by émigrés fleeing from the Soviet regime.

After the Revolution, the basic facts available about the character of Alexander II remained almost unchanged until 1962, when the first adequate biography of the Tsar-Liberator appeared. The stability and scarcity of facts prompted writers of the period to concentrate even more intensely on the reform measures. The predominant attitude toward the Reformer himself was firmly established in 1926, and remained almost inflexible until the late 1950's. It was generally accepted that "Alexander was not a reformer by nature."

Although this negative conclusion prevailed, many authors apparently had to wrestle with their data to harmonize their over-all studies with facts available concerning the character of the Tsar. Too many

conflicts appeared. Attempts at harmony resulted in an even wider range of ideas about the meaning of the reform effort. A few writers obviously solved the dilemma by including in their studies only those facts which supported the conclusion that Alexander and his Government were conservative by instinct. Other scholars attempted to explain the conflict in data by emphasizing the nineteenth-century context of the reform period. These latter writers, even those of the "Reformer-by-Necessity School," tended to be sympathetic toward the Reformer.

From all the material involved, one prominent pattern can be discerned. The basic histories of Russia adopt the Reformer-by-Necessity interpretation almost without exception. This seems to result from the broad perspective intrinsic to the general studies. The authors appear more willing to adopt an unsubstantial conclusion about Alexander because it fits into the revolutionary trend leading to 1917.

#### Alexander, Reformer by Necessity

Among those adopting the negative interpretation of Alexander's attitude toward reform, there are several scholars who take a rather radical stand against both the Reformer and his reforms. By its taint of bitterness this group sets itself apart from other scholars of its school, and will be discussed later as a separate unit. First, a chronological survey of the more-moderate members of the school is necessary to demonstrate the continuity of interpretation that began developing with the culminating events of the Revolution.

Not for some eight years after the Revolution did British and American scholarship produce another work providing an interpretation of Alexander II. Nicholas Makeev's and Valentine O'Hara's Russia was

published in 1925. The work displays little sympathy for the Old Regime.

Although Russia concentrates on the revolutionary movement in the twentieth century, it contains a brief analysis of the reform period. The authors strongly sympathize with the revolutionaries, as youth driven "to frenzied revolt and conspiracy" by cruel Government suppression which gradually intensified in the 1860's. "From 1866 the reaction of the nobility took the upper hand."<sup>1</sup> Reform, the authors conclude, sprang from the revelations of the Crimean War and was effected by a "strong body of liberal opinion."<sup>2</sup> When Alexander ascended the throne, "he seemed to realize the inefficacy of absolutism in the new conditions of life, the necessity of a radical change of policy. His fundamental reforms, despite the fact that the State hindered their full realization by every means in its power, produced unexpectedly good results."<sup>3</sup>

Makeev and O'Hara are restrained, almost vague in identifying Alexander as a product of the times; but this reluctance certainly is not evident in a study published the following year. In 1926, Bernard Pares resolved for all time his attitude toward the Tsar-Liberator. His History of Russia was, according to one prominent American scholar, the outstanding one-volume textbook of Russian history for nearly a

---

<sup>1</sup>Nicholas Makeev and Valentine O'Hara, Russia (New York, 1925), p. 91. Makeev, a former member of the Social Revolutionary party and President of the All-Russian Union of Zemstvos, emigrated in 1919. O'Hara, an Englishman, had a long record of involvement in Russian affairs. A previous work, an essay published in 1919, does include a brief, negative reference to Alexander's attitude: the new Tsar "had been a warm admirer of the politics of his father," but realized the system was breaking down (Daniel Bell Leary, "Education and Autocracy in Russia, from the Origins to the Bolsheviks," University of Buffalo Studies / Buffalo, 1919<sup>7</sup>, I, 67).

<sup>2</sup>Makeev and O'Hara, Russia, p. 88.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 60.

generation of young historians.<sup>4</sup>

By 1926 Pares had experienced the travails of the Duma period and had watched the new Provisional Government fall to the Bolsheviki. His disillusionment is noted in the sources referred to previously. It is safe to conclude that Pares' experiences had some influence on his shift of sentiment from 1907 to 1926. The effect, if any, on Russian studies in Britain and America invites speculation.

Pares, in his History, holds that Alexander was "greatly attached and entirely loyal" to his father. The heir's tutor, Zhukovsky, by "instinct and temperament" a conservative and a supporter of the autocracy, found that his pupil resisted intellectual training and shared the military tastes of Nicholas. In the son, the father "obtained a firm supporter for his drill-sergeant system of government."<sup>5</sup> From 1848 to 1855 Alexander tended to prove even more autocratic than Nicholas in defending rights of the gentry and imposing censorship. When the new Monarch ascended the throne, liberals were not optimistic about the future.<sup>6</sup>

Pares notes that Alexander's character "has been little understood," and concludes that he was "an honest conservative, forced by the overwhelming logic of facts" to undertake liberation of the serfs.<sup>7</sup> Once having assumed the task, the Tsar avoided no sacrifice in carrying it

---

<sup>4</sup>Warren Bartlett Walsh, Russia and the Soviet Union (Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1958), p. 610. Ironically, Walsh is the only strong representative of the Reformer by Nature school. His work is discussed last in this chapter.

<sup>5</sup>Bernard Pares, A History of Russia (2d Definitive ed., New York, 1953), p. 356.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., pp. 356-357.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid.

through. "In the main," the author comments about Alexander's Act of 1861, "this capital act of governmental policy, so far the central event in the history of the Russian people, was received with real gratitude."<sup>8</sup>

Emancipation, Pares continues, necessitated further reforms, for which Alexander and the bureaucracy were not eager.<sup>9</sup> But liberal and radical opinion spurred action. From the early 1860's, "a new period had set in, and it was now that Alexander's government had to complete the inevitable task of reform with failing energy, with growing indisposition, and constantly interrupted by agitating symptoms of hostility."<sup>10</sup>

Pares points out that Alexander still proceeded cautiously with reform despite radical activities. Then after 1866, strong reaction set in. The Tsar supported Dmitry Tolstoy, a staunch obscurantist, in suppressing the overzealousness of university students.<sup>11</sup> Restrictions were imposed on new reforms. Although Alexander withstood pressure to postpone execution of the Judicial Act of 1864, he hardly hesitated to employ administrative justice in violation of the measure.<sup>12</sup>

In the History, Pares thus follows the basic theme of his last work, depicting a Tsar whose initial acts in lifting restrictions set in motion a revolutionary force. As the movement grew, Alexander became less enthusiastic about reform. His refusal to grant a form of national

---

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 370.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., p. 371.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., p. 373.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., pp. 383-384.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., p. 385.

assembly widened the gulf between the people and the Government--making reconciliation impossible. It is in his conclusion about Alexander's attitude toward reform that Pares is much more definite than previously. Clearly, the Tsar was no reformer by nature. The significant fact about this hardening attitude is that the History includes no new data that would explain the change in its author. The limited bibliography, consisting almost entirely of English-language studies, reflects no basis for the new interpretation.

The same lack of foundation appears in Imperial Russia, written by an important émigré scholar, Michael Karpovich, and published in 1932. Imperial Russia, however, provides the first example of the effort by twentieth-century scholars to resolve more fully the conflicting impressions created by available data.

"Alexander II," Karpovich states, "was not a reformer by nature. But he was intelligent enough to be able to read the signs of the times, and courageous enough, at least during the early part of his reign, to subordinate his personal feelings to considerations of state." The author holds that because of the compromise with vested interests and the reaction which set in during Alexander's reign,

. . .the 'Great Reforms' have sometimes been harshly criticized and their wisdom has been questioned in the light of subsequent developments. The proper historical approach, however, is to judge them on the basis of a comparison with the old order of things which they were designed to modify. They stand this test . . .<sup>13</sup>

---

<sup>13</sup>Michael Karpovich, Imperial Russia, 1801-1917 ("Berkshire Studies in European History," ed. Richard A. Newhall, et. al. /New York, 1932/), p. 35. Karpovich, at Harvard Univ. at the time, provides only a selective Eng.-lang. bibliography. Further comment about Karpovich will be included in the conclusion of this chapter.

Karpovich's treatment of the reforms follows the usual pattern. Alexander resolutely effected emancipation by balancing conservative and liberal factions. The legal aspect of emancipation, Karpovich points out, warrants the description of "'perhaps the greatest single legislative act in the world's history'"; but on the economic side, the reform obviously draws justified criticism.<sup>14</sup> The author's brief examination of the major reforms emphasizes the positive changes they effected. All reforms, he concludes, pointed in one direction: "the breaking down of legal barriers which the old order had erected between the various classes."<sup>15</sup> With Alexander's activities, "a democratic society was growing in Russia under an autocratic government."<sup>16</sup>

The role of the revolutionary movement receives impartial treatment. Karpovich points out that the radical thrusts of the early 1860's occurred during the height of reform, and thus can not be ascribed to Government reaction. Reform simply stimulated demands for more reform, just as it had in the early days of Alexander I. As before, progressive public opinion outpaced the government. Liberals demanded a form of national representation. Radicals preached complete destruction of the old social order.<sup>17</sup> As time passed and the radicals failed to gain mass support, they turned to revolutionary conspiracy.

The revolutionary trend, Karpovich adds, received impetus from Government policy. "The liberal ardor of Alexander's early years was

---

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., p. 36.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., p. 40.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., p. 43.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., pp. 46-47.

spent in the strenuous effort to carry through the abolition of serfdom." The Tsar, easily influenced, fell victim to the conservative faction, who used radical activities to gain curtailment of reforms that had been granted. This reaction further alienated the Government from progressive elements.<sup>18</sup>

After Karpovich, other writers of the moderate Reformer-by-Necessity school had little to add either to basic fact or interpretation. They continued to analyze the reforms, especially the Zemstvo act and Alexander's unwillingness to grant a national assembly based on the Zemstvos.

Hugh Seton-Watson, in his objective study of the period, declares that Alexander's refusal to grant a national representative body and his actions against those proposing an assembly "mark a turning point in Russian history. This was the moment, if ever there was one, when the foundations of a Russian parliamentary democracy might have been laid."<sup>19</sup> Seton-Watson offers a suggestion of what the Tsar should have done. A debating congress could have been established, elected by limited franchise. While representation was gradually increased, the public would have had an outlet for its views and an arena for political experience.<sup>20</sup> "By 1900 Russia might have reached a stage where a bolder advance towards democracy could have been achieved by peaceful means."<sup>21</sup> But the "dogma of autocracy" and bureaucratic tradition prevented such action. The

---

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., pp. 48-51

<sup>19</sup>Hugh Seton-Watson, The Decline of Imperial Russia, 1855-1914 (London, 1952), p. 48. The British author apparently bases his work on secondary studies, mostly English-Language.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., pp. 48-49.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., p. 49.

decisive influence was the reactionary faction, who used the radical activities "to persuade Alexander that further progress would bring Russia to the brink of revolution"<sup>22</sup>

This same approach from hindsight is followed by John Lawrence in his History of Russia. In a ten-page sketch of the reform period, this writer fails to reveal any specific activities of the Tsar. But he does not hesitate to pronounce the judgement that: "If the supreme ruler had used his power unswervingly to press reforms for twenty years without haste or rest, the lasting foundation of a modern state could have been laid."<sup>23</sup>

Another of Lawrence's conclusions should be noted, since it has not been emphasized by many scholars preceding him. The author sympathizes with Alexander in his dilemma over the handling of political cases by the new juries. "The decisions of Russian juries were often capricious and in political cases every trial became a public debate on the political motives of the accused and on social justice in general. So it is hardly surprising that political trials were soon withdrawn from the ordinary courts."<sup>24</sup>

Another scholar differs with Lawrence on the attitude toward the Government's withdrawal of political cases from the courts, and provides other examples of the indecision over the general meaning of Alexander's

---

<sup>22</sup>Ibid.

<sup>23</sup>John Lawrence, A History of Russia (2d rev. ed., New York, 1960), p. 212. The first ed. was published in 1957. Lawrence, an Englishman, provides a very limited English-language bibliography; additional secondary sources are noted in the text. Primarily, the author draws on one French study in the section on the reforms.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid., p. 208.

reforms. Sidney Harcave, in Russia: A History, deplores the Tsar's interference in the new legal system, interpreting such action as another example of the reluctance to modify the autocratic and bureaucratic structure.<sup>25</sup> The reforms simply were meant "to bring Russia into closer alignment with the monarchies of Central Europe."<sup>26</sup> That, Harcave maintains, would have meant a free-labor system, continued dominance by the nobility, and only meager reforms to readjust society to emancipation. And it would not have necessitated any limitation of the autocratic power.<sup>27</sup> If, however, the state had given up its autocratic and bureaucratic position, Harcave declares, "Russia would have followed the paths of European political development."<sup>28</sup>

Perhaps the best summary of the moderate interpretation of the Reformer-by-Necessity school appears in the last work produced by one of its members. Nicholas Riasanovsky's History of Russia displays a characteristic balance. Alexander II, the work records, "showed no liberal inclinations prior to becoming emperor. Indeed he retained an essentially conservative mentality and attitude throughout his life."<sup>29</sup> Nor was Alexander a strong or talented man; he simply was "forced by the

---

<sup>25</sup>Sidney Harcave, Russia: A History (2d rev. ed., New York, 1953), pp. 266-267. Harcave, an American historian, provides an extensive English-language bibliography, comprising memoirs and general studies; but materials relating to the reform period are rather limited.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid., p. 246.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., p. 261.

<sup>29</sup>Nicholas V. Riasanovsky, A History of Russia (New York, 1963), p. 409. The study is based, according to the bibliography, on secondary and primary sources, all major languages. Riasanovsky was at the Univ. of Calif., Berkeley, when the History was published.

logic of the situation" to undertake and carry through fundamental reforms "unparalleled in scope in Russian history since Peter the Great."<sup>30</sup> The Tsar's refusal to grant a constitution tends to show that the reforms "owed little to any far-reaching liberalism or vision on the part of Alexander II and his immediate associates."<sup>31</sup>

Riasanovsky's study provides the usual detail about emancipation, while the period after 1861 is comparatively void of specific detail. Emancipation, the author holds, resulted largely from efforts of the "liberals"--the Grand Duchess Helen, the Grand Duke Constantine, Nicholas Miliutin and George Samarin. "More important, Alexander II himself repeatedly sided with them."<sup>32</sup> In the second half of the reign, the "Government" tried to limit the effectiveness of the reforms. Riasanovsky acknowledges the difficulty of analyzing "the rationale of reaction," but judges that the granting of a "constitutional monarchy and certain other concessions" possibly would have "satisfied most of the demand and provided stability for the empire."<sup>33</sup>

While Riasanovsky and other moderates were attempting to resolve conflicting data, some of the Reformer-by-Necessity adherents seem to have been engaged in a one-sided campaign against the Tsar-Liberator. Their basic facts remained essentially the same as those presented by other researchers. But interpretations of the data, and in some cases the uniform selection of data, allow a distinction between the critical

---

<sup>30</sup>Ibid.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid., p. 420.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid., p. 412.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid., p. 420.

group and the moderates.

There are, of course, some critical studies that deviate only slightly from the moderate position. Jesse Clarkson's History of Russia, for example, follows the usual interpretation of Alexander's reform character.<sup>34</sup> Clarkson's over-all attitude toward the reforms is rather balanced; even Dmitry Tolstoy receives the author's understanding. The conservative Minister of Public Instruction simply believed that the function of education was to impart exact information and to discipline the mind. Clarkson also notes that Tolstoy failed to sway Alexander in the direction of sweeping educational reaction.<sup>35</sup>

Yet, despite the balance of his work, Clarkson commits himself to some rather harsh conclusions. He holds, for example, that in effecting emancipation Alexander took every precaution to protect the economic interests of the nobility, and thus the Act of 1861 gave the peasant no cause to be grateful for his new position.<sup>36</sup> And "any bits of liberalism that had more or less accidentally been embedded in the 'Great Reforms'" were whittled away afterward.<sup>37</sup>

---

<sup>34</sup>Jesse D. Clarkson, A History of Russia (New York, 1961), pp. 271, 293ff. Clarkson, an American, provides a selective bibliography, all major languages and mostly secondary studies. The point made above about the broad range of works concerning Alexander's character should be emphasized again. Often the interpretations differ only slightly; yet the over-all tone of a study qualifies it for a particular school, or division of a school. This is the obvious weakness of the broad "school-of-interpretation" approach, but the method is still the most practicable for a study of this type. For the best example of the difficulty of classifying a work, see B. H. Sumner, A Short History of Russia (New York, 1949). The disconcerted topical treatment and lack of definite conclusions present a problem.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid., p. 307.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid., pp. 293-302.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid., p. 330.

Again, in discussing "Russification and the Jews," Clarkson outlines the numerous measures enacted under Alexander to allow Jews more extensive civil liberties. But these acts, he maintains, were only a scheme to Russify the Jewish element. "Early in his reign, Alexander II had announced (March 31, 1856) his intention 'to review all existing decrees on the Jews in order to make them agree with the general aims of fusing this people with the native inhabitants as far as the moral condition of the Jews may permit.'"<sup>38</sup> The principal method of Russification, according to Clarkson, was to lure the educated and prosperous element in Russian Jewry away from the Jewish masses and make it an ally in the silent war against Jewish orthodoxy.<sup>39</sup>

Slightly more adamant than Clarkson's work--and less detailed--are the studies by Joshua Kunitz and Melvin Wren. Kunitz devotes some thirty pages to the reform period, and while providing few details about Alexander, offers several conclusions. Alexander is identified as an "uncompromising reactionary" before succeeding to the throne, and as an "intelligent conservative" afterward.<sup>40</sup> The reforms themselves, Kunitz declares, were "important, but inadequate" and were "characterized by timidity and half-heartedness. What the monarchy gave with one hand, it tried to take away with the other."<sup>41</sup> Probably the most significant contribution of Kunitz' work is a quotation from a liberal's letter to

---

<sup>38</sup>Ibid., p. 331.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid.

<sup>40</sup>Joshua Kunitz, Russia: The Giant That Came Last (New York, 1947), p. 198. Though his work includes no formal bibliography, this American writer's popularly oriented account is, he states, based largely on Russian sources (Ibid., p. ix).

<sup>41</sup>Ibid., p. 218.

Alexander Herzen concerning the arrest of revolutionaries in 1862: "The arrests do not surprise me, and, I confess, they do not arouse my indignation. This is war. The stronger wins. . . . I wish you were the government. I should like to see how you would act."<sup>42</sup>

Melvin Wren's conclusions echo those of Kunitz. "By nature at least as conservative as his father, Alexander II granted the reforms because he saw them as necessary to the continuation of the monarchy. But what the Tsar gave with one hand he took away with the other."<sup>43</sup> Wren adds that "by temperament as well as by training the new Tsar seemed disposed to resist reform. . . . Inclined to take the easy way, he was not a leader."<sup>44</sup> The author displays the same critical attitude toward the limitations of the reforms.<sup>45</sup>

While critical of Alexander, Kunitz and Wren lack the sense of authority of another scholar of similar conviction, Anatole G. Mazour. In Russia: Past and Present Mazour repeats the declaration that Alexander was by nature neither a liberal nor a reformer, and as heir-apparent had been "ultraconservative, blocking any measure that tended to curb the rights of the gentry or define the obligation of the serfs toward their landlords. He supported rigid censorship and was an avowed

---

<sup>42</sup>Ibid., p. 212.

<sup>43</sup>Melvin C. Wren, The Course of Russian History (2d ed., New York, 1963), p. 406. Wren, of Montana State, bases his work on Eng.-language materials.

<sup>44</sup>Ibid.

<sup>45</sup>Ibid., pp. 406ff, 418ff, 427ff.

believer in autocracy . . ."<sup>46</sup> After the Crimean War, Alexander "was on the horns of a dilemma, and his common sense chose reform."<sup>47</sup> Although radical activities provoked reaction, the Government still "had to accept reforms forced upon it by . . . the Emancipation of the serfs in 1861."<sup>48</sup> With these broad conclusions, Mazour presents the usual sketch of Alexander during emancipation proceedings--that of a resolute, moderating leader.

Mazour's Rise and Fall of the Romanovs offers a fourteen-page analysis of Alexander and the reforms. The examination is packed with data to support a negative evaluation of the third-to-the-last Romanov. The author now maintains that Alexander's actions "were motivated more by a desperate effort to forestall radical alterations than by a sense of historical necessity."<sup>49</sup> Alexander, Mazour holds, had been trained to preserve absolutism, and this implied preservation of the gentry's position and thus the maintenance of serfdom.<sup>50</sup> In a sketch of the heir's training period, the author carefully selects only those illustrations which bear out his interpretation. In an outline of the reforms, he avoids discussion of Alexander's role. Nothing is said of the

---

<sup>46</sup>Anatole G. Mazour, Russia: Past and Present (New York, 1951), p. 105. Mazour, at Stanford Univ. when the work was published, later revised his study and republished it as Russia: Tsarist and Communist (New York, 1962). The author offers a good English-language bibliography. Further comment about the author will be included later in this chapter.

<sup>47</sup>Ibid.

<sup>48</sup>Ibid., p. 107.

<sup>49</sup>Anatole G. Mazour, Rise and Fall of the Romanovs (New York, 1960), p. 101.

<sup>50</sup>Ibid.

years of committee deliberations that finally led to the Act of 1861.<sup>51</sup> Of the reaction after 1866, Mazour declares it was so severe that "progressive members of the cabinet handed in their resignations," leaving the conservatives a free hand to try to "turn back the clock of history, with violent repercussions. The revolutionary movement was fast coming of age."<sup>52</sup>

Mazour might appear to be the major representative of the Reformer-by-Necessity school's critical branch. But this position must be assigned to Michael Florinsky, who, like Mazour, emerged from the chaos of the Revolution to exert an influence on Russian scholarship in Britain and America. Florinsky is significant not only because of his remarkable productivity, but also because of his personal involvement in the development of Russian studies.

As a scholar-refugee from the Civil War in Russia, Florinsky began working with Paul Vinogradov in England in 1920, and remained in that position until 1925.<sup>53</sup> During this time Vinogradov became editor of the Russian series of Yale University's "Economic and Social History of the World War." After Vinogradov's death, Florinsky moved to the United States in 1925 to continue working with the project. In 1931 his End of the Russian Empire was published as a part of the series.

Florinsky's first work includes only a general reference to

---

<sup>51</sup>Ibid., pp. 103-104.

<sup>52</sup>Ibid., p. 109.

<sup>53</sup>Paul Vinogradov, an eminent Russian jurist and historian, placed himself in self-exile during the Old Regime. Florinsky apparently served as his research assistant, primarily. See the author's Preface, Michael T. Florinsky, The End of the Russian Empire ("Economic and Social History of the World War," ed. James T. Shotwell; New Haven, Conn., 1931).

Alexander, but it sets the tone for his subsequent publications. It is said, he notes, that after the death of Nicholas I the sovereign "was gradually reduced to the position of a mere cog in the complex machinery of State. He became the chief of the State employees, the head of a huge bureaucratic machine which produced the measures to which he affixed his signature."<sup>54</sup> Florinsky agrees with the idea, although he points out that the Tsar still retained the power to dismiss Ministers and to disallow the objectives of his advisors. The exercise of such power, however, was "extremely infrequent under Alexander II" and his successors.<sup>55</sup>

Florinsky acknowledges that his work is "anything but flattering" toward the Imperial Government. "We believe," he continues, apparently speaking for the émigré colony, "that the breakdown of Imperial Russia was the inevitable result of its own internal weakness; but this does not necessarily mean that the Government . . . intentionally barred the advance of the country along the path of progress."<sup>56</sup>

To Florinsky, the Old Regime's weakness, and its fatal mistake, was the transfer of power to the bureaucracy and not to the people. This point is emphasized in his second major work, published in 1939. Toward an Understanding of the U.S.S.R. provides a background sketch of the development of the Russian administrative system, which refers only briefly to Alexander and the reforms. While drawing no conclusions about Alexander's character, the author stresses the Tsar's unwillingness

---

<sup>54</sup>Ibid., p. 6.

<sup>55</sup>Ibid.

<sup>56</sup>Ibid., p. 2.

to grant an elective representative assembly and thus voluntarily limit the autocratic power.<sup>57</sup>

After Florinsky published his next book, Russia: A History and Interpretation, the question of his attitude toward the Old Regime and Alexander II was determined--vividly.<sup>58</sup> Concerning Alexander's reign, the history is easily the most detailed ever produced by a British or American scholar. It has been quoted extensively since its publication in 1947. In the introduction to his chapter on Alexander and the reforms, Florinsky commits himself to a three-page, precise interpretation of the Tsar's character.<sup>59</sup> Then he pursues his thesis through another two hundred pages.

Alexander, the author declares, was "singularly ill qualified by education, convictions, and temperament for the part of reformer he was fated to play."<sup>60</sup> In supporting this statement the study traces, very briefly, the training period of the young heir. Illustrations are selected to support an extremely one-sided viewpoint. "The nebulous,

---

<sup>57</sup>Michael T. Florinsky, Toward an Understanding of the U.S.S.R.: a Study in Government, Politics and Economic Planning (New York, 1939), pp. 9-10, 29. Florinsky's publication of 1939 drew both praise and criticism from the reviewers. One notes that on the surface the work appears to be an example of objective scholarship; but with careful reading "it soon becomes evident that Dr. Florinsky is out to damn the whole Communist system . . . . What promised to be a very useful work thus turns out in the end to be only 'another book on Russia' in the con-class" (The Book Review Digest, 1939, ed. Mertice M. James and Dorothy Brown /New York, 1940/, p. 332). Another reviewer deems the work "judicial in manner," but "hostile in spirit" (Ibid.). This tone becomes more evident in the work discussed below.

<sup>58</sup>Michael T. Florinsky, Russia: A History and Interpretation (2 vols.; 2d ed., New York, 1953).

<sup>59</sup>Ibid., pp. 880ff.

<sup>60</sup>Ibid., p. 880.

sentimental humanitarianism of Zhukovsky," for example, "left little imprint on his pupil's character, except perhaps in fostering public display of his emotions, accompanied at times by copious tears."<sup>61</sup> While such tenderhearted feelings "greatly impressed his official biographers, they did not prevent the Tsar from maintaining a police regime of extreme severity and from sending thousands of people into exile without even the formality of a trial."<sup>62</sup>

Florinsky maintains that the Tsar rarely displayed personal leadership--his initiative in the emancipation process was an almost singular instance. Alexander "exercised his influence over the destinies of Russia chiefly through the selection of his advisers; the uncertainty as to his personal views is made all the greater by his practice of maintaining in responsible offices, simultaneously and for years, men whose opinions and policies were irreconcilably opposed . . ."<sup>63</sup> Florinsky holds that although Alexander's political philosophy "eludes precise definition," considerable evidence indicates he was an admirer of Nicholas' system. This attachment, according to Florinsky, explains the liberal and reactionary fluctuations of the reform period.<sup>64</sup>

In outlining the process of emancipation, the author includes no actions of the Government which would tend to draw sympathy from his readers. The personal acts of Alexander are overlooked except for

---

<sup>61</sup>Ibid.

<sup>62</sup>Ibid. Florinsky's concept of Alexander as an unfeeling, vindictive despot receives almost no support from the general scholarship, either the reformer-by-nature or reformer-by necessity school, as indicated throughout this study.

<sup>63</sup>Ibid.

<sup>64</sup>Ibid., pp. 880, 1064ff.

negative illustrations--the Tsar gave the State Council "a mere fortnight" for its final deliberations over the emancipation plan and, furthermore, in 1860 violated his promise to allow representatives of provincial committees "to take an active part in framing the statutes."<sup>65</sup>

The Tsar's conservatism also prevailed when the new Zemstvos were established, according to Florinsky. The "ruling bureaucracy" regarded the new assemblies with hostility, denied them adequate funds and assured that they would be dominated by the nobility and Government officials.<sup>66</sup> The result of such conservative reaction, Florinsky concludes, was "disappointment and decline of interest in zemstvo institutions, as evidenced by the extraordinarily low percentage of voters who participated in the elections and the mass absenteeism of members of zemstvo assemblies."<sup>67</sup>

Judicial reform, the author states, was thorough and sound, but its implementation immediately was restricted by the Government, whose excuse was a lack of funds and a shortage of trained jurists. Florinsky feels the Government hesitated primarily because the juridical operations embodied in the new law "were in conflict with Russia's medieval social structure and traditional administrative practice."<sup>68</sup> Yet, in spite of restrictions, "the post-reform courts were immeasurably superior to their predecessors."<sup>69</sup> In a summary of the legal reform, Florinsky

---

<sup>65</sup>Ibid., p. 888. Also see pp. 921ff.

<sup>66</sup>Ibid., pp. 898-899.

<sup>67</sup>Ibid., p. 900.

<sup>68</sup>Ibid., p. 904.

<sup>69</sup>Ibid., p. 906.

fails to reveal any activities by Alexander. But consistent with his basic premise, he outlines the "vicious subterfuge" employed by the Minister of Justice in the late 1860's.<sup>70</sup> Ministers and advisors--these were, to Florinsky, the real actors.

And yet, the author effects the same contradiction, or uncertainty, of most writers, by noting that Dmitry Miliutin was able to carry out military reform because he "had the tsar's confidence."<sup>71</sup> Again, he states that the reactionary Minister of Public Instruction, E. V. Putiatin, failed to gain the Tsar's approval of harsh university restrictions in 1861. Alexander, in fact, quickly replaced Putiatin with the liberal A. V. Golovnin.<sup>72</sup> The actors, as Florinsky admitted in his first work, were still subject to the will of the Tsar.

It is on Dmitry Tolstoy that the author trains all his anti-autocratic artillery. Tolstoy's educational policy receives attention in seventeen pages of a twenty-page review of educational policy during the period. In the treatment of the "sinister" Tolstoy's reforms, Florinsky again notes that Alexander, in supporting Tolstoy, opposed the majority of the State Council.<sup>73</sup>

Florinsky's unsolvable and frustrating dilemma is apparent in his work, despite its lengthy conclusions and massive supporting data on the defects of the reforms and its lengthy conclusions and very limited substantiating data on the defects of the Reformer. Even with a careful

---

<sup>70</sup>Ibid., p. 905.

<sup>71</sup>Ibid., p. 907.

<sup>72</sup>Ibid., pp. 1030-1032.

<sup>73</sup>Ibid., pp. 1035ff.

selection of data the conflicting ingredients remain. Florinsky can declare that the reforms were only "half-hearted concessions on the part of those who (with some exceptions) hated to see the disappearance of the old order and tried to save as much of it as circumstances would allow."<sup>74</sup> But he has not shown, in all the detail of his two-hundred page study, the character of Alexander II--his personal attitude toward progressive reform in Russia from 1855 to 1874.<sup>75</sup>

#### Alexander, Reformer by Nature

Florinsky's difficulty in harmonizing his data was apparently no greater than that of the scholars who looked more favorably upon Alexander's character. This small group, however, offers two solutions to the problem. The first writer, George Vernadsky, vaguely implies that Alexander's disposition inclined toward the progressive side, and then outlines the reforms in a noncontroversial manner. The second scholar, Warren B. Walsh, commits himself more clearly to the Reformer-by-Nature viewpoint, and then enters into a highly interpretive summary of the reform-reaction pattern, explaining it in the context of the time through broad generalization.

George Vernadsky's History of Russia reflects an almost neutral attitude, remaining consistent with his intention to be "completely impartial in . . . treatment of current political events as well as

---

<sup>74</sup>Ibid., p. 881.

<sup>75</sup>More comment about Florinsky will be provided in the conclusion to this chapter.

events of the more distant past."<sup>76</sup> His brief, six-page summary of the reforms offers neither background on Alexander nor detail concerning the Tsar's role in promoting reforms. Vernadsky concludes that after the Crimean War, unrestrained public opinion demanded reform, and found a receptive Tsar on the throne. Alexander still held Nicholas' "ideals of enlightened absolutism," but "was by nature different from his father."<sup>77</sup> Having been educated "in a more humane spirit," the new Monarch had a "much gentler and more tolerant disposition than Nicholas."<sup>78</sup>

Alexander's character is not reflected in Vernadsky's superficial examination of the reforms. He notes that the emancipation measure was "tragically inadequate"; its failure to establish the peasant as an independent landowner created the "embryonic ideas of the subsequent revolution."<sup>79</sup> The revolutionary movement itself receives a three-page treatment, in which Vernadsky depicts the radicals as abstractly oriented youth who were too unreasonable in their demands.<sup>80</sup>

Vernadsky's evaluation of the reforms, excepting emancipation, is positive; yet the study as a whole is too bland, lacking in tenor. This characteristic, however, certainly does not apply to the work of the sympathetic school's major spokesman, Warren Bartlett Walsh. In Russia and the Soviet Union, this scholar provides the most analytical treatment

---

<sup>76</sup>George Vernadsky, A History of Russia (Rev. ed., New Haven, Conn., 1939), p. xiii. This edition's treatment of the reforms does not differ from that of the edition of 1929. At the time, Vernadsky was at Yale. His other works include no information on Alexander's character.

<sup>77</sup>Ibid., p. 151.

<sup>78</sup>Ibid.

<sup>79</sup>Ibid., p. 154.

<sup>80</sup>Ibid., pp. 163-166.

of the reform-reaction trend available in any basic history, if not in any work. The approach is similar to Karpovich's, discussed previously.

Walsh includes no new data about the Tsar-Liberator, and actually incorporates less basic fact into his study than most other authors have. "I am presenting here," he states in his Preface, "what seems to me to be sound and worthy, knowing all the while that another might have chosen differently."<sup>81</sup> Walsh's interpretation represents, to say the least, a differing choice. He holds that most of the conservative aspects of the reforms were natural results of a practicable compromise between ideals and the realities of Russia's social structure at the time.

The nobility, Walsh points out, had always served in some form of administrative capacity within the national framework. Conversely, the lower classes were almost lacking in any such experience. This, he believes, would tend to explain the limited extent of some reforms. The lack of local initiative, based on inexperience, perhaps helped curtail the implementation of reform.<sup>82</sup>

Walsh, in stressing the clash between idealism and socio-political realities, notes the basic responsibility of radical factions in disrupting progressive reform. When Alexander's measures "did not prove

---

<sup>81</sup>Warren Bartlett Walsh, Russia and the Soviet Union ("The University of Michigan History of the Modern World," ed. Allen Nevins and Howard M. Ehrmann; Ann Arbor, 1958), p. ix. The listing of Walsh and Vernadsky as representatives of the sympathetic school does not imply that there are no other histories that indicate a Reformer-by-Nature interpretation; a few of the popularly oriented primers do seem to accept the idea, but even these are too vague for a conclusion. See, for example, Ivar Spector, An Introduction to Russian History and Culture (New York, 1949).

<sup>82</sup>Ibid., pp. 254ff.

panaceas, when he did not go as far or as fast as the liberals and radicals wanted, the enthusiasm with which they had hailed the reforms curdled. Here is another example of De Toqueville's famous axiom that the most dangerous moment for a bad government is when it begins to reform."<sup>83</sup> Since reform is an open admission of defects, a cycle is set in motion, explains Walsh. People's hopes intensify. "Then, when the reforms do not cure all evil, hope is followed by frustration, anger, and impatience. This was certainly true in Alexander's day."<sup>84</sup>

Toward the Reformer, Walsh is consistently sympathetic. He notes the humanitarian influence of the heir's tutors. He also observes that in 1847 Alexander, having investigated the conditions of the serf, "formally petitioned his father to liberate the serfs."<sup>85</sup> As Tsar, the author continues, Alexander usually displayed dependence on his family and advisors. Though friendly and good-natured, he could be determined and even ruthless when aroused by anger or conviction.<sup>86</sup>

"Alexander II," Walsh concludes, "was a believer in freedom and equality under law"; he demonstrated this belief by his reforms, by restoration of home rule to Finland, and by his actions toward the Jews.<sup>87</sup> In carrying through the reforms, clearly necessitated by the times, the Tsar "was bucking not only conservatism, on the one side, but also

---

<sup>83</sup>Ibid., p. 247. Also see pp. 260-261.

<sup>84</sup>Ibid., p. 247.

<sup>85</sup>Ibid., p. 245.

<sup>86</sup>Ibid., p. 246.

<sup>87</sup>Ibid.

irresponsible and often totally unrealistic demands on the other side."<sup>88</sup>

Walsh's study, like Karpovich's, makes an attempt to avoid the pitfalls of writing history in the broad perspective. Textbooks tend to link together the various components of a particular nation's development, and in the process "basic trends" and "major events" attract the scholarly eye. This is only natural; but the process too often molds lesser trends or minor events to fit the greater developments. And the more ambiguous a smaller component is, the more it is subject to adaptation to the predominant currents. This holds certain dangers for the historian working in the twentieth century, an era charged with passion for political and social liberality. The textbooks stretch back from the current period, fitting in the pieces to the socio-political history of "advancing civilization." In the broad perspective, any unit of history should be examined with extreme caution.

Some writers, examining Alexander and his reform effort, apparently focus attention on the revolutionary trend and uncritically adapt the Tsar to that stream of thought. They have the Reformer acting on the stage of March, 1917, rather than that of the Period of the Great Reforms. Alexander is placed on the defensive, perpetually "defending the Old Regime" against an inexorable forward movement. Rarely does he appear as an actor, a reformer. The method is not difficult to employ in Alexander's case, since the general lack of factual detail leaves him as pliable as putty, but sticky as molasses in the hands of the textbook writer.

This perplexing nature of the Tsar-Liberator is more evident in

---

<sup>88</sup>Ibid.

studies by some scholars of Russian origin. A few like Mazour and Florinsky have been unable to act dispassionately in reconstructing Russian history of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Their eyes and their hearts focus on the revolutionary movement, the final triumph over the Old Regime in March, 1917 and the Bolshevik reversal later that year. The 'émigré' lived for the first Revolution of 1917, and he lived through the second. This is both his value to Russian studies and his danger to Russian studies.

Various questions arise about the role of the Russian-born scholar, but it is not the intent of this thesis to undertake biographical pursuits. As a suggestion for further study, however, it suffices to point out that Karpovich, like Mazour and Florinsky, was born in Russia, and began publishing in America, along with his colleagues of Russian origin, in the 1930's. Yet Karpovich's attitude differs noticeably. The same point applies to Vernadsky, of course.

Perhaps the difference in attitude arises principally from each writer's concept of historical change, rather than from a vague emotional response to personal experience. Though the two must, of course, be closely entangled, the distinction may be reflected in the authors' studies. Karpovich and Vernadsky evidently are disposed to examine the period of reform in its proper context and to accept the gradualism and rigors that characterize fundamental, stable progress. Mazour and Florinsky, on the other hand, display the characteristic impatience of the revolutionary himself. It probably was no accident that Mazour chose for the title of his first study in 1937 The First Russian Revolution, 1825: The Decembrist Movement. The Introduction by Robert J. Kerner, then at the University of California, Berkeley, reflects Mazour's own

mood: "It is therefore in the Decembrists--men for the most part of high and noble rank--that we see the beginning of a long and ever increasingly ominous struggle. It was a struggle between medieval autocracy and modern liberalism, lasting for nearly a century and ending finally in the total collapse of the autocracy and in the disappearance of an antiquated, medieval structure of society."<sup>89</sup>

Another quotation, on the frontispiece of Mazour's first work, should not be overlooked. It was taken from a study by another Russian-born scholar: "'If I have spoken ill of Russia, it arises solely from the affection which I bear her.'"<sup>90</sup>

---

<sup>89</sup>Anatole G. Mazour, The First Russian Revolution, 1825: The Decembrist Movement, its Origins, Development, and Significance (Berkeley, 1937), p. xvi.

<sup>90</sup>Ibid., frontispiece.

## CHAPTER III

### AFTER THE REVOLUTION: NARROWING THE SCOPE

The predominant tendency to construct Russian history around the girder of the revolutionary movement is reflected not only in the general histories, but also in the more-specialized studies relating to the reform period. The authors' choices of subject matter illustrate the point. Over-all, most attention has been given to the radical-revolutionary movement. Next in order is the "intelligensia", comprising the progressive, educated segments of society--liberals and most of the radical leaders. Third in importance are the conservative elements, founded largely on Slavophilism. These are usually examined as antagonists of the progressive movement. At the bottom of the list of most-desirable subjects lie the peasantry, Alexander, educational development, the Polish Rebellion of 1863 and various specific measures enacted during the period of reforms. Except for a few works, the full range of specialized studies offers no additional significant facts about Alexander's character.

One basic pattern emerges from this body of scholarship. As the scope of the subject matter narrows, the writers become more understanding toward Alexander. This is evident even in those works concentrating on the radical movement.

## Alexander, Reformer by Necessity

Of the numerous studies of the radical-revolutionary development during Alexander's reign, only three include clear interpretations of the Tsar. The works of Leopold Haimson, David Footman and Avraham Yarmolinsky refer only briefly to Alexander's character and activities, and can be examined as a compact unit. Haimson's Russian Marxists and the Origins of Bolshevism records that "the inauguration of Nicholas' successor, Alexander II, was not greeted with any great enthusiasm by the 'enlightened' members of society. During his father's reign, Alexander had been a wholehearted supporter of reaction; for that matter he would remain a conservative during the rest of his life."<sup>1</sup> Haimson interprets Alexander as a conservative Tsar whose intelligence and fortitude enabled him to push through the reforms to "save the state edifice."<sup>2</sup>

The author provides no detail about Alexander. His bibliography, an excellent basis for study of the revolutionary movement, reveals no sources that could lead to a substantial conclusion about the Reformer. Haimson, like too many writers, is willing to accept a particular interpretation of Alexander II and proceed from that point. It would appear that this provides a rather unstable foundation for study of the revolutionary movement, which had its principal roots in the reform-reaction cycle of the 1860's and early 1870's.

David Footman is less exact than Haimson in articulating Alexander's

---

<sup>1</sup>Leopold H. Haimson, The Russian Marxists and the Origins of Bolshevism (Cambridge, Mass., 1955), p. 8.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

character, but his work provides a much better insight into the reform-reaction continuum, mostly that of the latter part of the Tsar's reign. Red Prelude reveals a self-conscious Monarch who tended to take any criticism of reform measures as a personal insult. Footman believes that the "emotional factor" is basic to understanding "the imperial Hamlet who was called to put right the state of Russia."<sup>3</sup> To illustrate his point, the author cites biographies by French and Russian scholars. After noting Alexander's romantic life and domestic problems, he accents an increasing moodiness, depression, lack of resolution, "violent paroxysms of weeping," asthma and even rheumatism.<sup>4</sup> Footman does not specify at what point these maladies began to affect the Tsar, but his continuing analysis seems to indicate the early 1860's.

Footman leaves a vivid impression of a well-intentioned but disoriented Emperor responding to the demands of the time. Alexander is depicted as a man haunted by the spectre of revolution, isolated from the public by the vested interests of the bureaucracy, and lacking "an upper and middle class with administrative gifts and a sense of practicalities who could be trusted to manage an empire for their own ends and keep fanatics and the lower class in check."<sup>5</sup> Alexander was, Footman concludes, an autocrat with the moral conviction that "an attack against the autocrat was blasphemy."<sup>6</sup> This conception of political crime

---

<sup>3</sup>David Footman, Red Prelude: the Life of the Russian Terrorist Zhelyabov (New Haven, 1945), pp. 14-15.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., pp. 15-16.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 16.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., pp. 16-17.

inevitably turned the ruler into a policeman.<sup>7</sup>

Avrahm Yarmolinsky's Road to Revolution: a Century of Russian Radicalism offers far less analysis of Alexander's character than Footman's work; but it is more candid. Alexander "was not a reformer either by temperament or conviction, but he was statesman enough to perceive that the Empire could not muddle along in the old way."<sup>8</sup> The author fails to illustrate this conclusion.

Yarmolinsky's study is, however, well-balanced, lacking any sign of bias as it traces the evolution of radical-conservative antagonism. He points out, for example, that peasant riots during the Crimean War occurred primarily in response to rumors that emancipation had been granted by the Tsar, but was being obscured by Government officials.<sup>9</sup> Again, he notes that Government reaction was "on the rise" by the end of 1861, but that radical publications spurred such activity.<sup>10</sup>

The author distinguishes between the radical political movement and the university disturbances created by non-political, youthful zeal. To underscore the limited extent of the university student movement, he observes that as late as 1880 there were still only some 8,000 youth in all the universities of the Empire.<sup>11</sup> Still, he points out that in the

---

<sup>7</sup>Ibid.

<sup>8</sup>Avraham Yarmolinsky, The Road to Revolution: a Century of Russian Radicalism (London, 1957), p. 88. The author was in America most of the time preceding this publication, and should be classified as a Russian-American scholar, one whose influence has been felt little as yet.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., p. 110.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., p. 105.

spring of 1861 the universities were embroiled in such turmoil that Alexander considered closing them. Yet the Tsar only sanctioned a new statute cutting Government scholarships and banning student meetings.<sup>12</sup> Yarmolinsky also notes that Alexander opened the universities to the Jews.<sup>13</sup>

The author includes in his study one illustration of Alexander's attitude that does not seem to appear in any other work. Though it provides no enormous insight, the incident supports previous comments about Alexander's lack of hostility toward his political enemies. After Karakazov's attempt on the Tsar's life in 1866, the youth petitioned for mercy. "The Tsar's indirect response," Yarmolinsky states, "was that personally he had long since forgiven the man in his heart, but as a sovereign he did not believe he had the right to pardon such a criminal."<sup>14</sup>

Many of the conclusions found in the studies by Haimson, Footman and Yarmolinsky are repeated in the major work on the peasant question, Jerome Blum's Land and Peasant in Russia from the Ninth to the Nineteenth Century. The title is misleading since the study terminates with emancipation in 1861. In his limited examination of Alexander's attitudes, Blum at first cites favorable and unfavorable data. But he soon abandons this approach and begins adopting the conclusions and limited supporting data offered by one anti-autocratic source, Kornilov's

---

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., p. 104.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., p. 248.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., p. 141.

history.<sup>15</sup>

Blum cites Kornilov to the effect that Alexander, as heir, had defended the rights of the serf-owners. But he also notes that reports of the Prussian Ambassador to St. Petersburg indicated in 1845 that the heir was convinced "reforms were necessary and inevitable."<sup>16</sup> Then, continuing to cite Kornilov, the author notes that on Alexander's accession, those close to him looked forward to an "'era of the gentry,'" while "abolitionists despaired of progress."<sup>17</sup> One of the new Monarch's first acts was to dismiss the Minister of Interior who had proposed inventories for the Western provinces. Alexander considered the idea unfair to serf-owners.<sup>18</sup> Blum cites negative comment from other secondary studies to conclude:

In person the new sovereign was nervous, indecisive, and given to spells of depression and violent fits of weeping. In a conversation in September, 1856 a member of his Senate described him to the Prussian ambassador as lacking in all initiative. Yet this conservative, unsure man initiated and carried through a revolutionary change, because the shortcomings revealed by the Crimean War convinced him that this was the only way to guarantee the internal order and external power of his empire.<sup>19</sup>

---

<sup>15</sup>Jerome Blum, Land and Peasant in Russia from the Ninth to the Nineteenth Century (Princeton, 1961). Blum apparently draws most of his ideas concerning Alexander from Kornilov's heavily biased work (Alexander Kornilov, Modern Russian History From the Age of Catherine the Great to the End of the Nineteenth Century, tr. Alexander S. Kaun (2 vols in 1; New York, 1943). Kornilov's History was first translated, in 2 vols., in 1916-17); strongly critical of the Old Regime, it probably has been quoted more extensively than any other single work. This certainly holds true for the reform period.

<sup>16</sup>Blum, Land and Peasant, pp. 576, 576n.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., pp. 576-577.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., p. 577.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid.

Blum's account of the emancipation process provides substance for understanding the period to 1861. He notes, for example, that the principle of abolition was firmly established in Nicholas' reign, and received impetus from accelerating rural unrest.<sup>20</sup> Almost 350 agrarian "disturbances" occurred between 1845 and 1854, compared with 474 from 1855 to 1861. Troops had to be used to suppress at least 132 uprisings between 1836 and 1854. In the same period, peasant rioters murdered some 175 overlords and attempted to remove another seventy-five. Much of the rioting sprang from misunderstanding created by open discussion of emancipation, a fact that prompted Nicholas to restrict all discussions of reform.<sup>21</sup>

After the Crimean War, Nicholas' successor, "equally convinced of the dangers that peasant discontent portended, and possessed of the resolution to command emancipation," warned that serfdom had to be abolished by legal methods.<sup>22</sup> The Tsar-Liberator proceeded to impose his wishes upon the nobles without regard for their vested interests and "without heed to their protests."<sup>23</sup>

While Blum's study of emancipation reveals an active Tsar moving determinedly toward a reform goal, Samuel Kucherov's examination of the Judicial Reform of 1864 reflects an entirely different development.

---

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., p. 544ff.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., pp. 557-558.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., p. 560. Also see pp. 575ff.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., p. 617. For a study of the impact of emancipation, see Geroid T. Robinson, Rural Russia and the Old Regime, (5th ed., New York, 1949). Robinson, displaying bitter criticism of the autocracy, refers only vaguely to Alexander.

Kucherov, a former member of the bar in Imperial Russia, states that his "most cherished desire" is to transmit to his readers the admiration he feels for the Russian judiciary, lawyers and jury of the period from 1864 to 1917.<sup>24</sup> Courts, Lawyers and Trials under the Last Three Tsars achieves this objective.

The author's highly specialized study of the act of 1864 and its subsequent operation provides valuable insights into the problem created by the inclusion of political offenses in the jurisdiction of the new courts. Kucherov praises the new jury system and bar, but he also displays an understanding of the Government's dilemma over the courts' handling of political cases. Much of this positive attitude apparently rises from the orientation of the study; the author's goal is to demonstrate the democratic evolution of the bar up to the disastrous Bolshevik triumph of 1917. It is questionable to what extent this greater evil ameliorated Kucherov's resentment toward the lesser one, the Old Regime. That his attitude toward the Bolshevik regime exerted such an influence seems to be reflected in his interpretation of Alexander's reform disposition before 1862.

Kucherov holds that Alexander actually opposed the introduction of a jury system into Russia during the 1850's. The Tsar assumed a progressive disposition only in late 1861.<sup>25</sup> The transformation occurred partly because emancipation necessitated further reform and also because the Tsar, for a reason Kucherov fails to explain clearly, "was happy,

---

<sup>24</sup>Samuel Kucherov, Courts, Lawyers and Trials under the Last Three Tsars (New York, 1953), p. viii.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid., pp. 21ff, 116ff.

with that particular and great happiness which the consciousness of a fulfilled . . . mission bequeathed by history gives to persons ruling over the fate of peoples."<sup>26</sup> The author's explanation of Alexander's change of attitude is disappointing, but no less so than his one-sided account of the Tsar's attitude before 1862. The facts are selected to depict a Tsar disposed to resist change in the old system. Alexander's progressive activities during the 1850's escape notice.

Only with the activities of late 1862 does Kucherov undertake a balanced study of his subject. He points out, for example, that Alexander's approval of unrestricted public debate of the pending judicial reform "was without precedence in modern Russian history. . . . This unique appeal to public opinion by Alexander II was a kind of consultative referendum in which everyone could take part, without any distinction as to class or property."<sup>27</sup> The author notes, however, that the 466 suggestions received from all parts of Russia had little actual influence on the final reform.<sup>28</sup>

Kucherov quotes the Imperial ukase of 1864 which declared the Government's desire to strengthen in the Russian people "'the respect for law without which public prosperity is impossible, and which must serve as a permanent guide for the actions of all and everybody, from the person of the highest to that of the lowest rank . . .'"<sup>29</sup> Without doubt, the author concludes, Alexander and the State Council, the

---

<sup>26</sup>Ibid., p. 23.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid., p. 24.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., pp. 24-25.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid., p. 26.

legislative power of the State, desired to "separate the administration of justice from the executive and legislative powers."<sup>30</sup>

The strength of the new law is illustrated by an incident occurring a year after the reform. Kucherov states that a judge, irremovable under the act of 1864, delivered a rather liberal speech during a Zemstvo meeting, and Alexander immediately ordered his dismissal from office. The Minister of Justice then reminded the Tsar of Russia that the new law forbade such an act. Alexander complied, after exclaiming, "'Did I really sign such nonsense?'"<sup>31</sup> The law conflicted with the will of the autocrat--and prevailed.

Despite the reaction of the 1860's Kucherov maintains that the Government imposed no significant restrictions on the new law until 1874. No fundamental alterations occurred until after Alexander's assassination.<sup>32</sup> The Tsar-Liberator's "emancipation of the individual," embodied in the measure of 1864, was firmly implanted. The system continued to mature until destroyed by the Bolsheviks in 1917.<sup>33</sup>

The three preceding summaries continue to reflect the same basic indecision about Alexander's personal disposition. But the narrowing of the scope of treatment has produced an apparent change in the general attitude of the Reformer-by-Necessity school. Its authors have become conciliatory toward the Tsar. Alexander's conservatism tends to derive

---

<sup>30</sup>Ibid., p. 33.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid., pp. 34-35. This widely quoted anecdote is taken from the memoirs of a person who apparently received the information secondhand. Kucherov footnotes the source.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid., pp. 211, 269ff.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid., pp. 302ff.

even more from emotional sensitivity and a vague frailty of body and will. Any idea of Alexander as a despot has been discarded entirely. Footman's characterization approaches this concept, but his emphasis is on emotional sensitivity rather than a harsh political disposition. Alexander's emotional frailty, according to Footman, finally turned him into a policeman.

Werner E. Mosse's biography of Alexander continues the trend toward conciliation, and probably serves as the best example of the indecisive scholar who cannot quite be satisfied with a treatment of the Reformer as a weak, malleable Monarch driven before the winds of progress. Mosse's Alexander II and the Modernization of Russia integrates data from English-language sources, among which is Florinsky's history, considered by the author to be the leading English-language history of Russia.<sup>34</sup>

In integrating his sources, Mosse achieves a fair balance of facts and conclusions, and in the process leaves the inevitable contradictions. Not least among these is the Tsar depicted by the author's conclusions and the Tsar who clearly emerges from the biography. Partly, the contrast results from Mosse's selection of data. His account of the period before 1862 is constructed to conform to his basic interpretation of Alexander. From the early 1860's the study becomes more balanced, more indecisive and more in contrast with the author's basic point of view.

Mosse's sketch of the heir reveals a good-hearted, but highly emotional youth who lacked the inclination to apply himself in intellectual matters. When faced with problems, Alexander preferred to take the path

---

<sup>34</sup>Werner E. Mosse, Alexander II and the Modernization of Russia (London, 1958), p. 183.

of least resistance.<sup>35</sup> As he gained experience in Government operations his faith in Nicholas' system was confirmed, a fact illustrated by his defense of the nobles' interests. Yet, the heir realized the need for progressive changes which were being initiated by his father.<sup>36</sup> The task frightened him to the extent that he indicated he did not wish to succeed to the throne.<sup>37</sup>

The author continues the account to depict the new Monarch as a recognized weakling.<sup>38</sup> Yet, Mosse's summary of emancipation proceedings clashes sharply with the concept; as usual Alexander becomes a skillful, resolute leader.<sup>39</sup> The same image rises from Mosse's summary of the Tsar's handling of university disturbances in 1861.<sup>40</sup>

The radical activities of the early 1860's, Mosse states, left Alexander worn, haggard, sensitive and in bad health.<sup>41</sup> His disappointing experiences convinced him that maintenance of the autocratic power was essential to national stability. As he explained to Bismarck in late 1861, he realized the value of advice from the public and of general participation by competent subjects; but regulating such involvement was the problem, since a relatively small group was capable of governing. Thus, only the crown could guarantee continued equality of freedom among

---

<sup>35</sup>Ibid., pp. 30-32.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid., pp. 35-37.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid., p. 37.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid., pp. 43-46.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid., pp. 53, 66, 72-73.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid., pp. 127-128.

<sup>41</sup>Ibid., p. 129.

all classes.<sup>42</sup> Alexander made this same point again later when responding to the St. Petersburg Zemstvo's demands for central representation: "I give you my imperial word that, this very minute, at this very table, I would sign any constitution you like, if I felt that this would be for the good of Russia. But I know that, were I to do so today, tomorrow Russia would fall to pieces."<sup>43</sup>

Mosse hardly deviates from a positive evaluation of Alexander from 1862 to 1866. He notes, of course, the influence of liberal and conservative factions on the Tsar, but adds little to Hodgetts' previous account.<sup>44</sup> He also criticizes the Zemstvo statute of 1864, declaring it was "the 'consolation prize'" offered by Alexander to the nobility "for the losses of 1861."<sup>45</sup> But Mosse's general evaluation of the period is well-exemplified by his conclusion about the Tsar's actions in Poland. Alexander's goal, the author maintains, was slow autonomous evolution of the Kingdom, and he pursued this course "with tenacity in the face of disappointment and provocation."<sup>46</sup> The Tsar-Liberator "was eager to promote the well-being of his 'satellite' subjects. In Poland and Finland, as in the rest of the empire, his policy was one of moderate reform and 'modernization.'"<sup>47</sup> In delineating the meaning of modernization,

---

<sup>42</sup>Ibid., pp. 132-133.

<sup>43</sup>Ibid., p. 133.

<sup>44</sup>Ibid., pp. 44-45, 63-64, 137, 138.

<sup>45</sup>Ibid., p. 92.

<sup>46</sup>Ibid., p. 123. Also see p. 107ff.

<sup>47</sup>Ibid., p. 124.

Mosse exercises no restraint in eulogizing Alexander's reforms.<sup>48</sup>

It is with the period after 1866 that the author's account begins to display contradiction. Alexander's actions in approving or disapproving educational and military reforms are noted; there is still evidence of the leader.<sup>49</sup> Yet, Mosse holds that after 1866 a "fierce struggle began between the 'new men' and the surviving 'liberals' for the body and soul" of the exhausted Tsar.<sup>50</sup> "Russia was ready to turn from a medieval into a modern state," but Alexander "lacked the firmness, the vision, and the statesmanlike grasp of detail to be completely successful."<sup>51</sup>

Mosse quotes one French scholar who maintains that what the disorganized Tsar-Liberator needed to do was "'build a new Russia."<sup>52</sup> But instead, "'the edifice was constructed upon the old foundations."<sup>53</sup> Thus, Mosse appears to reveal a certain propensity for revolutionary change, the same attitude that characterizes one of his favorite reference works, Florinsky's history. This frame of mind that accepts the idea that Russia could have leaped from autocracy to some publicly satisfying form of democracy in two decades contrasts sharply with the attitude of writers of the Reformer-by-Nature school.

---

<sup>48</sup>Ibid., p. 105.

<sup>49</sup>Ibid., p. 101ff.

<sup>50</sup>Ibid., p. 135.

<sup>51</sup>Ibid., pp. 105-106.

<sup>52</sup>Ibid., p. 105.

<sup>53</sup>Ibid.

## Alexander, Reformer by Nature

Stuart Ramsay Tompkins' Russian Intelligentsia affords a good rebuttal to critics who are prone to accept the possibility that great strides toward popular involvement in government could have been taken by the Tsar during the 1860's. The study is one of the best available on the problem of pacing reform in the midst of undisciplined, inexperienced and unyielding factionalism. Tompkins does not commit himself to a precise conclusion about Alexander's reform character, but the study is so sympathetic toward the reforms and so critical toward radical zeal that the author's attitude appears clear enough.

Tompkins reveals Alexander as a flexible Monarch, a man intelligent enough "to allow himself to be carried along by the general sweep of public opinion which was demanding a radical program of reform."<sup>54</sup> The new Tsar's actions quickly rewarded the almost universal expectation that the change in Government in 1855 would bring relaxation of autocratic discipline.<sup>55</sup>

The author holds that although the reforms sprang directly from the need of the time and had their origins in the reigns of Alexander's predecessors, they constituted a sharp break with the old system and reflect an "extremely powerful" original impulse toward reform.<sup>56</sup> "It is true," he adds, "that after 1861 public interest fell and enthusiasm flagged, but, despite the Polish revolt and its conservative influence on public

---

<sup>54</sup>Stuart Ramsay Tompkins, The Russian Intelligentsia: Makers of the Revolutionary State (Norman, Okla., 1957), p. 3. The study utilizes primary and secondary source materials in all major languages.

<sup>55</sup>Ibid., pp. 6ff, 24ff, 53ff, 68ff.

<sup>56</sup>Ibid., p. 13.

opinion<sup>7</sup>, Alexander persisted in his efforts."<sup>57</sup> Reform continued even after 1866. The Tsar's general intent was "to establish how far the principles of absolutism could be combined with those of popular participation in government."<sup>58</sup>

Tompkins emphasizes that Alexander's moderation constituted a weakness in Russia of the mid-nineteenth century. Neither extreme conservatives nor radicals welcomed the measures of the Tsar-Liberator. The revolutionaries especially "were determined to find nothing good" in Alexander's efforts.<sup>59</sup> To discontented segments of the public, "the reforms were a fraud, designed solely to lull prevailing discontent."<sup>60</sup> The clash between the Government and revolutionary sentiment began in 1859 with the first restrictions on public debate of emancipation; from that point the rupture broadened. Radical thrusts drew increasing Government reaction, until by the early 1870's the revolutionary movement was temporarily suppressed. In reality, however, the extremes of conservatism and radicalism had only intensified.<sup>61</sup>

The major value of Tompkins' work lies in its detailed account of press censorship, its causes and repercussions from 1859 to the early 1870's. Public reform zeal and Alexander's effort to preserve a moderate pace of reform become quite clear. In 1858, for example, the Tsar overrode his censors and allowed discussion of the peasant question and

---

<sup>57</sup>Ibid., p. 14.

<sup>58</sup>Ibid., p. 15.

<sup>59</sup>Ibid., p. 16. Also see pp. 20, 47, 227ff.

<sup>60</sup>Ibid., p. 66.

<sup>61</sup>Ibid., pp. 27ff, 46ff, 55ff, 66-67.

other political issues. This, in turn, necessitated establishment of a definite censorship code since none was in force at the time. The complexity of such a policy required considerable time for deliberation, during which a disorganized administrative censorship continued to attempt to cope with public zeal. As censorship laws were enacted, radical events provoked constant alterations.<sup>62</sup>

Tompkins maintains that the final censorship law of 1865 was quite progressive despite revolutionary activities. For the first time, infraction of statutory press laws in the metropolitan centers, St. Petersburg and Moscow, were to be tried in ordinary courts.<sup>63</sup> The author notes that the law of 1865, though relatively progressive, still placed considerable restrictions on the press. After 1866 these were tightened further, until finally in July, 1873 the Government reserved the right to forbid press discussion of any particular issue.<sup>64</sup> Yet, Tompkins quotes other sources to demonstrate that the general effect of the law of 1865 and the subsequent press measures was "to introduce a basis for relaxation" of the radical-conservative antagonism.<sup>65</sup> Under clearly defined restrictions the press began to mature, losing much of its "trivial, exasperating character."<sup>66</sup>

Thus by 1870, the author concludes, an equilibrium had been

---

<sup>62</sup>Ibid., p. 68ff.

<sup>63</sup>Ibid., p. 76. Outside the two cities, where control would be quite difficult, publications were still subject to preliminary censorship (Ibid.).

<sup>64</sup>Ibid., p. 79.

<sup>65</sup>Ibid., p. 80.

<sup>66</sup>Ibid.

established among conservative, liberal and radical publications.<sup>67</sup>

This ameliorated a major problem of the 1860's, the lack of "respectable organs to reflect moderate or conservative opinion."<sup>68</sup>

Tompkins makes it clear, however, that the balancing effect came too late to prevent isolation of the Government from general public opinion.

It seems to me that these facts indicate reasonably honest intentions of the government to pursue the program of reform, with a view to meeting public opinion halfway, but Alexander found himself confronted with the irreconcilable hostility of the 'intelligentsia' and found no support from public opinion for his program of moderation.<sup>69</sup>

Radicalism and reaction maintained its momentum.

Tompkins asserts that government suppression after the assassination attempt in 1866 confirmed the public, especially the moderate element, "in the attitude long advocated by the more radical element that no understanding was possible with the forces of autocracy."<sup>70</sup> By the late 1860's the "great majority of the intellectual class--now beginning to be called the 'intelligentsia'--had become openly hostile to the government and the existing order."<sup>71</sup> The rupture originated with the radical youth who viewed the initial "good humor and tolerance" of the Tsar as "a signal for stepping up rather than abating demands."<sup>72</sup>

"The truth," Tompkins holds, "was that reforms of all kinds were

---

<sup>67</sup>Ibid., p. 81.

<sup>68</sup>Ibid., p. 88.

<sup>69</sup>Ibid., p. 238.

<sup>70</sup>Ibid., p. 97.

<sup>71</sup>Ibid., pp. 97-98.

<sup>72</sup>Ibid., p. 99.

hindered by the traditional belief that compromise means weakness."<sup>73</sup>

Tompkins' work illuminates Alexander's difficult task of moderating the reform-reaction dichotomy of national advancement. Yet it leaves, unmodified, the prevailing uncertainty of the Tsar-Liberator's personal disposition toward liberal reform. This principal question of Alexander's character when he ascended the throne in 1855 has elicited varying

---

<sup>73</sup>Ibid. Two important studies that parallel Tompkins' in many respects are Nicholas A. Hans' History of Russian Educational Policy, 1701-1917 (London, 1931) and The Russian Tradition in Education (London, 1963). The studies carry extra significance since the author is a former Director of Education of the City of Odessa, Russia. Hans is rather noncommittal on Alexander's reform character, but his emphasis on the educational reforms of Dmitry Tolstoy provides a perspective not available in any other work. Hans' conclusions about the progressive nature of the educational reforms, especially the issue of classicism, contrast sharply with most other studies. In the History, Hans states his intent to try "to prove the democratic character of his /Tolstoy's/ measures in spite of his established reputation as an extreme reactionary" (p. viii). The author draws fully from primary materials and other sources, and documents his data carefully. Of Alexander's reign, Hans states that it is a mistake to try to determine periods of reform and reaction; "it is better . . . to pay more attention to the results achieved than to try to find any radical difference in policy. In contradistinction to the reigns of his father and of his son, the reign of Alexander II has a character of its own, which may be called liberal and progressive" (Ibid., p. 94; also pp. 115, 138-139). Reaction in education, Hans concludes, began later, "after the assassination of Alexander II, and we must retain this term for the reign of Alexander III" (Ibid., p. 115). In The Russian Tradition the author provides further insight into the radical tendencies with which Alexander had to deal. Hans reveals the impulse of progressive reformers to push too hard against the still predominant conservatism of established educational authorities. The lack of restraint produced friction, and forced Alexander to impose restrictions--or, as in one case, to send overzealous educators abroad to study Western educational methods (pp. 69, 47-49, 51, 54, 138). In his second work, Hans concluded about Alexander: "The new Tsar sincerely wanted to bridge the gulf that separated the throne from the people. Whether after thirty years of reaction, the moderate reforms were introduced to late, or whether a more radical reformation of society would have been successful is hard to tell. Fate has decided against the Tsar" (Ibid., pp. 54-55). For another, less authoritative study of educational reform, see William H. E. Johnson, Russia's Educational Heritage (Pittsburg, 1950), an integration of secondary studies. Johnson concludes that after 1866, reactionary forces "had again triumphed over an initially progressive emperor" (pp. 148-149; also pp. 136, 201, 237).

conclusions, but supporting data leave too many voids in the record. Only the Reformer's two other biographers are left to attempt a resolution.

Stephen Graham's Tsar of Freedom, a popularly written study based almost entirely on secondary sources, offers an extremely positive evaluation of Alexander. Most of the work, however, is dedicated to foreign affairs. Treatment of the reforms is quite weak; Tolstoy's measures, for example, escape the author's attention. Graham's data, comprising relatively few derogatory illustrations, provides no fresh insight. Generally the account parallels that of Hodgetts. With only a few contradictory lapses, Graham's Tsar is a reformer by nature, quite liberal and strong-willed.<sup>74</sup>

The author notes the humanitarian influence of the heir's tutors, and concludes that the young Alexander was not an original character. "He was used to having someone at his elbow to tell him what was good or wise, and he readily assimilated good advice. He had tact or was merely disinclined to quarrel."<sup>75</sup> Graham feels it is strange that Nicholas "provided that his son should be broad-minded, liberal and European."<sup>76</sup> That the training was effective was demonstrated by Alexander's activities in behalf of the serfs in 1847 and 1848. Only the European revolutions of the latter year forced the shelving of the heir's

---

<sup>74</sup>Stephen Graham, Tsar of Freedom, the Life and Reign of Alexander II (New Haven, Conn., 1935), pp. 43, 46, 53, 64, 66, 73ff, 102-103, 117, 122-123, 237ff.

<sup>75</sup>Ibid., p. 19.

<sup>76</sup>Ibid., p. 17.

plan for emancipation.<sup>77</sup>

Alexander, Graham maintains, was probably the only Tsar of Russia who actually believed in freedom of the individual.<sup>78</sup> His objective was to bestow such freedom, with himself as the "supreme arbiter" who would prevent infringements on individual rights.<sup>79</sup>

Graham's biography receives both support and correction from the work that must be recognized as the most authoritative study of the Tsar-Liberator. E. M. Almedingen's Emperor Alexander II succeeds in filling several of the voids. The British scholar dramatizes a lot, but this fails to detract from his extensive use of basic sources and his documentation of data. Almedingen apparently has some Russian family background, and gives evidence of being quite familiar with materials available on his subject. "The late Madame de Rynkiewicz told me," he informs the reader, "that, soon after his accession, the Emperor Alexander III ordered most of his father's private papers to be destroyed."<sup>80</sup>

Almedingen's account of the heir's youth and training period harmonizes with that of Hodgetts, but is more detailed. At a few points it provides minor corrections of Hodgetts' data. But most important is the author's success in presenting a broader view of Alexander's baptism in what Zhukovsky constantly referred to as "moral power."<sup>81</sup>

---

<sup>77</sup> Ibid., p. 26.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid., p. 113.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid., p. 114.

<sup>80</sup> E. M. Almedigen, The Emperor Alexander II (London, 1962), p. 10. The author does not identify Madame de Rynkiewicz. In his study he refers to the fact that his grandfather held estates in Tver Province; apparently this was during the reform period (Ibid., p. 78n).

<sup>81</sup> Ibid., pp. 42, 45-46, 51, passim.

The heir was taught throughout his childhood and youth that a just and open-minded monarch would win the loyalty of his people. This would enable him to lead the nation, rather than command it, on the path of harmonious progress. The stability of the process would derive from public education in moral principles and humanitarianism. The concept was expressed concisely by Zhukovsky when, in defending his plan for Alexander's education, he reminded Nicholas that the very essence of the Russian word for education was "'knowledge informed and guided by morality.'"<sup>82</sup>

Alexander emerges from Almedingen's study as a person firmly committed to the moral, humane ideals of his tutor. This point is well-established. At the same time, the author makes it clear that the heir to the Russian throne held to his faith in the autocratic principle. Alexander's liberalism "was always social rather than political, and what reforms the Grand Duke envisaged were invariably set within the framework of an autocratic government, because he was convinced that none other would answer in Russia."<sup>83</sup>

The author's discussion of the heir's activities during the 1840's provides valuable insight. He clearly demonstrates that Alexander did everything possible to promote the termination of oppressive serfdom.<sup>84</sup> But the European revolutions of 1848 provoked a definite conservative response. Again, Zhukovsky's influence was a decisive factor. Alexander's preceptor was in Baden during the revolution in Prussia, and wrote

---

<sup>82</sup>Ibid., p. 31.

<sup>83</sup>Ibid., p. 70.

<sup>84</sup>Ibid., pp. 71ff.

to his pupil about the horror he witnessed:

Baden is a volcano, Frankfort a seething cauldron. . . .  
Pray God something may happen to hasten the dawn of salu-  
tary reaction. . . . Life is shattered--all is chaos  
and flame and blood. . . . God preserve our country from  
any such horrible fate.<sup>85</sup>

Almedingen's description of the conservative effects of the revolu-  
tions of 1848 is illuminating. So is his point that the effects of the  
Crimean War reaffirmed Alexander's previous conviction that radical re-  
forms were necessary.<sup>86</sup> The new Emperor began with no definite plan of  
action. "Alexander's réforms suggest a tree, its roots his resolve and  
energy, its trunk Emancipation."<sup>87</sup> The author's detailed treatment of  
the reform effort reflects a strong, progressive Reformer, a leader bal-  
ancing opposing factions and, true to Zhukovsky's memory, allowing the  
fullest practicable extent of public and governmental participation.<sup>88</sup>  
But still the Tsar retained his faith in the autocratic principle; in  
fact it increased with the radical-conservative friction of the period.  
To one suggestion that he inaugurate a popular form of government, Alex-  
ander replied: "'That would be like entering a newly born foal for a  
steeplechase race.'"<sup>89</sup>

The author depicts the period immediately after 1866 as one of  
rather extreme reaction, provoked by the attempt on Alexander's life, a  
general intangible threat of revolution, and the prompting of the

---

<sup>85</sup>Ibid., p. 85.

<sup>86</sup>Ibid., p. 98. Also see pp. 84ff, 101ff.

<sup>87</sup>Ibid., pp. 221ff. Also see pp. 139ff, 233.

<sup>88</sup>Ibid., pp. 89-90, 116, 151, 155, 147, 162ff.

<sup>89</sup>Ibid., p. 117.

conservative factions.<sup>90</sup> Alexander, by 1866, had suffered the attrition of five chaotic years, and his resolution had declined. Dmitry Tolstoy, "a pompous nonentity, with the mind of a shelled pea," headed the reactionary pack that imposed a stifling order on society.<sup>91</sup> Reform continued in subdued fashion.

Almedingen concludes that Alexander's reforms were always motivated by compassion for man's misery, and seldom were based on reason or calculation. "He felt, he grasped, he reacted to an impression and shaped his course accordingly."<sup>92</sup>

The Tsar-Liberator thus begins to assume a believable and consistent human form. The fabled Reformer emerges, with reasonable clarity, as Alexander the man. His portrait received its distinguishing strokes only in 1962, and it is too early to determine what effect the image will have on subsequent scholarship. Certainly those influences that prevailed up to 1905 and from 1905 to the late 1950's will diminish. There is no longer a strong urge to modify history to promote understanding between East and West or to express disillusionment with the final Revolution. Similarly, the intense resentment of some of the first generation émigrés should exert less influence with time; Russian-born scholars of the second and third generations, if they follow the pattern of others, probably will become rather Anglicized, absorbing the predominant quirks and prejudices of that perplexing people.

Almedingen has noted that Alexander's personal papers might have

---

<sup>90</sup> Ibid., pp. 207ff, 226ff.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid., p. 209. Also see pp. 226, 235, 243.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid., p. 233.

been destroyed, a possibility which accents the major problem in trying to determine the Tsar's character. With limited source-materials, the question will remain subject to judgement from every writer who wishes to offer an unqualified opinion. This tendency seems to have influenced at least one recent study, which apparently ignores Almedingen's findings.<sup>93</sup>

Regardless of the availability of data on Alexander II, two other factors have clouded the issue concerning his disposition and probably will continue to exert the same influence. First is the fact that on both ends of the reform period lie "great events" that tend to envelop the man and obscure the scholarly vision. The European revolutions of 1848 and the Crimean War on the eve of Alexander's reign blend with his character, influence his disposition. It is impossible to know what Alexander would have been had he ascended the throne without these events interposed between youth and Tsardom. To determine the influence of the events, much research remains to be done--if the materials are available.

---

<sup>93</sup>E. Lampert, Sons Against Fathers: Studies in Russian Radicalism and Revolution (Oxford, 1965). The British author asserts that Alexander was indolent, "in no way equipped to be either a liberator or a reformer" (ibid., p. 2). Alexander's failures resulted from "infirmity of purpose"; the Tsar "believed his life and work were in the hands of God . . . yet he himself consistently reinforced divine resources by most prosaic and sinister means" (ibid., pp. 3-4). The author's major conclusion is provoking: Alexander and the liberal court faction were representatives of "conservative liberalism" based on shrewd feigns and maneuvers to "safeguard, reinforce and camouflage the fabric of the existing order" (ibid., p. 76). Compare Lampert's approach with that of Jacob Walkin, an American scholar. Walkin does not attempt to draw such specific conclusions about Alexander's personal disposition. Like Walsh, Wallace and others, he emphasizes the context in which the Tsar and Government operated. Walkin holds that Alexander realized reform "would eventually lead to a constitution. . . . Rash and impetuous steps before the situation was ripe would be not only 'harmful, but even criminal'" (Jacob Walkin, The Rise of Democracy in Pre-Revolutionary Russia: Political and Social Institutions Under the Last Three Tsars /New York, 1962/, p. 156).

All these points apply also, of course, to the revolutionary movement toward the end of the period of reform.<sup>94</sup>

The other major factor that casts a shadow on Alexander and his reform effort is closely related to the revolutionary movement, but has a more comprehensive grasp on the minds of some twentieth-century scholars. This is the predominant affinity with the concept of the "popular movement", the liberalism that has become the life-force of Western civilization. Certainly this kinship between a scholar's personal socio-political orientation and his sense of universal progress poses an emotion-laden problem when he confronts an autocratic government of the past--and the autocratic Tsar-Liberator who tried to lead it in reform.

---

<sup>94</sup>Materials for study of this problem--the revolutionary movement's influence on Alexander's attitude during the early 1870's--are available. See, for example, Moritz Busch, Bismarck: Some Secret Pages of his History for correspondence between Bismarck and Alexander concerning the threat of international socialism. One report from St. Petersburg, for example, on February 29, 1872, marked "very secret," informs Bismarck of information linking the International with the Russian "Nihilists" (Ibid., II, 46). Busch's record suggests that European powers, including the Papacy, were quite concerned about the international socialist movement; it also suggests the existence of considerable correspondence between the Russian Government and the powers on the question. It should be pointed out that the problem of international socialism, as it concerns the Tsar's attitudes, is closely related to the question of the influence of court factions on Alexander. To the conservatives, Western socialism was the supreme manifestation of a decaying civilization, and this concept was used as an argument against liberal, "Western" reform in Russia, especially after the Paris Commune of 1871. The conflict between conservatives and liberals centered on the German element in the Russian court, which included the royal family. For further insights into the problem see Busch, Bismarck; Bismarck, the Man and the Statesman: the Reflections and Reminiscences of Otto, Prince Von Bismarck, tr. under the supervision of A. J. Butler, ed. Horst Kohl (2 vols; New York, 1899); The Diplomatic Reminiscences of Lord Augustus Loftus (4 vols; London, 1892, 1894). Bismarck regarded the conflict between the German (or Prussian) court and the Slavophil groups as the key to Russian policy. Loftus, British Ambassador to St. Petersburg from 1872 to 1879, also notes that the two factions were striving to control Government policy in the early 1870's.

## A SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

The division of material by chapter has been employed to provide systematic reference to works cited in the text. Annotation has been minimized since this study was, in itself, an examination of the publications as they related to the subject under treatment. Specific references are provided to pages of the text in which each work appears.

### Chapter I

Allibone's Dictionary of English Literature and British and American Authors, A Supplement. 3 vols. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Co., 1908.

This source provides brief biographical data for the period before 1908, much of which does not appear in other reference works. Volume II was, for example, the only source containing information about Brayley Hodgetts. See page 14 of this study.

Baring, Maurice. The Russian People. London: Methuen & Co., 1911.

As an introduction to Russian history, written from a sympathetic viewpoint, the work serves its purpose. It covers Russian developments from the earliest times, emphasizing cultural trends until the mid-nineteenth century, and then adopts a topical format to deal with the consequences of emancipation. The Mir, Zemstvo, Nihilism and the general revolutionary movement receive emphasis. The work contains a brief Table of Contents and is poorly indexed. For pertinent information about Alexander and the reforms, see pages 23-25 of this study.

\_\_\_\_\_. A Year in Russia. Rev. ed. London: Methuen & Co., 1917.

This work provides insights into Baring's personal attitudes, through a record of his experiences in Russia from August, 1905 to August, 1906. The work also contains brief references to previous Russian history, but adds nothing to Baring's work listed above. See page 23 of this study.

Beazley, Raymond, Forbes, Nevill, and Birkett, G. A. Russia: from the Varangians to the Bolsheviks. London: Oxford University Press, 1918.

Part Three, by Birkett, covers the period 1801-1917, through the March Revolution. A very limited English-language bibliography is provided for Part Three. The well-written and rather detailed basic history follows a chronological format. For further comment, see pages 28-34 of this study.

Beveridge, Albert J. The Russian Advance. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1903.

The author's basic subject is the eastward expansion of Russia in the late nineteenth century. The American writer traveled in Russia in 1901, gaining impressions of that nation's culture. These are expressed in his work. The appendix contains foreign-policy agreements with other powers involved in the Far East. There is no index to the study, and the Table of Contents is quite brief. For more comment, see page 10 of this study.

British Authors of the Nineteenth Century. Ed. Stanley J. Kunitz. New York: H. W. Wilson Co., 1936.

This biographical reference provides good sketches, but is quite selective. See page 2 of this study.

Busch, Moritz. Bismarck: Some Secret Pages of His History. 2 vols. New York: The Macmillan Co., 1898.

Busch's records contain considerable comment about communications between Alexander II and Bismarck during the reform period. Besides the reference to Hepworth Dixon (see page 2 of this study) Busch provides data on Alexander's policy of religious toleration (Busch, p. 66ff) and problem with the Slavophil and German-oriented court factions (Busch, II, pp. 21, 49, 60-61, 79-80; I, pp. 420, 456, 475-476). Busch's work, poorly indexed, is based on a diary kept while he was acting as Bismarck's Press Secretary for some twenty-three years, from February, 1870 to May, 1893. Volume II begins July 28, 1871, and has a detailed Table of Contents.

Dillon, E. J. The Eclipse of Russia. New York: George H. Doran Co., 1918.

The study deals almost entirely with the revolutionary movement from the late nineteenth century through the March Revolution, but provides considerable background material on Russian history before that period. See page 25 of this study for more comment.

Dixon, William Hepworth. Free Russia. 2 vols. London: Hurst & Blackett, 1870.

A popularly written "travel account", based on the author's trips throughout Russia in the reform period. Emphasis is placed on religious issues, courts and justice. No index is included. For further comment, see pages 2-6 of this study.

Great Britain Board of Education. "Special Reports on Educational Subjects." Vol. XXIII. Thomas Darlington. Education in Russia. London: Wyman & Sons, Ltd., 1909.

The author provides a detailed record of Russian educational development through 1904, and also includes an excellent bibliographical note on Russian source materials of all types. See pages 18-20 of this study for further comment.

Hodgetts, E. A. Brayley. The Court of Russia in the Nineteenth Century. 2 vols. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1908.

In his second volume, Hodgetts provides one of the most

detailed insights into the operations of the Russian Government during the period of reform, especially concerning the Pan-slavist movement and various court factions. The work extends through the Russo-Japanese War of 1905. For more comment see pages 13-17 of this study.

Latimer, Elizabeth Wormeley. Russia and Turkey in the Nineteenth Century. 5th ed. Chicago: A. C. McClurg & Co., 1899.

Along with brief comments about Alexander I, II and III, the author provides a topical treatment of Russo-Turkish relations and general developments in the Balkans. Sketches of leading officials are included. For more detail see page 10 of this study.

Latimer, Robert Sloan. Under Three Tsars: Liberty of Conscience in Russia, 1856-1909. New York: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1909.

In dealing with religious freedom, the author provides considerable documentation. The study is based on extensive use of periodical literature and personal travel in Russia. Some works cited by the author are not found in other bibliographical references. The indexing is very poor. See pages 17-18 of this study.

Mavor, James. An Economic History of Russia. 2 vols. 2d ed. revised. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., 1925.

This is the standard work on the subject, providing good documentation, a detailed Table of Contents, and a good Index in each volume. It is also a good basic political history through 1909, including considerable detail on the revolutionary movement. See pages 20-22 of this study.

Nobel, Edmund. The Russian Revolt: Its Causes, Conditions, and Prospects. Boston: Houghton, Mifflin & Co., 1885.

The author stresses social and religious development up to 1884, but concentrates on the period before Alexander II's reign. Western influence and the resulting revolutionary movement compose the central theme. An anti-autocratic bias is noticeable. See page 10 of this study.

Pares, Bernard. "Reaction and Revolution in Russia," The Cambridge Modern History. Vol. XII: The Latest Age. Ed. A. W. Ward, et. al. 2d. ed. New York: The Macmillan Co., 1917, pp. 294-311.

A much more critical study than Pares' previous work, tracing the reform-reaction movement into the twentieth century. See pages 25-27 of this study.

\_\_\_\_\_. Russia and Reform. London: Archibald Constable & Co., 1907.

Next to Wallace's study, this is the most important general work on the reform period. It has a detailed Table of Contents, a brief Index and no Bibliography. The treatment is topical, and extends to the election of the Second Duma, 1907. The period before Alexander's reign receives only brief comment. See pages 11-13 of this study for detail.

\_\_\_\_\_. A Wandering Student: The Story of a Purpose. New York: Syracuse University Press, 1948.

This autobiography, centering on the author's involvement in Russian studies, comprises the period from his birth through the fall of 1947. See pages 9ff of this study for Pares' comments about other writers. The work contains a fair Index.

Sack, A. J. The Birth of the Russian Democracy. New York: The Russian Information Bureau, 1918.

This work was written by the Director of the Russian Information Service of the new Provisional Government of 1917, and was financed by that organization. The study begins with the Decembrist movement and terminates after the March, 1917 Revolution. As might be expected, it is quite critical of the Old Regime. It provides a sketchy survey up to the 1870's and then becomes quite detailed. The Duma period is emphasized. One of the most valuable contributions of the work is its good collection of the portraits and photos of leading figures. See page 33 of this study.

Sarolea, Charles. Great Russia, Her Achievement and Promise. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1916.

In his broad, topical and highly interpretive essay, Sarolea exercises no restraint in championing Russia against British distrust. The work refers only briefly to Alexander II. No Index is provided. See page 13 of this study.

Vitzthum von Eckstaedt, Count Charles Frederick. St. Petersburg and London in the Years 1852-1864. Translated by Edward F. Taylor. 2 vols. London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1887.

As a minister of Saxony, the author was in Russia from June, 1852 to June 1853. Volume I provides good sketches of leading officials and a brief evaluation of Alexander the young heir. See pages 15-16 of this study.

Wallace, Sir Donald Mackenzie. Russia. Revised ed. New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1905.

This is the basic study, by a British or American scholar, of the reform period, covering from 1870 to early May, 1905. It follows a topical format, and has no formal bibliography. It contains very detailed Table of Contents. The first edition (1878) has only a brief Index, but it too includes a detailed Table of Contents; topical format is used. See pages 6-10 of this study.

Williams, Harold Whitmore. Russia of the Russians. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1915.

The author's topical treatment of Russian History stresses the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It is weak on political developments, while emphasizing cultural topics through 1912. The work includes no Preface or Introduction, has a poor Index and a brief Table of Contents. No Bibliography or footnotes are provided. See pages 27-28 of this study.

## Chapter II

Clarkson, Jesse D. A History of Russia. New York: Random House, 1961.

The author follows a basic chronological format, with some topical division. Quotations are footnoted. Indexing is good. See pages 45-46 of this study.

Florinsky, Michael T. The End of the Russian Empire. "Economic and Social History of the World War," edited by James T. Shotwell. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1931.

This work, including the period from the Russo-Japanese War of 1905 through the Bolshevik Revolution, is useful to determine the development of the author's attitudes toward Russia's governing powers. See pages 49-50 of this study. As stated in the text of this study, Florinsky was sharply critical toward the Old Regime.

\_\_\_\_\_. Toward an Understanding of the U.S.S.R.: a Study in Government, Politics and Economic Planning. New York: The Macmillan Co., 1939.

Florinsky, an Economic Historian, reveals his attitude toward the Old Regime in this work also, but more clearly than in his publication of 1931. See pages 50-51 of this study.

\_\_\_\_\_. Russia: A History and Interpretation. 2 vols. 2d ed. New York: The Macmillan Co., 1953.

This is the most detailed history available concerning the period of reform, but it reflects strong anti-autocratic bias. The author provides a good index for each volume and an extensive bibliography in all major languages. Volume II includes the period from the beginning of the reign of Alexander I through 1917. See pages 51-55 of this study for more detail.

Harcave, Sidney. Russia: A History. 2d ed. revised. New York: F. B. Lippincott Co., 1953.

The author provides one of the best treatments of the period of reform, certainly one of the most detailed. His English-language bibliography is weak on the reform period, but extensive for most other chapters. See pages 42-43 of this study. The 1st ed. was published in 1952.

Karpovich, Michael. Imperial Russia, 1801-1917. "The Berkshire Studies in European History," edited by Richard A. Newhall, et. al. New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1932.

The study, quite interpretive, is only 106 pages long and contains a minimum of detail. The author covers domestic developments, excluding foreign affairs unless they directly affected internal policies. The work is well balanced, objective, and serves as an excellent introduction to the period. See pages 39-41 of this study.

Kochan, Lionel. The Making of Modern Russia. London: Jonathan Cape, 1962.

In this brief, sketchy work, the author provides a minimum of detail. He emphasizes the weaknesses of Alexander's reforms, but

appears sympathetic toward the Tsar himself. Based, apparently, on secondary works, the study extends only through Stalin's reign.

Kunitz, Joshua. Russia: The Giant That Came Last. New York: Dodd, Mead & Co., 1947.

This American writer includes no formal bibliography and no footnoting, but states that his work is based largely on Russian sources. It has a popularly oriented style. The account extends from the Christianization of Russia to the Bolshevik triumph. See pages 46-47 of this study.

Lawrence, John. A History of Russia. 2d ed. revised. New York: Farrar, Straus & Cudahy, 1960.

This British author traveled in Russia periodically from the early 1940's. The study avoids foreign relations unless they directly affect domestic development. Some parenthetical documentation is provided; the English-language bibliography is very limited. See page 42 of this study.

Makeev, Nicholas and O'Hara, Valentine. Russia. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1925.

This study, extending into the period of the New Economic Policy, concentrates almost exclusively on the revolutionary movement in the twentieth century. A detailed Table of Contents is provided. See pages 35-36 of this study for more detail.

Mazour, Anatole G. The First Russian Revolution, 1825: The Decembrist Movement, Its Origins, Development, and Significance. Berkeley: The University of California Press, 1937.

This work is cited in the text only to accent the author's emotional involvement with his subject. See pages 60-61 of this study.

\_\_\_\_\_. Rise and Fall of the Romanovs. New York: D. Van Nostrand Co., Inc., 1960.

This brief, 189 page work includes a minimum of detail and considerable interpretation. The section relating to Alexander II's reign is noticeably weaker than other parts of the study. The author's attitude toward the Reformer is clearer in this work than in his other two publications. See pages 48-49 of this study.

\_\_\_\_\_. Russia Past and Present. New York: D. Van Nostrand & Co., Inc., 1951.

This is the author's most comprehensive work, but its strictly topical arrangement presents a problem to the reader. Fortunately, it has a good Index; but some items were found to have escaped the attention of the indexer. Treatment of Alexander's reign is comparatively brief. A rather comprehensive English-language Bibliography is included. See pages 47-48 of this study.

\_\_\_\_\_. Russia: Tsarist and Communist. New York: D. Van Nostrand & Co., Inc., 1962.

Here, the author has revised his work of 1951, adopting a

chronological format and expanding the treatment of cultural development. See page 48 of this study.

Pares, Bernard. A History of Russia. Definitive ed. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1953.

The original edition of 1926 was revised, with rather minor changes, after the author's death in April, 1949. The author's son, Richard Pares, provides a concise biographical Introduction. The Table of Contents is detailed. The account extends through World War II. A fair Selected Bibliography is included. See pages 36-39 of this study for more detail.

Riasanovsky, Nicholas V. A History of Russia. New York: Oxford University Press, 1963.

This is one of the better histories, providing a good balance of data and interpretation. The Selected Bibliography, including sources in all major languages, includes brief comments about the authors. See pages 43-44 of this study.

Seton-Watson, Hugh. The Decline of Imperial Russia, 1855-1914. London: Methuen & Co., 1952.

The author's account is rather unsubstantial, but clear and concise. Largely, it is an interpretation of history, rather than a historical record. It serves as an objective survey of the period, based on English-language materials. See pages 41-42 of this study.

Spector, Ivar. An Introduction to Russian History and Culture. New York: Van Nostrand Co., Inc., 1949.

This work, covering the period 862 to 1949, is written for the beginning student. It is generally objective, brief and positive toward Alexander II. Probably the author's greatest contribution is his splendid English-language Bibliography and Appendix containing the Constitution of the U.S.S.R. published in Russia in 1959. See page 57 of this study.

Sumner, B. H. A Short History of Russia. Revised ed. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1949.

This British author's disconcerting topical treatment detracts greatly from the work. First published in 1943, it apparently has had little influence in the field. See page 45 of this study.

Vernadsky, George. A History of Russia. Revised ed. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1939.

Since its publication in 1929, this work has served as one of the basic texts of Russian History. A mixture of topical and chronological arrangement is employed to give the reader a clear, concise and dispassionate account. A rather extensive Bibliography is provided, consisting of all major languages. See pages 55-56 of this study.

Walsh, Warren Bartlett. Russia and the Soviet Union. "The University of Michigan History of the Modern World," eds. Allen Nevins and Howard M. Ehrmann. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1958.

This is the most highly interpretive history available. While not as factually detailed as most of the better texts, it provides an unusually balanced, objective account. The author provides an excellent annotated Bibliography, comprising all major languages. See pages 55-59 of this study for more detail.

Wren, Melvin C. The Course of Russian History. 2d ed. New York: The Macmillan Co., 1963.

Wren's work should be rated slightly above the popularly oriented histories; it can hardly compare in scholarship with most works listed under this chapter. See pages 37 and 46-47 of this study. The first edition appeared in 1958.

### Chapter III

Almedingen, E. M. The Emperor Alexander II. London: The Bodley Head, 1962.

This is easily the most thorough examination of the man Alexander II. The British author draws from the same principal sources used by his predecessors, but apparently noticed some significant facts that had been overlooked. Documentation is provided for quotations and the more prominent facts. Almedingen dramatizes considerably, ascribing emotions to some of his characters; but this fails to detract from his data. See pages 82-85 of this study.

Bismarck, the Man and the Statesman: the Reflections and Reminiscences of Otto, Prince Von Bismarck. Translated under the supervision of A. J. Butler. Ed. Horst Kohl. 2 vols. New York: Harper & Bros., 1899.

Mr. Kohl provided only minor corrective editing, at Bismarck's request. The memoirs extend from 1832 to early 1888, and contain good indexing and detailed Tables of Contents. Volume II scarcely touches upon internal affairs in Russia; but the first Volume offers considerable information on conflicts in the Russian "Cabinet," especially those involving the pro-German elements of the Russian court. See page 87 of this study.

Blum, Jerome. Land and Peasant in Russia from the Ninth to the Nineteenth Century. Princeton: The Princeton University Press, 1961.

The study terminates with emancipation in 1861. Blum's effort has resulted in an excellent economic history of Russia centering on agricultural development. The author apparently carried out research carefully in both primary and secondary sources. See pages 66-68 of this study.

The Diplomatic Reminiscences of Lord Augustus Loftus. 2 Series; 2 vols. in each Series. London: Cassell & Co., Ltd., 1892, 1894.

The first Series covers the period 1837-1862; the second extends from 1862 to 1879. The last volume of each Series contains an Index. Each volume has an extremely detailed Table of Contents. The author began his diplomatic career at Berlin in 1837; he left Berlin in 1872 when appointed Ambassador to St. Petersburg, a position retained until 1879. See page 87 of this study.

Footman, David. Red Prelude: the Life of the Russian Terrorist Zhelyabov. New Haven: The Yale University Press, 1945.

This study of the terrorist "Peoples Will" during the 1870's includes an excellent appendix, a "Revolutionary Who's Who" providing short biographical sketches of over fifty youths involved in the organization. The work provides information on student attitudes during the 1860's. See pages 63-65 of this study.

Graham, Stephen. Tsar of Freedom, the Life and Reign of Alexander II. New Haven: The Yale University Press, 1935.

Graham's rather unsubstantial work is based primarily on secondary studies. It is more thorough on foreign affairs than domestic policy, providing little detail about the reforms. See pages 81-82 of this study.

Haimson, Leopold H. The Russian Marxists and the Origins of Bolshevism. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1955.

An interpretive account of events that drew some of the intelligentsia into the Marxist movement, concentrating on the period from the early 1880's to the late 1890's and terminating with the Revolution of 1905. The work is largely biographical, referring only briefly to Alexander II. See page 63 of this study.

Hans, Nicholas A. A History of Russian Educational Policy, 1701-1917. London: P. S. King & Son, Ltd., 1931.

Hans, former Director of Education of the City of Odessa, provides an extensive Bibliography of primary and secondary Russian sources. The work is thoroughly documented and contains numerous tables of statistics and illustrative material. Fortunately, the study has been republished recently (New York: Russell & Russell, Inc., 1964); this second edition is identical to the original in pagination and content. See page 80 of this study.

. The Russian Tradition in Education. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1963.

This is a study of Russian educational philosophy as it was developed by leading educational figures, from the reign of Peter the Great through the Stalin era, with emphasis on the role of education in the national structure. A detailed Table of Contents is provided. See page 80 of this study.

Johnson, William H. E. Russia's Educational Heritage. Pittsburgh: Carnegie Institute of Technology, 1950.

The work stresses the political implications of education, especially as it relates to teacher training. As an integration of English-language secondary works, the study serves its purpose. The account extends through the March, 1917 Revolution. See page 80 of this study.

Kornilov, Alexander. Modern Russian History, From the Age of Catherine the Great to the End of the Nineteenth Century. Translated by Alexander S. Kaun. 2 vols. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1943.

This work is cited to note its influence on British and American scholarship. Originally published in 1916-1917, it is probably the most quoted source relating to the period of reform and Alexander II. Its tone is highly anti-autocratic, but the general account is well balanced and extremely detailed. In this author's opinion it is the best general account available, although it is quite weak on foreign affairs. See page 67 of this study.

Kucherov, Samuel. Courts, Lawyers and Trials under the Last Three Tsars. New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1953.

The author, a former member of the bar in Imperial Russia, stresses the gradual democratic evolution of the judicial system from the Judicial Reform of 1864 to the Bolshevik triumph of 1917. The study reflects extensive use of primary sources and specialized works in all major languages. Documentation is excellent. See pages 68-71 of this study.

Lampert, E. Sons Against Fathers: Studies in Russian Radicalism and Revolution. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965.

This study is cited as an example of a continuing tendency to disregard available data concerning Alexander's character and draw rather unsubstantial conclusions. The study concentrates on the 1860's, providing two chapters on general conditions in Russia and leading radicals--Chernyshevsky, Dobrolyubov and Pisarev. The author displays the strongest anti-autocratic bias this writer has encountered in any work except Florinsky's. See page 86 of this study.

Mosse, Werner Eugen. Alexander II and the Modernization of Russia. London: The English Universities Press, Ltd., 1958.

This brief study of 191 pages is based primarily on secondary English-language sources. Generally, the treatment is contradictory concerning Alexander's character, and adds little to Graham's work. See pages 72-75 of this study.

Tompkins, Stuart Ramsay. The Russian Intelligentsia: Makers of the Revolutionary State. Norman: The University of Oklahoma Press, 1957.

The study extends through the March, 1917 Revolution. The author has made extensive use of primary and secondary sources in all major languages. A detailed Table of Contents is provided. See pages 76-80 of this study.

Robinson, Geroid T. Rural Russia under the Old Regime. 5th ed. New York: The Macmillan Co., 1949.

Robinson examines agrarian conditions from 1861 to 1917, basing his study largely on Russian sources, primary and secondary. The account refers only briefly to Alexander II or the Government. The author's aversion for the Old Regime is quite evident. See page 68 of this study.

Yarmolinsky, Avrahm. Road to Revolution: A Century of Russian Radicalism. London: Cassell & Co., Ltd., 1957.

The author traces the revolutionary movement from "the ancestor: Radishchev" to execution of the leaders of the People's Will in 1887. The Epilogue extends to establishment of the Russian Social-Democratic Labor Party in 1898. No documentation is provided. The author has used Russian primary and secondary sources and basic secondary studies in other major languages. The work is well balanced. See pages 65-66 of this study.

VITA

Dean Banks

Candidate for the Degree of

Master of Arts

**Thesis:** ALEXANDER II AND THE GREAT REFORMS: THE TSAR-LIBERATOR'S PERSONAL DISPOSITION TOWARD REFORM, AS INTERPRETED BY BRITISH AND AMERICAN SCHOLARS FROM 1870 TO 1964.

**Major Field:** History

**Biographical:**

**Personal Data:** Born near Ada, Oklahoma, June 6, 1935; spent almost sixteen years in Frederick, Oklahoma; is the son of Mrs. Mamie Baird of Corpus Christi, Texas.

**Education:** Attended grade school, junior high school and high school in Frederick, Oklahoma; graduated from Frederick High School in 1953; attended Oklahoma Baptist University 1957-1959; received the Bachelor of Arts degree from Central State College, Edmond, Oklahoma in May, 1962; completed requirements for the Master of Arts degree at Oklahoma State University in July, 1967.

**Professional experience:** Entered the United States Army in 1954, serving as a Personnel Administration Specialist until 1957; held business administrative positions while attending college; taught history at Oklahoma State University, 1962-1964, as a Graduate Assistant; served as an Administrator in the Economic Opportunity Program (Anti-Poverty Program) in south Texas, 1964-1967; carried on research in social problems and published articles as a free-lance professional writer, 1964-1967; member of Phi Alpha Theta and Phi Kappa Phi National Honorary Society.