her economic interests. His predecessors of both dynasties were also statesmen, but they were sedentary men who preferred to benefit from the work of others, while Peter was an active, self-taught master craftsman, an artisan-Tsar.

Feofan Prokopovich
THE HEROIC TSAR

Feofan Prokopovich (1681–1736), a clergyman from the Ukraine, educated at the Theological Academy of Kiev and in Rome, became Peter's most loyal and trusted advisor on matters concerning church affairs and the theoretical aspects of statecraft. Dedicated to Russia's cultural Westernization, a firm believer in the primacy of the state over the church (on the model of the Lutheran states in Germany), Feofan Prokopovich helped to draft the Spiritual Regulation and vigorously defended Peter's policies on all occasions. In defense of Peter's disinheriting his son Alexis and changing the traditional order of succession, Prokopovich wrote his most famous work, the tract "Justice is the Monarch's Will," which was to serve as a justification of the autocratic power of Russian rulers throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. In his capacity of Archbishop of Novgorod and senior member of the Holy Synod, Feofan Prokopovich delivered the oration at Peter's funeral. It is a good illustration of the uncritical admiration and sense of awe which the collaborators and disciples of Peter displayed towards their great and beloved "Tsar Reformer."

A Funeral Oration for the Most Illustrious and Most Sovereign Emperor and Autocrat of All Russia, Peter the Great, Father of the Fatherland, Delivered in the Capital City of Saint Petersburg, at the Church of the First Apostles, Saints Peter and Paul, by the Right Reverend Theophanos, Vice-President of the Most Holy Governing Synod, Archbishop of Pskov and Narva, on the 8th Day of March 1725.

What is this? O Russians, what have we lived to witness? What do we see? What are we doing? We are burying Peter the Great! Is it

From Feofan Prokopovich, "Slovo na pogrebenie vsepresvetleishago Petra Velikogo, imperatora i samoderzhtsa Vserossiiskogo, otsa otechestva . . ." ["Oration at the Funeral of the Most Illustrious Peter the Great, Emperor of All Russia, Father of the Fatherland. . . ."] in *Sochineniia* [*Works*], edited by I. P. Eremin (Moscow-Leningrad, 1961) (*Izd. Akadaemii Nauk SSSR*), pp. 126–129. Editor's translation.

not a dream, an apparition? Alas, our sorrow is real, our misfortune certain! Contrary to everybody's wishes and hopes he has come to his life's end, he who has been the cause of our innumerable good fortunes and joys; who has raised Russia as if from among the dead and elevated her to such heights of power and glory; or better still, he who—like a true father of the fatherland—has given birth to Russia and nursed her. Such were his merits that all true sons of Russia wished him to be immortal; while his age and solid constitution gave everyone the expectation of seeing him alive for many more years; he has ended his life—o, horrible wound!—at a time when he was just beginning to live after many labors, troubles, sorrows, calamities, and perils of death. Do not we see well enough how much we have angered Thee, O Lord, and abused Thine patience! O, we are wretched and unworthy, our sins are immeasurable! He who does not see it is blind; he who sees it and does not confess his cruelty is obdurate. But why intensify our complaints and pity which we ought to assuage. How can we do it? For if we recall his great talents, deeds, and actions we shall feel the wound from the loss of such a great good, and we shall burst into tears. Alone a kind of lethargy or a death-like sleep can make us forget this truly great loss.

What manner of man did we lose? He was your Samson, Russia. No one in the world expected his appearance among you, and at his appearance the whole world marveled. He found but little strength in you, and on the model of his name he made your power strong like a rock and diamond. Finding an army that was disorderly at home, weak in the field, the butt of the enemy's derision, he created one that was useful to the fatherland, terrible to the enemy, renowned and glorious everywhere. In defending his fatherland he at the same time returned to it lands that had been wrested from it and augmented it by the acquisition of new provinces. Destroying those who had arisen against us, he at the same time broke and destroyed those who had evil designs on us; and closing the mouth of envy, he commanded the whole world to glorify him.

Russia, he was your first Japhet! He has accomplished a deed heretofore unheard of in Russia: the building and sailing of ships, of a new fleet that yields to none among the old ones. It was a deed beyond the whole world's expectation and admiration, and it opened up to thee, Russia, the way to all corners of the earth and carried

thine power and glory to the remotest oceans, to the very limits set by thy own interests and by justice. Thine power which had been based on land he also has established on the sea, firmly and permanently.

He was your Moses, o Russia! For are not his laws like the strong visor of justice and the unbreakable fetters of crime! And do not his clear regulations illuminate your path, most high governing Senate, and that of all principal and particular administrations established by him! Are they not beacons of light in your search for what will be useful and what will avoid harm, for the security of the law-abiding and the detection of criminals. In truth, he has left us wondering wherein he has been best and most deserving of praise; was he loved and caressed more by good and honest men than hated by unrepentant sycophants and criminals?

O Russia, he was your Solomon, who received from the Lord reason and wisdom in great plenty. This is proven by the manifold philosophic disciplines introduced by him and by his showing and imparting to many of his subjects the knowledge of a variety of inventions and crafts unknown to us before his time. To this also bear witness the ranks and titles, the civil laws, the rules of social intercourse, propitious customs, and codes of behavior, and also the improvement of our external appearance. We see and marvel then at our fatherland; it has changed externally and internally, and it has become immeasurably better than it had been previously.

And he was your David and your Constantine, o Russian Church! The synodal administration is his work, and oral and written exhortations, too, have been his concern. The heart saved from the path of ignorance heaves a sigh of relief! What a zeal he has displayed in combatting superstition, adulatory hypocrisy, and the senseless, inimical, ruinous schism nesting in our midst. How great his desire and his endeavor to find the best pastoral talent, the truest divine wisdom, and the best improvement in everything.

Most distinguished man! Can a short oration encompass his immeasurable glory? Yet our present sad and pitiful state—moving us to tears and sighs—does not permit us to extend the discourse. Probably, in course of time, the thorns that butt our heart will dull, and then we shall speak of his deeds and virtues in fuller detail, even though we shall never be able to praise him adequately enough.

But at this time, even remembering him but briefly, as if only touching the edges of his mantle, we see, my poor and unfortunate hearers, we see who has left us and whom we have lost.

Russians, it is not in vain that we feel exhausted by sadness and pity, not in vain, even though this great monarch, our father, has left us. He has gone—but he has not left us poor and wretched: his enormous power and glory—manifested in the deeds I spoke of before—have remained with us. As he has shaped his Russia, so she will remain: he has made her lovable to good men, and she will be loved; he has made her fearful to her enemies, and she will be feared; he has glorified her throughout the world, and her glory will not end. He has left us spiritual, civil, and military reforms. For if his perishable body has left us, his spirit remains.

Moreover, in departing forever he has not left us orphaned. How can we call ourselves orphans when we behold his sovereign successor, his true companion in life and the identically minded ruler after his death, our most gracious and autocratic sovereign, great heroine and monarch, mother of all Russians![1] The world bears witness that the female sex is no hindrance to Your being like Peter the Great. Who does not know Your God-given, natural sovereign wisdom and maternal charity! And these two qualities have arisen and developed firmly, not merely because of Your cohabitation with such a ruler—for he cared little to have merely a companion for his bed—but by dint of Your sharing in his wisdom, labors, and misfortunes; so that over many years—like the gold refined in the crucible—he has formed an heir to his crown, power, and throne.

We can but expect that You will consolidate what he has done and complete what he has left unfinished, that You will preserve everything in good order! Courageous soul, only endeavor to overcome Your insufferable pain, a pain compounded by the loss of Your most beloved daughter;[2] Yours is like a cruel wound that has been exacerbated by a new blow. And in this most bitter loss endeavor to be the way everybody has seen You alongside the active Peter, his companion in all labors and misfortunes.

[1] Catherine I, second wife of Peter the Great, Empress of Russia from 1725 to 1727.

[2] Reference to the death of Nathalie, daughter of Peter and Catherine, that had occurred on 4 March 1725, at the age of seven. (Peter himself had died 28 January

And you, sons of Russia of all ranks and title, most noble estate, console your monarch and your mother by your loyalty and obedience; also console yourselves with the certain knowledge that in your monarch you see Peter's spirit—as if not all of Peter had withdrawn from you. For the rest, we bow before God our Lord who has thus visited us. Let merciful God, Father of all consolation, wipe the unquenchable tears of our sovereign Lady and her most beloved kin—daughters, grandchildren, nieces, and the whole imperial family; and let His merciful care sweeten the bitterness of their hearts and give us consolation. O Russia, seeing who and what manner of man has departed from you, behold also whom he has left to you. Amen.

Paul N. Miliukov

SOCIAL AND POLITICAL REFORMS

Until the end of the nineteenth century all those who wrote about Peter had been mainly concerned with his successes in military and foreign affairs and with his personal role in bringing about Russia's greatness and glory. At the end of the nineteenth century, however, the interest shifted to social and economic problems. Assuming the existence of historic laws of inevitable social progress, historians examined Peter's reign from the point of view of the population's material condition and of its place in Russia's social and economic evolution. Paul N. Miliukov (1859–1944) exemplified this new orientation in his dissertation for the degree of magister, *a massive and exhaustive study of the relationship between Peter's economic and administrative policies, from which we quote part of the conclusion. While recognizing the necessity of Peter's reforms in that they helped to turn Russia towards Europe and progress, Miliukov believed that in terms of the well-being of the Russian people the price had been much too high. So high, as a matter of fact, as to jeopardize the future economic and social progress of Russia and as to negate in part Peter's political and military successes. Unwilling to give much credit to Peter for any constructive transformation of the country's structure, Miliukov felt that the social and economic changes which occurred in the first Emperor's reign were not the result of any conscious policy of Peter's but only the unavoidable by-products of his military and diplomatic efforts.*

Had Peter lived a few years longer, he would undoubtedly have gone still further along the road of Russifying his reform of the state—a road he had taken from the very first when he introduced his reform in 1718–1719. But Peter died, and the task of adapting the reform to Russian conditions had to be completed by the Supreme Privy Council. Did this alter the fate of the reform? Hardly. In essence, it was still in the hands of the men who had carried it out during Peter's last years. As we follow the changes in the field we have selected for observation, we become accustomed to seeing reform without the reformer, and this is true of the years when Peter was still alive. Substantially the same impression was gathered by the

From Paul N. Miliukov, *Gosudarstvennoe Khoziaistvo Rossii v Pervoi Chetverti XVIII Stoletiia i Reforma Petra Velikogo* [*The National Economy of Russia in the First Quarter of the 18th Century and the Reform of Peter the Great*] (2nd ed., St. Petersburg, 1905), pp. 542–543, 545–546 (1st ed., St. Petersburg, 1896), pp. 730–732, 734–736. Used with permission of the literary executor of Paul N. Miliukov. Translated by Mirra Ginsburg.

better-informed contemporary participants and observers. It was only people remote from the field of action who later naively identified Peter with his reform and paved the way for the view that Peter was the sole creator of the new Russia.

Unfortunately, there is not a single piece of sincere contemporary testimony by any of Peter's closest Russian aides regarding Peter's last years. However, the numerous reports and memoranda of foreign envoys consistently convey the same impression, which coincides with the results of our own study and, it seems to us, with the facts: an impression that the sphere of the Tsar's personal influence was relatively narrow. This was stated briefly, clearly, and with his usual intelligence, by Vockerodt,[1] one of these observers. This is how he described the gradation of Peter's personal interests, which determined the extent of his personal intervention. "Particularly, and with all his zeal, he sought to improve his military forces. At the same time, the wars, which occupied his entire life, and the pacts he concluded with foreign powers in connection with these wars, compelled him also to give attention to foreign affairs. In this, however, he relied in most part on his ministers and favorites, who usually managed to influence him in favor of the side which paid them best. His favorite and most pleasant occupations were shipbuilding and other activities related to navigation. This provided him diversion every day, and even the most urgent affairs of state had to yield to it. . . . Internal improvements in government, justice, economy, revenues, and trade concerned him little or not at all during the first thirty years of his reign. He was content, provided his admiralty and army were adequately supplied with money, firewood, recruits, sailors, provisions, and ammunition; and this was easy enough, since his troops found ways and means for many years to maintain themselves at the expense of others, without burdening the state."

We know that all of this was not as easily achieved as it had seemed to Vockerodt, and that the Tsar was therefore, willy-nilly, compelled to concern himself with increasing his revenues. But we also know that his reform aspirations in the sphere of internal state

[1] Johann Gotthilf Vockerodt, Secretary of the Prussian legation in St. Petersburg, in 1734 wrote a memorandum to the Prussian Crown Prince Frederick (the future Frederick II) on his observations and experiences in Russia where he had resided for 25 years.—Ed.

organization did not go beyond this involuntary concern. After 1714 the legislator's horizon broadened noticeably. His domestic policy ceased to be exclusively fiscal. But even here his lack of preparation and of a general outlook and system continued to lead to innumerable contradictions, which manifested themselves not only between borrowed forms and native reality, but even among the borrowed forms themselves, and among their various facets. As we trace this endless chain of errors and misunderstandings, documented in archival records, we cannot help recalling the words which slipped from the lips of a person whose competence in this case is beyond question. They are the words of the Empress Catherine, who made the first thorough study of the papers of Peter the Great for her own practical purposes: "He did not know himself what laws were necessary to the state." Of course, this comment is too general and sweeping. Yet it is much nearer the truth than the schoolbook rhetoric of some recent scholars, who assert that "Peter took with him to the grave the key to his great schemes, and those who continued his work were unable to find this key. They assimilated only the outward forms of his transformations, but were unable to grasp the content of these forms. They were unable to revive the spirit of the first Emperor."

All that we know about Peter's reform of the state contradicts this rhetoric. Prepared by the elemental flow of history and collectively discussed, this reform not only was hidden deep in the Emperor's "spirit," but, on the contrary, reached his mind only at second hand, in chance fragments. . . .

Peter's social and state reforms have been least studied. Indeed, one can scarcely speak of Peter's "social" reforms. With the exception of the measures in favor of the urban class, promulgated during his last years under the influence of mercantilist ideas, Peter introduced no social reforms as such. The great changes observable during his reign in the position of other social classes were merely the indirect by-products of his legislation, which he himself had least foreseen. When he introduced the capitation tax, he never thought that he was tightening the knot of serfdom. And when he imposed life-long service duty on the service class and introduced single inheritance [*edinonasledie*], he least imagined that he was furthering the creation of the corporative spirit of the Russian nobil-

ity and the privileged property rights of the gentry. Russia's social evolution was bound, to an even greater extent than her cultural development, to historic precedents, and was thus even less dependent than the latter on the will of the lawmaker.

There remains the aspect of the reform which has been the subject of our study. Its place, it seems to us, lies somewhere in the middle, between those aspects of the process which developed under the direct influence of the reformer, and those which developed independently of, or even counter to his will. It is more difficult to alter the state system than to dress some of the people in new styles of clothing, to form new regiments, or build new ships; but it is easier than changing customs or the class structure. The political reform was not prompted by the lawmaker's personal plans or predilections as were his navy or the German style of dress. Nor was it the product of the spontaneous historical process alone. Peter's will was, of course, necessary for its accomplishment; however, this facet of his reform went beyond his essential horizon and was carried out by him almost by necessity. The facts of history had also prepared the ground for the state's reorganization, yet this reorganization did not follow spontaneously. The reform was not brought about either by personal initiative or by historic precedent, although both elements combined to produce it. It was dictated by the exigencies of the moment, which were themselves the product of both personal initiative and historic precedents.

In this sense, the reorganization of the state appears to have been a secondary, a derivative phenomenon. And, indeed, this is what Peter held it to be, regarding it not as a goal in itself, but only as a means. This means was a necessity to the extent that the objectives set by Peter were necessary to the state; it was timely to the extent that objectives were. It would be too late and generally idle today to question the necessity of the objectives, as they were questioned by Peter's contemporaries. As for their timeliness, there can unfortunately be two answers, depending on whether we examine them in relation to the domestic or to the foreign position of Russia. In connection with Russia's external position, the timeliness of these objectives is proven by their successful achievement; this timeliness will probably be confirmed by the juxtaposition of facts of European politics, from which Russia could not be absent. However, in con-

nection with the domestic situation, the question as to the timeliness of the reform must be answered in the negative. New problems and tasks of foreign policy were thrown upon the shoulders of the Russian people at a moment when they did not as yet command sufficient means to deal with them. The political progress of the state once more outran its economic development. The tripling of the taxes (from 25 to 75 million in our money) and the simultaneous decline of the population by at least 20 percent are facts that prove our assertion more eloquently than any details. Russia had been raised to the rank of a European power at the cost of the country's ruin.

Peter I. Lyashchenko

THE NATIONAL ECONOMY

The selection below is from the pen of the distinguished Soviet economic historian, P. I. Lyashcenko (1876–1955). Following the official interpretation of Marx's periodization of Western history, Lyashchenko would like to see in the reign of Peter the Great the formative period of Russia's capitalist development. But in spite of the establishment of new industries and the modernization of some sectors of Russian economic life, Lyashchenko cannot call Peter's reign the beginning of true capitalism in Russia, since the labor force continued to consist mainly of unfree serfs and the capital was obtained from noble landowners and state subsidies. In spite of his questionable theoretical framework, Lyashchenko gives an informative summary of Russia's economic development in the eighteenth century and of the contribution made to it by Peter's legislative activity.

The Reforms of Peter

"When Peter the Great," says Comrade Stalin, "was confronted with the more advanced countries of the West, and feverishly went about building factories and mills to supply his army and improve the defense of the country, it was a peculiar attempt to jump out of

Reprinted with permission of The Macmillan Company from *History of the National Economy of Russia to the Revolution of 1917*, by Peter I. Lyashchenko (New York, 1949), pp. 267–270, 283–288, 291–295, 296–297. Translated by L. M. Herman.

Sergei F. Platonov

PETER THE GREAT NOT A REVOLUTIONARY INNOVATOR

In the first selection from the pen of this distinguished historian, we have read a high estimate of the accomplishments of Muscovy in solving Russia's traditional diplomatic and political tasks and problems. It will not come as a surprise, therefore, to find Platonov arguing that, however impressive and exciting Peter's personality, the Emperor did little that was radically new; that he only followed in the footsteps of his Muscovite predecessors; and that like them, he was not always successful in solving Russia's basic problems.

Our approach to the description of the era of transformations stemmed from a conviction that this period has been predetermined by the entire course of Russia's previous history. We have therefore examined the essential features of pre-Petrine life as it had evolved up to the moment when Peter began his work. We then acquainted ourselves with Peter's upbringing and the circumstances of his childhood and youth, in order to understand the development of the reformer's personality. And, finally, we have studied the character of Peter's reforming activity in all its aspects.

What are we to conclude from our study of Peter? Was his activity traditional, or did it represent a sharp and sudden revolution in the life of the Muscovite state, for which the country was entirely unprepared?

The answer is quite clear. Peter's reforms were not a revolution either in their substance or their results. Peter was not a "royal revolutionary," as he is sometimes called.

To begin with, Peter's reform was not a political revolution. In foreign policy, Peter closely followed the old directions and fought the old enemies; he achieved unprecedented success in the West, but he did not resolve by his successes the old political problems in relation to Poland and Turkey. He did a great deal toward the attainment of the cherished aspirations of Muscovy, but he did not complete all that had to be done. The conquest of the Crimea and the partitions

From Sergei F. Platonov, *Lektsii po Russkoi Istorii* [*Lectures on Russian History*], edited by I. Blinov (St. Petersburg, 1904), pp. 457–460. Translated by Mirra Ginsburg.

of Poland under Catherine II were our nation's next steps forward, directly continuing the work of Peter and of old Russia.

In domestic policy, Peter did not leave the seventeenth century far behind. The organization of the state remained the same. The fullness of sovereign power as it had been formulated by Tsar Aleksei in the words of the Acts of the Apostles, was given more extensive definition under Peter in the Military Regulation, in decrees, and in the philosophic tracts of Feofan Prokopovich. Local self-government, which had been a class institution, unpolitical in character before Peter's day, remained the same under Peter. Bureaucratic institutions continued to be superior to the organs of self-government of the social classes, and although the outward forms of the administration were altered, its general nature remained unchanged. Under Peter as before him, the administration was based on a mixture of principles: personal and collegial, bureaucratic and estate-based.

Nor did Peter's work bring about a social revolution. The position of the various classes within the state, as well as their mutual relationships, remained essentially unchanged. The attachment of social classes to state obligations remained in full force; only the manner in which these duties were rendered was changed. Under Peter, the gentry had not yet attained the right to own people as a matter of class privilege; it owned the peasants' labor merely because it needed material security to perform service to the state. The peasants had not yet lost their personal civil rights and were not regarded as full serfs. The course of history led to progressive intensification of their bondage, but, as we have seen, this process had begun before Peter and was completed after him.

It is equally impossible to see any revolutionary significance in Peter's economic policy, its objectves or its results. Peter gave clear definition to the goal toward which his predecessors had already moved in halting steps—the goal of raising the country's productive capacity. His program for the development of the nation's industry and trade had already been familiar in the seventeenth century—to Krizhanich[1] theoretically, and to Ordyn-Nashchokin practically. The results achieved by Peter did not place the national economy on a new foundation. Agricultural labor remained the principal source of

[1] Iurii Krizhanich (died 1683), Croat writer and priest, is frequently considered the ancestor of Pan-Slavism.—Ed.

the nation's wealth. Possessing after Peter's death 200 factories and plants, Russia continued to be an agricultural country, with but a weakly developed industry and trade.

Culturally, Peter cannot be said to have brought anything radically new into Russian life either. The old cultural ideals had begun to be questioned before him. The problem of new foundations in cultural life had come into sharp focus in the seventeenth century. Tsar Aleksei had already in part been a representative of the new tendencies, and Tsar Feodor had embodied them fully. In this respect, Tsar Peter was their direct heir. But while his predecessors had been the pupils of Kievan theologians and scholastics, Peter was the pupil of Western European bearers of Protestant culture. Peter's forebears troubled themselves little about disseminating their knowledge among the people, while Peter regarded this as one of his chief tasks. In this he differed substantially from the seventeenth-century sovereigns. Thus, Peter was not the originator of the cultural trend, but the first ruler who ventured to carry out the reform. The results of his activity were very great: he gave his people the widest opportunity for material and cultural association with the entire civilized world. But one must not overestimate these results. Under Peter, education affected only the upper strata of society, and even there only to a small extent; the mass of the people retained its old outlook.

But if, as we see, Peter's activity introduced nothing that was radically new as compared with the past, why did his reforms acquire among later generations, and even among Peter's contemporaries, the reputation of a radical state revolution? Why did Peter, who acted along traditional lines, become a royal revolutionary in the eyes of Russian society?

There are two main reasons for this. One may be found in the attitude of society toward Peter; the other, in Peter himself.

Russian society was tremendously impressed by Peter's broad and decisive reforms, in striking contrast to the cautious and slow policies of the government of Muscovy. This society lacked the sense of historical tradition which was so strong in Peter's genius. Near-sighted Muscovites explained both the foreign undertakings and the domestic innovations of the Tsar by his personal whims, views, and habits. They contrasted specific innovations with equally specific customs of long standing, and concluded that Peter was mercilessly destroying their

past and traditions. Behind the abolished and newly established particulars of social life they failed to see the general nature of the old and the new. Public opinion had not yet reached the capacity to generalize on such a level as to be aware of the fundamental principles of Russian national and social life, and it dealt only with individual facts. This was why Peter's contemporaries who witnessed the innumerable innovations, both large and small, felt that Peter had turned the entire life of the country upside down, leaving no stone of the old edifice in place. They regarded transformations in the old order as its total destruction.

This impression among contemporaries was furthered by Peter himself. His conduct, his entire manner of action, suggested that Peter was not merely changing the old forms, but that he hated them passionately and fought to abolish them. Instead of improving the old, he seemed to be driving it out and forcibly replacing it by new ways of life. This frenetic attitude toward his work, the militant character of his activity, the needless cruelties, the coercion and severity of his measures—all these were the results of impressions left by the experiences of Peter's childhood and youth. Having grown up in the midst of enmity and strife, having seen both open rebellion and secret opposition, Peter did not enter upon the path of reform in a calm and even spirit. He hated the milieu which had poisoned his childhood, and the dark aspects of the old life which had given rise to that milieu. Therefore, in destroying and changing the old ways, he brought into his activity as a monarch also the feelings of a man who had suffered because of them. Compelled to fight for power and independence at the beginning of his reign, Peter preserved his fighting methods to the end. Initially faced by open enmity, and even later feeling the hidden resistance of society, Peter constantly fought for what he believed and considered right and useful. This explains those aspects of Peter's reforming activity which lent his reform the features of a sharp and forcible revolution.

In its essence, however, this reform was not a revolution.

Richard Pipes

CHAPTER 5

THE PARTIAL DISMANTLING OF THE PATRIMONIAL STATE

The system we have described was so immune from pressures from below that, in theory at least, it should have perpetuated itself *ad infinitum*. The crown's monopoly on political authority, its ownership of nearly all the landed, commercial and industrial wealth, its tight grip on the social classes, and its ability to isolate the country from unwanted foreign influences all seemingly combined to assure perpetual stasis. One can see no way that the Muscovite population could have altered the system had it wanted to; and, as has been indicated, it had excellent reasons to dislike changes. The great patrimonial states of the Hellenistic world with which the Muscovite state had much in common collapsed not from internal causes but as a result of conquest. The same held true of the related regimes of the 'oriental despotic' type in Asia and Central America.

Yet in Russia the patrimonial system did experience significant change, though it was change induced, in the first place, from above, by the government itself. The reason why the Russian monarchy found it necessary to tamper with the closed and self-perpetuating system which had cost it so much trouble to establish has mainly to do with Russia's relations to western Europe. Of all the regimes of the patrimonial and oriental-despotic type, Russia was geographically closest to western Europe. Furthermore, as both a Christian and a Slav country, she was culturally the most sensitive to western influences. She was the first, therefore, to become aware of the inadequacies of her rigid, regulated system when confronted – especially on the field of battle – with the more flexible and 'scientifically' managed institutions of the west. Russia was the earliest of the non-western countries to undergo that crisis of self-confidence which other non-western peoples have experienced since; a crisis caused by the realization that inferior and odious as it may appear, western civilization had discovered the secrets of power and wealth which one had to acquire if one wished successfully to compete with it.

This awareness dawned upon Russia's leadership in the second half of the seventeenth century, two hundred years before a similar shock was to jolt Japan, another uncolonized non-western power. After overcoming initial perplexity, Russia launched a process of internal reform which, ebbing and flowing, has continued ever since. First to be reformed was the army. But it soon became evident that the mere copying of western military techniques was not enough, because the more fundamental sources of the west's strength lay in the social, economic and educational base; this too then had to be emulated. Increased contact with the west made the rulers of Russia realize that their might was more apparent than real; the system under which the crown owned or controlled everything set strict limits on what they could accomplish because it deprived them of support from a freely acting society. In response, the crown began cautiously to alter the system. Initially it hoped merely to graft individual western borrowings on the patrimonial system and thus enjoy the best of both worlds. 'We need Europe for a few decades, and then we must turn our back on it', Peter the Great once confided to his collaborators.[1] But once set in motion the process could not be stopped at will because as the social élite gained strength and independence from the government's reforming moves it began to pressure the monarchy on its own behalf, wresting from it rights which it had not intended to give them. The end result was the dismantling – partly vuluntarily, partly under duress – of three out of four mainstays of the patrimonial regime. During the ninety-nine years which elapsed between 18 February 1762, when dvoriane were formally exempt from obligatory state service, and 19 February 1861, when the serfs received their freedom, the hierarchy of social estates bound to the crown was dissolved. The 'ranks' (*chiny*) were set free and, transformed into estates (*sosloviia*), allowed to pursue their own interests. Concurrently, the crown gave up its proprietary claim to the country's economic resources. In the second half of the eighteenth century, it surrendered its monopoly on land by giving dvoriane full and unconditional title to their estates, and abolished nearly all the monopolies on trade and industry. Finally, the country was thrown open to the virtually unimpeded flow of foreign ideas.

These developments seemed to presage Russia's ultimate political westernization as well, that is, to lead to an arrangement under which state and society would coexist in some kind of an equilibrium. The patrimonial system from which the social, economic and cultural supports had been withdrawn appeared doomed. Or so it seemed to the majority of observers of imperial Russia, native and foreign alike. It is, however, a matter of historical record that this denouement did not occur. The reforms carried out by the imperial government fell short of

their promise. While willing to concede its population considerable economic opportunities, civil rights and intellectual liberties, the monarchy insisted on retaining its monopoly on political authority. The patrimonial idea, even if truncated, survived behind the façade of the imperial state, and only the most perceptive observers who refused to be deceived by the mirage of 'historical trends' realized this fact – among them Speranskii, Chaadaev and Custine. Why the imperial government failed to take the final, decisive step and 'cap the edifice', as it was euphemistically called in the nineteenth century, is a complex problem that will be discussed in the proper place. Suffice it to say that it firmly refused to share political power with society; and even when finally compelled in 1905 by revolutionary events to grant a constitution it yielded more in form than in substance.

Incomplete reform injected a fatal contradiction into the relationship between state and society in Russia. For reasons of national power and prestige, the population was encouraged to educate and enrich itself, to develop a public spirit, to come – when asked – to the aid of 'its' government. At the same time it was expected to tolerate a paternalistic regime which acknowledged for itself no restraints or norms, and not only excluded the citizenry from participating in the formulation of laws but forbade it under severe penalties openly to contemplate any such participation.

Such was the main source of the tension which underlies the course of post-Petrine Russian history. An older system which for all its limitations had been at least consistent was abandoned in favour of something half-old, half-new. This arrangement steadily deprived the rulers of Russia of the power they had once enjoyed without giving them in return any of the benefits of liberal and democratic government.

The ultimate outcome was the erosion of royal power and, in as much as royal power was in Russia the only source of legitimate authority, general political disorganization. In order to divert the attention of the élite from politics, the monarchy amply gratified its material wants. Catherine the Great in effect divided the Russian empire into two halves, each of which she handed over for exploitation to one of the two constituent elements of the service class, dvorianie landowners and bureaucrats. The two groups were allowed undisturbed to exploit the country as long as they delivered to the crown its quota of taxes and recruits, and refrained from meddling in politics. Russia was now for all practical purposes farmed out to private interests. As a price for maintaining autocratic prerogative under conditions where it no longer made sense, the crown had to surrender most of its title to the country.

The resulting arrangement was curious in the extreme. The formal powers of Russia's sovereigns in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries