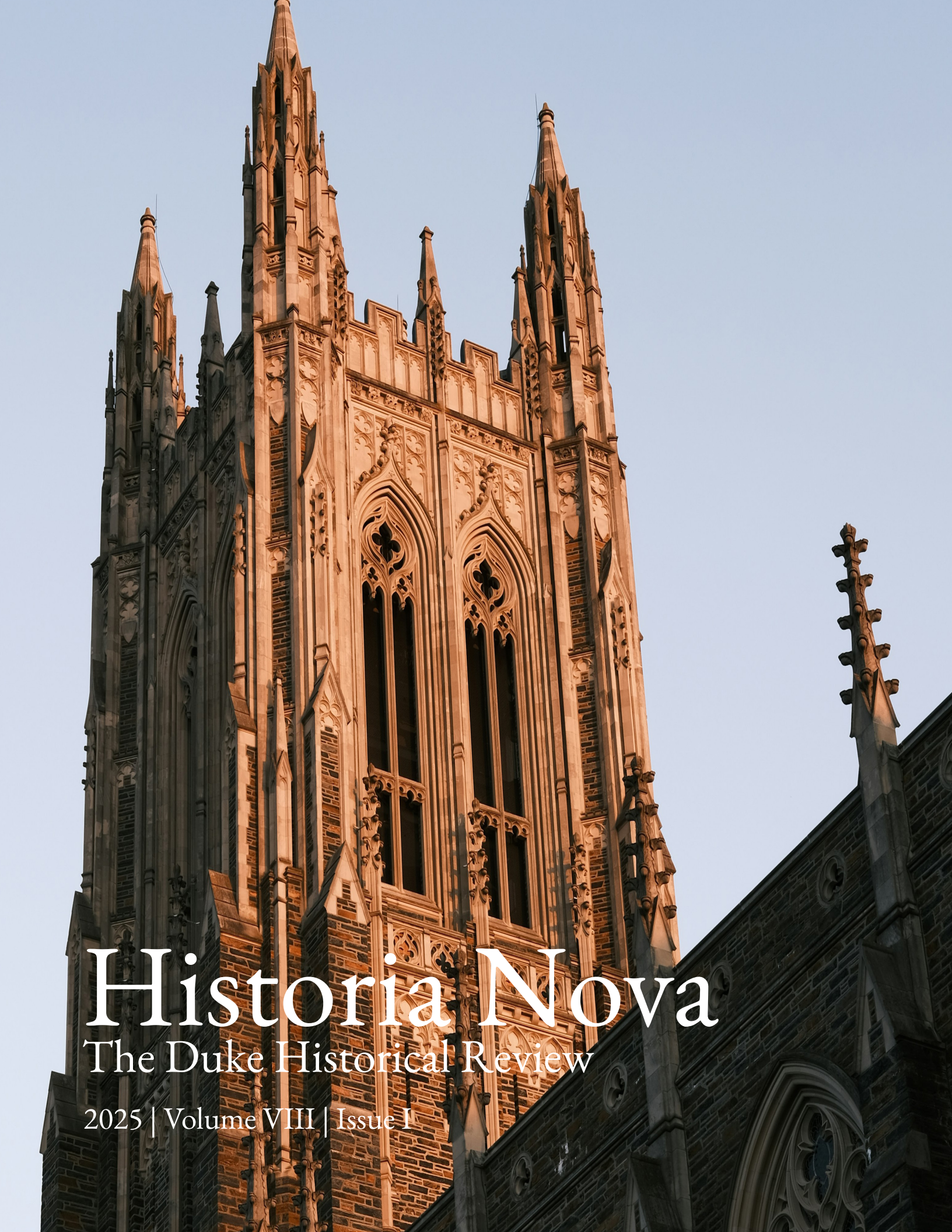

Historia Nova

The Duke Historical Review

2025 | Volume VIII | Issue I

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Historia Nova
The Duke Historical Review

Duke University

2025

Volume VIII

Issue I

Preface

James Chappel, PhD (Director of Undergraduate Studies)

Dear readers,

You are holding in your hands, or on your screen, the results of many hundreds of hours of work by talented undergraduates across the country. Historical writing at this level is an act of passion, and it takes even more of it to edit and publish it. Maybe it seems like a fool's errand at some level – after all, there's already so much historical writing out there, most of it languishing unread. Why add to the pile? Trust me, this is not only a question that undergraduates ask. It's one that I ask, too, every time I type a word.

We live in challenging times for historical reasoning and scholarship. Academic freedom is currently under assault, from all corners, and humanistic study has long been undervalued. But from my perspective, there is nothing more human, and more humane, than what you see in *Historia Nova*. For what you see here are students devoting themselves to the patient and empathetic study of the past: of other people, different from us in every way. The goal of studies like these is not to judge, but to understand, and to do some using a combination of scientific and theoretical and literary tools. This is the very essence of the humanities, and even the very essence of what it is to be human. What you're seeing here is evidence that, despite everything, this most human of tasks continues to be pursued, in new and exciting ways. So I'm glad you're reading this. But in a very real sense, it doesn't matter if you do or not, because volumes like these have a purpose of their own.

This volume is also a celebration of another historian who labored patiently, and this one over many years: Vasant Kaiwar, longtime member of the History Department and one of our most beloved teacher-scholars. In his honor, the department has begun to sponsor a yearly essay prize, with a focus on the themes of race, empire, and global history that were his own specialty. You will find in this volume the first winner of that prize, and in future years we hope to show you more.
Thank you for reading – and, even more, thank you for writing, whether you wrote something in this volume or whether you are just writing for your own pleasure. Keep writing, and keep reading. The world needs it.

James Chappel, PhD

Letter from the Editors

Dear Reader,

The Editorial Board is beyond excited to present the eighth volume of *Historia Nova*.

Above all, our journal aims to provide readers with access to original and creative historical research from undergraduate authors across the world. As in previous issues, the latest iteration of The Duke Historical Review introduces unique arguments to previously untouched historical eras, subjects, and issues, while shedding new light on already covered topics. Our editors have worked diligently to curate this latest installment of historical inquiry, and we invite you to join us in learning from the methodical research produced by this year's group of exceptional authors.

In this issue, we hope that you'll enjoy selections touching on subjects as disparate as the Russian Empire and the astronomical pursuits of John Quincy Adams, but that in each of these pieces you'll find a common commitment to critical primary source analysis. In the first section of Volume VIII, you will hear from authors hailing from Columbia University and Tufts University, as they engage with topics relating to pseudoscience, the manipulation of historical texts, and silviculture.

Additionally, we are proud to announce that, for the first time, *Historia Nova* will be publishing the original research produced by the 2024 winner of the Duke University History Department's prestigious Vasant Kaiwar Prize. The authors of such papers are recognized for engaging in thoughtful, primary source research pertaining to imperial history and Eurocentrism. For this inaugural prize winner, we are pleased to share the work of author Nathan Strang, who engages with press reports detailing public responses to Francis Galton's ideas on eugenics.

Finally, we are privileged to showcase the original scholarship of Patrick Duan, winner of the Duke University History Department's 2023 William T. Laprade Prize for Highest Distinction in a history thesis. Patrick's work is a culmination of several years of dedicated analysis on "The Genealogy of Russian Historical Exceptionalism and the Road to Revolution." We believe this work, along with the rest of the pieces showcased in this issue, are demonstrative of the incredible capabilities of undergraduate historians.

Covering vastly different subjects and periods of time, the research in the latest iteration of *Historia Nova* is meant to inform, inspire, and ignite your intellectual curiosity. It's been a privilege to work with each and every one of these authors and we thank them for sharing their important contributions to historical scholarship with us.

Sincerely,
The Historia Nova Editorial Board

Our Mission

Historia Nova features exceptional historical analysis from undergraduate students at institutions across the English-speaking world. Our publication reveals the field's dynamism and challenges the ways in which history is interpreted and continually re-interpreted by scholars. We hope you enjoy this issue. For more information about our organization at Duke University please refer to our website at (https://history.duke.edu/new-events/undergraduate) or email us at (dukehistorianova@gmail.com).

Historia Nova Editorial Team

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By Daniel Bethke, Tufts Universtiy

"Vita enim mortuorum in memoria posita est vivorum"

"The life of the dead is placed in memory of the living"

- Cicero

Introduction

Many people know John Quincy Adams for his role as architect of the Monroe Doctrine, his stubborn advocacy for internal improvements, and his fiery abolitionist zeal. His scientific pursuits receive less popular attention. Consequently, few people, even those otherwise greatly enthusiastic for presidential politics and biographies, ever see all sides of him. The gap is particularly troubling because Adams' passion for science took up the majority of his free time for a significant portion of his life, and it has left a firmly-stamped legacy on American society. As the historian Samuel Flagg Bemis put it, "No statesman since Franklin had done so much to advance the cause of science in America."[1] One cannot gain a fair picture of Adams' life or times by ignoring his scientific pursuits; that would be like studying Thomas Jefferson without ever exploring *his* scientific passions and pursuits. It is an insidious omission.

Adams' interests were nearly illimitable, but in the scientific realm he was particularly enamored with gardening, metrology, and astronomy. These were not merely dilettante passions but rather fiery extensions of his limitless zeal for internal improvements and government support for intellectual development. His scientific curiosities must therefore be seen in a broader context. He did not develop them due solely to his dual Christian-classical upbringing, nor was it solely some idiosyncratic, unyielding desire to "prove himself." Adams' causes were *all of these plus* his European education, working together within the perfect context of a fledgling, expanding nation. His scientific interests, simultaneously public and private in both cause and consequence, were instrumental to the modern fabric of the country. This aspect of Adams' character deserves far more attention and analysis than modern society and its scholars have heretofore given it.

1 Samuel Flagg Bemis, *John Quincy Adams and the Union* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1956), 523.

In Principio: The Origins of Adams' Scientific Curiosity

Some scholars have attributed Adams' robust interest in science to his Christian upbringing, but this factor forms only the tip of the iceberg. James Traub, for instance, states that an "abiding Christian faith" was a central component of Adams' early education and that his "moral order itself, which dictated a person's deepest obligations, was Christian."[2] Adams' broader dedication to knowledge certainly owes *part* of its origin to the Puritanical need for a literate and educated society; that cannot be ignored. Indeed, this inculcated Puritanical doctrine likely influenced young Adams' philosophy far more than any Enlightenment philosopher.[3] Another component of Adams' deep interest in science was his classical education. Extensive readings of Cicero, Demosthenes, Terence, Tacitus, and other figures from antiquity had informed him about the virtues of knowledge and curiosity in all forms. Adams even compared living without Cicero and Tacitus to living without his limbs.[4] About silviculture in particular, Adams read from Cicero, "If you have a garden in your library, everything will be complete."[5] Later in his life, Adams would design an acorn and oak leaf seal for his written works and correspondence. The motto on the seal came from Cicero's quotation of Cæcilius Statius in the First Tusculan Disputation: Serit arbores quae alteri seculo prosint ("He plants trees for the benefit of later generations").[6]

Still, this Christian-classical upbringing does not explain everything. Most of Adams' political contemporaries had a similar religious and educational background. Yet despite the high prevalence of this shared curriculum, Adams was alone among his generation in the degree to which he so fervently pursued science. It would thus be too convenient and too fallacious to assume that Adams' undeniable Christian-classical upbringing so strictly dictated his later personality. He did not draw his interests solely or even primarily from a Christian-classical canon; frequent correlation does not imply invariable causation. Adams was certainly influenced by these factors, but other, more idiosyncratic experiences such as his time in Europe also played a major role. For instance, Adams' European "travels, his reading, the time spent in the company of men like Francis Dana and Thomas Jefferson had given him a maturity [and] made him conversant on a breadth of subjects that people found astonishing."[7] This personal influence cannot be understated: the elder Adams later recalled to Jefferson that John Quincy "was as much your son as mine."[8]

In this European curriculum, young Adams' father relegated mathematics, chemistry, and other sci-

2 James Traub, *John Quincy Adams: Militant Spirit* (New York: Basic Books, 2017), 15.

3 Alf J. Mapp, Jr., *The Faiths of Our Fathers: What America's Founders Really Believed* (New York: Fall River Press, 2006), 56.

4 Paul Nagel, *John Quincy Adams: A Public Life, A Private Life* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999), 260.

5 Marcus Tullius Cicero, *Letters to His Friends*, ed. Evelyn Shuckburgh (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1920), Perseus Digital Library, CDLXIV (F IX, 4).

6 *Legal Papers of John Adams*, ed. L. Kinvin Wroth and Hiller B. Zobel (Cambridge: Adams Papers, 1965), vol I, vi.

7 David McCullough, *John Adams* (New York: Touchstone, 2001), 324-325.

8 John Adams to Thomas Jefferson, January 22, 1825, in Lester J. Cappon, ed., *The Adams-Jefferson Letters* (Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 1959).

ences to secondary roles as compared with history, philosophy, and literature. The elder Adams emphasized knowledge of science's "rudiments" instead of urging a more comprehensive understanding. To sweeten the pot for his son, who he assumed would not enjoy the subject, he noted, "You will find it as entertaining as an Arabean Tale."[9] At times, John Quincy's father even actively discouraged mathematical and scientific study: "As to Geography, Geometry and Fractions I hope your Master will not insist upon your spending much Time upon them at present."[10]

Both Adamses still viewed math and science as subjects of great importance, just not of *utmost* importance. During evenings together, John and John Quincy frequently reviewed concepts of geometry and trigonometry, fractions, proportions, conic sections, and L'Hôpital's rule. With math in particular, Abigail Adams noted of the father and son while in Auteuil that the "table is covered with mathematical instruments and books, and you hear nothing 'til nine o'clock but of theorem and problems bisecting and dissecting tangents and se[quents]."[11] Part of the reason for the subordination of the sciences came from the elder Adams' self-admitted unfamiliarity with many such topics: "[I]t is thirty years since I thought of Mathematicks, and I found I had lost the little I once knew, especially of these higher Branches of Geometry, so that he is as yet but a smatterer like his Father. However, he has a foundation laid."[12]

Early on in his life, Adams expressed a strong desire to become a poet and seemingly no desire to pursue science, nor politics, even as a dilettante. As a young student in 1786, he even compared reading and translating poetry to building "a monument more lasting than bronze."[13] Throughout his whole life, Adams kept up this interest in poetry whenever he could, even if it was never in a "professional" context. His parents nonetheless put an end to his poetic professional aspirations. Invariably thereafter, in both science and poetry, Adams took great pleasure. The older and more entrenched in politics Adams became, the more he turned to science. It became the most tangible and reliable means for Adams to leave behind the legacy he so desperately sought, especially when few legislative successes and a nonexistent poetic career already endangered that prize.

Scientific thinking therefore served a key purpose for Adams. When involved in treaty negotiations during the War of 1812, for instance, Adams turned to science as an escape from the infuriating intransigence of his British counterparts. Thus, the "more he pondered astronomy, the more enthralled he became and the less he fretted about England's delay in agreeing to discuss peace."[14] Adams' scientific pursuits were less the inevitable consequence of his education or upbringing and moreso a sort of coping mechanism or

9 John Adams to John Quincy Adams, May 14, 1783, in L.H. Butterfield et al., *Adams Family Correspondence* (Massachusetts Historical Society: Cambridge, 1963), vol. 5.

10 John Adams to John Quincy Adams, March 17, 1780, Adams Papers, Massachusetts Historical Society.

11 McCullough, *John Adams,* 325.

12 John Adams to Benjamin Waterhouse, April 23, 1785, Adams Papers, Massachusetts Historical Society.

13 Rhonda Barlow, "'On the Borders of Nonsense': John Quincy Adams, Poet." The Beehive, Massachusetts Historical Society, May 8, 2019, https://www.masshist.org/beehiveblog/2018/12/on-the-borders-of-nonsense-john-quincy-adams-poet/.

14 Nagel, *John Quincy Adams,* 213.

escape for him (plus an intellectual challenge) as he navigated the turbulent sea of politics, into whose tempestuous waters he never wanted to plunge in the first place. Politics was to him a vain, petty, and hypocritical business.[15] Always feeling disgusted with the hustling world of careers and political work post-graduation, Adams frequently sought refuge therefrom. He viewed that world "as a dismal place compared with the pleasures of his intellectual life in Europe and at Harvard. In these he had been a success, but now he must grub for sustenance. 'The hurry of affairs' repelled him, Johnny said."[16] Adams could never *truly* relax, but he found his own idiosyncratic yet still studious method in gardening and other scientific pursuits.

Intellectual pressure also played a major role. The need for constant self-improvement had been drilled into Adams since his youth. To his parents, for whom his becoming a "Blockhead" would have been unpardonable, he was "a project almost as much as a person."[17] Frequently, Adams confessed to his diary that his motives amounted to little more than "shewing what I can do."[18] In part, one may consequently view Adams' scientific interests as merely an extension of his endless quest for self-improvement. Since childhood, Adams had been told by his father, "You come into life with advantages which will disgrace you if your success is mediocre. And if you do not rise to the head not only of your profession, but of your country, it will be owing to your own laziness, slovenliness, and obstinacy."[19] These rather harsh words reveal a key aspect of the Adams family model: members could either rise to the highest peaks of human achievement and renown or fall into the darkest depths of alcoholism, destitution, and obscurity. There was no middle ground. Later, Adams would reflect with Christian-classical undertones, "I [content] myself with the consolation, that even this drudgery of Science contributes to Virtue, though it lead not to wealth or honour."[20]

Adams thus became fascinated with silviculture, metrology, and astronomy for three reasons: (1) his quasi-Puritanical, classically-informed upbringing that emphasized the need for intellectual purity and virtue, (2) his need to prove himself and satisfy his fiery ambition, and (3) his need for a peaceful refuge from the daily toil and strife of political life, all of which had been greatly bolstered by his time and education in Europe. As time went on, these journeys abroad became increasingly prominent points of rhetorical comparison for Adams. He would frequently invoke European technological advancements, e.g. their "light-houses of the skies," as cause for further American investment in similar pursuits. To have not started in the race for attaining a certain scientific advancement was bad enough, but it was orders of magnitude worse to have not started when someone else already had.

Biographers and scholars like James Traub, Paul Nagel, and Samuel Flagg Bemis have variously identified one or two of the above factors (usually his

15 McCullough, *John Adams,* 219.

16 Nagel, *John Quincy Adams,* 49.

17 Ellis, *First Family,* 129.

18 *The Diaries of John Quincy Adams*, June 13, 1825, Primary Source Cooperative, Massachusetts Historical Society, https://www.primarysourcecoop.org/jqa/.

19 Mapp, Jr., *The Faiths of Our Fathers,* 57.

20 *The Diaries of John Quincy Adams*, December 31, 1804.

Christian-classical upbringing) as prominent parts of Adams' education and personality, but they have all been relatively single-tracked in their trains of theses; they have neither connected all three components together nor explicitly connected them to Adams' passion for science. There is seldom ever a single answer to such a complicated question as the origin of a person's life-lasting passion. Explanations and analyses of Adams' character must therefore consider these three reasons and others not singularly but together, just in the manner as they affected Adams.

Germinet Terra Herbam Virentem: The Refuge of Gardening

Adams's love of gardening was the natural result of the founding and antebellum generations' encouragement of agricultural and botanical development. Much of this emphasis was borne out of necessity, as the U.S. was still a highly agrarian country. The first six presidents all supported agricultural developments, just as they practiced farming and gardening in their own time, but Adams hoped that the government could play a far larger role in supporting these endeavors than it theretofore had. On a personal level, though, he had loved gardening for as long as he could remember. In 1833, he reflected, "My natural propensity was to raise trees—fruit and forest, from the seed—I had it in early youth, but the course of my life deprived me of the means of pursuing the bent of my inclination."[21] Much like with poetry and many of his other early interests, Adams' upbringing forced gardening to assume a deferential role toward the position for which he had been cultivated: statesmanship.

Because the elder Adams was abroad during much of his son's childhood, the boy spent much time with his mother, who taught him proper farming techniques. The birds and wild animals on the untamed land around the family farm in Quincy excited the boy, leading him to "look on nature with a lover's eye."[22] As with most of his intellectual pursuits, he viewed gardening as simply another way to honor the beautiful divine creation. It was a deeply spiritual act for him, also drawing him closer to the Roman Stoics and their lauded *hortus conclusus* [enclosed garden].

From the elder Adams, the young boy developed an appreciation for "utilitarian" aspects of gardens and farms. There were to be no statues, nor decorative fountains, nor needlessly ornamented barns or other buildings.[23] Simple fields and supplies would do nicely. In 1803, he acquired the British botanist William Forsyth's book *A Treatise on the Culture and Management of Fruit-Trees*, which he joyfully read and encouraged his father to do the same.[24] The guide explained cultivation techniques for pears, peaches, and plums plus several other types of fruit, but its most salient feature was the novel method it recommended for using a plaster to revive moribund trees. The con-

21 *The Diaries of John Quincy Adams*, June 7, 1833.

22 Josiah Quincy, *Memoir of the Life of John Quincy Adams* (Boston: Crosby, Nichols, Lee and Company, 1860), 2.

23 Mona Rose McKindley, "With a Heart of Oak: John Quincy Adams, Scientific Farmer and Landscape Gardener," (ALM thesis, Harvard University, 2013), 13-14.

24 *The Diaries of John Quincy Adams*, September 11, 1803.

troversial mixture of lime, dung, ashes, and urine drew heavy criticism, and its efficacy was highly dubious.[25] They had been successfully used to treat the cankers of fruit trees at the Kensington Royal Gardens, but this success may have owed more to careful pruning and fertilization than to the plaster mix.

In summer 1804, Adams examined the peach trees of fellow Quincy resident Captain Benjamin Beale, which were infested with worms.[26] He took one of them for closer inspection and pondered a great deal about potential remedies to insect infestations in fruits. The Adams family garden in Quincy had the same problem, so he was desperate for a solution. After planting some new trees and drawing from his reading, he eventually found his trees in far healthier conditions. Yet even when the worms posed a threat no longer, he could not contain his fascination, and he turned to William Dandridge Peck's *Natural History of the Slug Worm*, which served as a model for Adams' experiments with pear tree leaves to prevent future infestations.[27] Here, Adams vigorously demonstrated his zealous scientific mind. By all means necessary, he was determined to solve all problems that confronted him in his garden. Adams attended lectures on plant reproduction, read books on proper farming techniques, and continued to cultivate his garden.[28] Over the next several years, he kept up this habit no matter where his latest diplomatic assignment had taken him. During his time in St. Petersburg in particular, he spent nearly every day walking through the Summer Garden. However, like his father in Europe before him,[29] he found the hot summer climate quite insalubrious. Gardening, or at least the appreciation thereof, consequently became more of a therapeutic pleasure. This was especially necessary given Adams' ongoing depression. His most reliable retreat was the enduring nature of such bucolic pleasures as peaches, plums, and pines: they filled "the vacuity of time, till I loathe the bustle and turmoil of political life, and long for permanent repose."[30]

By the time Adams became President, he had been engaged in gardening for several decades, and he was determined to use all the resources his office now afforded him to continue that pursuit. The White House he came to essentially still lay upon a field. Across Pennsylvania Avenue was open country, and a few cattle and sheep freely grazed on the mostly barren surrounding meadow.[31] Jefferson had drawn up plans for a garden, but these did not come to fruition, and James Madison's innovations left little remaining after the War of 1812. Adams set out to change this. He began planting right away. Discontinuing many of his walks to increase the time spent in the garden of the President's House, he hired a new "scientific gardener"

25 Josie Stuart, "Plant Health at the RHS: a very brief history." The Royal Horticultural Society, May 7, 2024, https://www.rhs.org.uk/science/articles/history-of-plant-health.

26 *The Diaries of John Quincy Adams*, July 5, 1804.

27 *The Diaries of John Quincy Adams*, July 16, 1804.

28 *The Diaries of John Quincy Adams*, June 19, 1807.

29 McCullough, *John Adams,* 300.

30 *The Diaries of John Quincy Adams*, August 29, 1826.

31 Barbara McEwan, "Solace for a President," *American Horticulturist* 71, no. 10 (October 1992), 28.

named John Ouseley, with whom he frequently conversed about horticultural topics.[32] Adams spent up to two hours per day in the garden. If he did not know the name of a particular plant, he consulted Ouseley. To supplement these lengthy outdoors conversations, Adams read Henri-Louis Duhamel du Monceau's *Physique des Arbres*. He chronicled everything he noticed in the garden. Unfortunately, he still had not figured out how to eliminate white worms from peach trees.

> "There are other Roots and fruits which escaped my notice; and two sorts of Strawberries, the creeping Scarlet and the towering hautboy— I noticed two or three shoots of peach trees, this years growth, from buds which he [Ouseley] told me he had inoculated last July upon Plumb-stock Suckers— The Plumb trees he said had never born, though they now present a fair shew of fruit— The old Peach trees looked sickly, and on examining near the ground one of them we found under the bark two of the destructive white worms—the Algeria exitiosa."[33]

Around the President's House, Adams planted oak trees and some foreign plants sent to him by friends and diplomats. With his valet Antoine, he planted several rows of walnuts and apple seeds.[34] The two frequently went on hikes together, observing the bucolic pleasures around the burgeoning capital city. Sometimes, Antoine would bring him back a few plants, silkworms, or other specimens for closer study. No matter what he saw, Adams rejoiced. Even the weeds pleased him.[35] He continued to press Ouseley about the names of every plant, but he dejectedly admitted it would take at least six months of nonstop study to memorize them all.[36] By now, nearly all that Adams would talk or write in his diary about was his garden delights. In part, he had been forced into this position by a recalcitrant and indignant Congress, which prevented his efforts at internal improvements and other policies from properly manifesting. They had acquiesced to one policy he supported in passing an 1826 resolution urging the cultivation of mulberry trees for closer study of silkworms, but they were still largely intransigent.

Searching for acorns in the woods gave Adams especially great pleasure. It was his "best means to 'chase Anguish and doubt, and fear, and sorrow, and pain.'"[37] He felt a deep sense of compassion for the plants that had been victims of frost and hail, "which broke and lacerated piteously most of their tender leaves—This is the second enemy through which my infant plantation has had to run the gauntlet."[38] The serious and concerned tones in which he spoke about his plants reveal how deeply connected he was to them; it was as if they were his children. Adams continued his formal silvicultural study by ordering massive en-

32 McKindley, "With a Heart of Oak," 26.

33 *The Diaries of John Quincy Adams*, May 18, 1827.

34 *The Diaries of John Quincy Adams*, April 24, 1827.

35 Bemis, *John Quincy Adams and the Union*, 122.

36 *The Diaries of John Quincy Adams*, June 18, 1827.

37 Nagel, *John Quincy Adams,* 310.

38 *The Diaries of John Quincy Adams*, May 5, 1828.

cyclopedias (more than 1,200 pages each) of dendrology from London and Paris.[39] He kept receiving seeds from abroad, and he frequently consulted the works of Malphigi, Grew, Hales, and Bonnet.[40] Inspired by these texts, Adams also corresponded with "fellow scientific gardener" William Prince, who sent him a horticultural pamphlet and encouraged him to visit his garden.[41] Every day, he measured his seedlings' growth and waited eagerly for them to sprout. He was a meticulous chronicler.

Near the end of Adams' presidency, he began focusing more on trees (silviculture) than fruits and other crops (pomology). This shift remained for the rest of his life, causing him to later write that "there appears to me to be no species of agriculture so commendable for a young man to devote himself, as the raising of trees."[42] Trees, especially oak, were essential to the burgeoning American nation and its many industries. Yet the rapid growth of that nation had been quickly depleting much of the remaining oak forests. By loosely interpreting a previously-passed act of Congress,[43] Adams established a 30,000 acre reserve of over 100,000 oak trees in Florida. This was not an easy process; scattered Spanish holdings in the area still remained, which required months of "tortuous legal effort" to transfer to the government. [44]

Adams' goal was largely nationalistic. Paralleling his internal improvements and Monroe Doctrine, the timber reserve came at an urgent moment: already, more than half of the accessible coastal timber in Florida had been removed.[45] The reserve could thus have been crucial to the growth of American shipbuilding, commerce, and defense, but the subsequent Jackson administration eliminated it before it reached even a third of its intended size. Consequently, they also eliminated the possibility for experiments and new scientific knowledge about tree cultivation and pests to arise at the site, as Adams had intended. That abandonment is particularly puzzling because it does not comport at all with the Jackson administration's myriad future additions to other gardens. Furthermore, his administration never removed the national botanic garden planted by the Adams-led Columbian Institute for the Promotion of Arts and Sciences. Jackson did, however, destroy all the trees and gardens *Adams himself* had planted at the White House, so the act was likely more a consequence of personal spite than consistent policy-making. Still, creating the reserve was a groundbreaking action and became "the first action of conservation by an American president."[46]

Adams' interest in cataloging the natural world continued over the next several years. He instructed the Secretary of the Treasury to send every American consul a note stating that the President wanted samples of

39 Traub, *John Quincy Adams,* 360.

40 *The Diaries of John Quincy Adams*, May 19, 1827.

41 McKindley, "With a Heart of Oak," 28.

42 *The Diaries of John Quincy Adams*, August 31, 1836.

43 Bemis, *John Quincy Adams and the Union*, 123.

44 William R. Adams, "Florida Live Oak Farm of John Quincy Adams," *The Florida Historical Quarterly* 51, no. 2 (1972), 135.

45 Adams, "Florida Live Oak Farm of John Quincy Adams," 131.

46 Traub, *John Quincy Adams,* 360.

the finest seeds plus planting and pest information to be sent to the U.S.[47] Congress allocated no funds for this bold project, and many of the seeds surely died on their transatlantic voyages, but Adams was nonetheless ecstatic when he received his first shipment, Spanish chestnuts, within a few months. He also continued his experiments, including one to see "whether stones and seeds from grafted or budded trees would germinate."[48] The prevailing conclusion from all his experiments was a crucial one in contemporary horticulture: plants tend to thrive when naturally seeded, i.e. not by humans. Unfortunately for Adams, this meant that "the plants which I most cherish are the most apt to disappoint me and die."[49]

After his presidency, Adams continued his gardening habits, always straying away from excess "embellishment."[50] He eventually began corresponding with the young Andrew Jackson Downing (no relation to the seventh president, though he did marry Adams' grandniece), who eventually drew up the plans for the National Mall and was the first advocate for creating Central Park in New York. The two agreed that American trees, not imported ones, should line the important boulevards in the capital. Adams joyfully sent Downing dozens of seedling specimens he had cultivated, and Downing gladly reciprocated. In 1841, he published *A Treatise on the Theory and Practice of Landscape Gardening*, which he dedicated to Adams, "the lover of rural pursuits."[51] That such a highly influential figure in the history of scientific gardening dedicated his work to Adams reveals the former president's strong and unwavering support for that field. It is highly possible that Downing's later work in designing the National Mall and Central Park would never have occurred were it not for Adams' continued support and influence. In a small part, he was responsible for these achievements.

Adams' interest in landscape gardening lasted for the rest of his life, supplemented by readings from John Claudius Loudon, Thomas Whately, Hermann Pückler-Moskau, Phillip Miller, Humphrey Marshall, John Evelyn, and other prominent figures in the field.[52] These works dealt variously with bucolic symbolism in literature, color combinations, the history of famous gardens, and cultural meanings of certain trees. Adams' study habits were thus highly interdisciplinary: science, especially as concerned silviculture, was a symphony of thought and inquiry that required proper contextualization in every related field.

Gardening was not just a personal pursuit for Adams; he heavily encouraged his children to cultivate their own plants too. Together, they would plant seeds and sprout them in glass jars for future observation. Like his father before him, Adams wanted his children to be proud of their local vegetables, fruit trees, and New England berries.[53] Here again, in this love of the

47 McEwan, "Solace for a President," 30.

48 McEwan, "Solace for a President," 31.

49 John Quincy Adams, *Memoirs of John Quincy Adams, Vol. 8: Comprising Portions of His Diary From 1795 to 1848*, ed. Charles Francis Adams (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott & Co., 1876), 23.

50 McKindley, "With a Heart of Oak," 32.

51 Andrew Jackson Downing, *A Treatise on the Theory and Practice of Landscape Gardening* (Boston: C.C. Little & Co., 1841), title page

52 McKindley, "With a Heart of Oak," 36-37.

53 Shepherd, *The Adams Chronicles,* 315.

land, his fervent nationalism shines through. In summer 1836, he taught his granddaughters how to plant and care for seedling trees. He was happy that they seemed to genuinely enjoy the act, and he reminded himself to keep encouraging them in it: "An interest in the Life of Plants is more rational than in that of cats, dogs, Parrots or monkies and by its capability of being made useful deserves to be cherished, and cultivated—I had the natural taste for raising plants from the seed even in my childhood, but the course of my life has not indulged me with its gratification."[54]

For the rest of his life, gardening remained his "great solace."[55] He continued searching for acorns and planting trees around his Mount Wollaston farm, often working with his son Charles Francis. They assiduously labored in bud grafting hundreds of fruit trees, transplanting seedlings, and other tasks. His choices of plants too became far more eclectic and experimental. As with every pursuit he undertook, Adam scolded himself for getting so immersed in this task that it prevented his progress in other labors, but this feeling only reveals the heights of dedication to scientific gardening: "I linger over these things morning and afternoon, till the half days are inexcusably wasted—and I do nothing else."[56]

Ultimately, gardening for Adams served a primary purpose of providing a retreat from the surrounding turbulent political world. Over the course of his life, he planted thousands of seeds, many of which eventually sprouted into towering giants of brilliant timber. As many components of his political agenda failed to materialize, and as his family seemed to fall apart when two of his sons died due to alcoholism, he turned himself wholly toward the "enclosed world of the garden... while the world beyond his gate connived at his downfall."[57] Raising fruit trees was far more congenial than raising livestock or any other agrarian pursuit. Despite how often nearby farmers mocked him for his bold cultivation efforts through the harsh New England winters, Adams persisted. He had to prove himself right and "prove the universe wrong."[58]

As was often the case, Adams was far ahead of his time. The powerful nations of Europe had devoted "voluminous legislation" to studying silviculture and enacting conservation laws, but the U.S. "had almost totally neglected it."[59] He planted, therefore, both for the public and for himself. The older he became, the more certain he was that his only assured way of benefiting future generations was by planting trees.[60] He cherished the thought of his posterity just like the Roman thinkers he revered.[61] Pouring his soul into his work, he remarked with great pride that a tree he planted today "in a century from this day may bear timber for the floating Castles of my Country, and fruit for the

54 *The Diaries of John Quincy Adams*, August 31, 1836.

55 Traub, *John Quincy Adams,* 372.

56 *The Diaries of John Quincy Adams*, June 20, 1833.

57 Traub, *John Quincy Adams,* 361.

58 Nagel, *John Quincy Adams,* 350.

59 Adams, "Florida Live Oak Farm of John Quincy Adams," 133.

60 Nagel, *John Quincy Adams,* 367.

61 Traub, *John Quincy Adams,* 389.

subsistence health and comfort of my descendants."[62] Literally and figuratively, many of the seeds he and his family planted still live on today.

Subicite Terram: A Boundless Fascination with Weights and Measures

Of all of Adams' myriad interests, metrology is perhaps the most idiosyncratic. It reflects his illimitable desire to catalog and systematize everything, as seen with his 14,000 page daily diary and the timing of his daily walks. Article I, Section 8 of the Constitution guaranteed Congress the power to fix the standard of weights and measures across the states.[63] However, despite past efforts by Washington and Jefferson to achieve metrological uniformity, the real quantity a weight or measurement represented had not yet been fixed by the early 1800s; a kilogram in one country could have been slightly different than a kilogram in another. This issue made accurate international comparisons of volume, weight, height, and length impossible. Several proposals existed for rectifying this issue, but still no international standard existed. This deeply frustrated Adams. He thus began his odyssey into the world of metrology with a fervent "wish to impose intellectual clarity and arithmetic order upon the fuzzy world."[64] At the Senate's instruction in March 1817, he embarked on a multi-year journey to create "a statement relative to the regulations and standards for weights and measures in the several States, and relative to the proceedings in foreign countries for establishing uniformity in weights and measures."[65]

The first step was understanding the differences between the competing systems. He toiled day after day in his attempts at comparing Russian, French, and English standards. At last, he confessed that his efforts to understand the French measurement system were to no avail. Several times in his diary, he further reprimanded himself for using this project as an excuse to "postpone less intriguing tasks."[66] He nonetheless pressed on in his metrological studies, which had now become an "addiction."[67] Working from sunrise to sunset, Adams examined methods for measuring the volume of liquids. He also pondered what common objects could serve as universal bases of measurement. They would have to be small and standard in size, so Adams immediately eliminated such volume-varying objects as grains of wheat but was ultimately indecisive. On October 20, 1820, Adams confessed to his diary his fear that his work would be insufficient: "It will still be very immature, and I fear in many respects extremely incorrect."[68]

As always, though, Adams was underestimating himself, and he later learned that his *Report on Weights and Measures* was "more correct than any that

62 *The Diaries of John Quincy Adams*, November 27, 1830.

63 Ralph W. Smith, *The Federal Basis for Weights and Measures: A Historical Review of Federal Legislative Effort, Statutes, and Administrative Action in the Field of Weights and Measures in the United States* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1958), 2.

64 Traub, *John Quincy Adams,* 169-170.

65 Smith, *The Federal Basis for Weights and Measures*, 6.

66 Nagel, *John Quincy Adams,* 196.

67 Traub, *John Quincy Adams,* 253.

68 *The Diaries of John Quincy Adams*, October 20, 1820.

has been given by any English writer."[69] The finished work is one of the most arcane and erudite texts to ever emerge from the United States Secretary of State's office. It also far surpasses the degree of "scholarly and elaborate" detail utilized by other proponents of metrological uniformity, e.g. Jefferson.[70] Adams' 245-page *Report* traces the evolution of weights and measures from the Hebrews to the Greeks to Renaissance England. He also frequently quotes from great philosophers and scientists. His passion for the subject and its applications is unmistakable:

> Weights and Measures may be ranked among the necessaries of life to every individual of human society. They enter into the economical arrangements and daily concerns of every family. They are necessary to every occupation of human industry; to the distribution and security of every species of property; to every transaction of trade and commerce; to the labors of the husbandman; to the ingenuity of the artificer; to the studies of the philosopher; to the researches of the antiquarian; to the navigation of the mariner; and the marches of the soldier; to all the exchanges of peace, and all the operations of war. The knowledge of them, as in established use, is among the first elements of education, and is often learned by those who learn nothing else, not even to read and write.[71]

Adams was immensely proud of the text and all those who had the "courage and perseverance to read" it.[72] In language he scarcely if ever used when discussing strictly political matters he went so far as to call his metrological work one "of the most memorable transactions of my life."[73] His wife Louisa Catherine was also ecstatic, albeit for a different reason: when her husband finally sent off the *Report* for publishing, she wrote, "Thank God we hear no more of Weights and Measures."[74] Still, to some degree, Adams had "proved himself." Beyond this intellectual goal, the work also reveals elements of his Christian-classical upbringing. As Adams put it, "if the Spirit of Evil is... to be cast down from his dominion over men... then this system of common instruments... will furnish the links of sympathy between the inhabitants of the most distant regions."[75] Here, Adams conceives of metrology as a means of attaining peace. He seamlessly blends Christian theology with classically-informed scientific passion and idiosyncratic ambition. Even Adams' father "professed himself bewildered" and was unable to finish reading the work, though he did praise it for its wealth of knowledge.[76] Buried in all this impenetrable erudition were two proposals: "1. To fix the standard,

69 *The Diaries of John Quincy Adams*, September 6, 1834.

70 Smith, *The Federal Basis for Weights and Measures*, 6.

71 Adams, *Report,* 119-120.

72 *The Diaries of John Quincy Adams*, September 6, 1834.

73 *The Diaries of John Quincy Adams*, February 22, 1821.

74 *The Diaries of Louisa Catherine Adams*, January 6, 1821, Adams Papers, Massachusetts Historical Society, https://www.masshist.org/adams/louisa_catherine_adams.

75 John Quincy Adams, *The Report of the Secretary of State upon Weights and Measures* (Washington, DC: Gales & Seaton, 1821), 48.

76 Shepherd, *The Adams Chronicles,* 254.

with the partial uniformity of which it is susceptible, for the present, excluding all innovation. 2. To consult with foreign nations, for the future and ultimate establishment of universal and permanent uniformity."[77]

During and after the completion of his *Report*, Adams corresponded with several people who he thought would find the subject interesting. Then-Secretary of War John C. Calhoun, for instance, commended the report but called it "too much of a Book for a mere official Report."[78] When meeting with Stratford Canning to discuss his report, which he had just given to Congress, Adams ecstatically emphasized how it could and should facilitate a "concert of operations" for the mutual benefit of both the United States and the United Kingdom.[79] This idea again reflects Adams' seamless unification of personal interests and political improvements; his scientific passion was motivated as much by a Christian-classical interest in virtuous public service as it was by his idiosyncratic intellectual restlessness. Adams was worried that if one country finally adopted a standard, it would put them out of sync with the other country. He therefore urged joint action between the two countries. Canning, for his part, admitted that he understood little of Adams' work on the subject,[80] though he certainly displayed no hostilities and even conveyed Adams' worries to the British government. Yet no one seemed to have the same passion for this niche field as Adams. He was a true maverick.

The political legacy his work left behind, however, is more difficult to trace. It provoked "no immediate reaction,"[81] likely because at that time the metric system had not yet been well established and the United States could not adopt the English system without making significant changes that many people might not understand. Therefore, wrote Adams, "Of all the nations of European origin, ours is that which least requires any change in the system of their weights and measures."[82] He called for the country to declare its current standards and to give standardized metal measurements to each state. Some members of Congress proposed resolutions in the coming years to create models for standards of length, mass, and capacity, but no further action ever occurred. When Adams became President, he emphasized the need to uniformly fix the standard of weights and measures in his first annual message.[83] Consequently, in May 1828, the "first effective weights and measures law of this country" was enacted, which standardized the troy pound in accordance with a British model.[84] Adams' work unfortunately had little impact beyond this law. Consequently, although he called it the most important literary labor of his life, his *Report* ultimately only survives as a "monument to intellectual passion and obscure schol-

77 Lewis V. Judson, *Weights and Measures of the United States: A Brief History* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1963), 5.

78 *The Diaries of John Quincy Adams*, February 22, 1821.

79 *The Diaries of John Quincy Adams*, October 20, 1820.

80 *The Diaries of John Quincy Adams*, October 30, 1820.

81 Smith, *The Federal Basis for Weights and Measures*, 7.

82 Adams, *Report,* 93.

83 John Quincy Adams, "First Annual Message" (speech, Washington, DC, December 6, 1825), The American Presidency Project, https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/first-annual-message-2.

84 Smith, *The Federal Basis for Weights and Measures*, 8.

arship."[85] That monument still stands, even if popular attention to it never has.

Fiat Lux: Astronomy, Museums, and Observations

Adams' love for astronomy traces its origins back to the earliest chapters of his life. As a young boy, he spent many evenings in Quincy, Paris, and St. Petersburg observing the star-dotted firmament. His four boyhood years at the Court of St. Petersburg in particular, filled with many long and dark winter nights, greatly sharpened his interest in the "mysteries of the firmament that sparkled so mightily over the vast realm of Russia."[86] Watching the heavens became a lifelong pursuit. As a boy, Adams seldom had the chance to *formally* study astronomy, but it was nonetheless one of his favorite subjects.[87]

His first *formal* exposure to the discipline came while he was a student at Harvard. In 1786, at age 19, his class studied theories of the Earth's motion and then each student observed the sun and its spots through a large telescope. Eventually, the class would also observe Venus, Jupiter, Saturn, and several other celestial bodies. Adams wrote in his diary that what "I have read is pleasing, and the study in itself is as agreeable, as it is useful & important."[88] They then studied the motion of Earth and the moon, plus the theories of solar and lunar eclipses, but Adams was already well-versed in both topics. Professor Samuel Williams presented three hypotheses for the planetary system: the Ptolemean, the Tychonic, and the Copernican,[89] but again Adams felt that the lecture was unnecessary.

Particularly striking about this time of Adams' life is that he skipped many of his recitations, only to spend this time reading astronomical texts anyway. Adams read voraciously from Biot, Lacroix, Lalande, Newton, and others. He enjoyed studying the subject but did not enjoy being *told* to study it, a sign of defiance that extended to all realms of his life. Thus, Adams confessed that "I have not received from these lectures either the entertainment or the instruction which I expected from them."[90] His impatience came because he wanted to learn more, and this unquenchable thirst for intellectual improvement was the foundation of his later passion for astronomy.

He found his opportunity when he was appointed Minister to Russia in 1809. Over the next several years, his diary entries abound with celestial observations and praise for the beauty of the stars. Adams frequently discussed the topic with Tsar Alexander I on their walks together, and Adams was impressed by his knowledge. At this time, Adams lacked the special astronomical instruments his class had used at Harvard, but he found his naked-eye observations far more interesting. He wrote with great joy about seeing the Northern Lights, and he always called the bold cano-

85 Traub, *John Quincy Adams,* 255.

86 Bemis, *John Quincy Adams and the Union*, 502.

87 Nagel, *John Quincy Adams,* 45-46.

88 *The Diaries of John Quincy Adams*, November 6, 1786.

89 *The Diaries of John Quincy Adams*, November 8, 1786.

90 *The Diaries of John Quincy Adams*, November 27, 1786.

py of stars "brilliant."[91] His coming diplomatic assignments offered him still more opportunities to stay up late into the night and examine the stars. Often, he did so from rooftops and for extremely prolonged periods, which brought about a "painful and distressing" dizziness.[92] His intense engagement and fascination with astronomy, to the point of causing himself bodily harm, strongly demonstrates his dedication to the subject.

Adams was finding his passion for astronomy again, having momentarily stifled it two decades prior due to his understimulating college lectures. In this rediscovery he was aided by his multidisciplinary mind; he always found ways to connect the agricultural to the philosophical, the mathematical to the political, and in this case, the astronomical to the theological. He initially wanted to use astronomy to better understand Biblical chronology. Now, though, the subject fascinated him on its own account. As Adams studied the subject more closely, he became particularly fascinated with the Copernican concept of heliocentrism, his first exposure to which had been at Harvard. He thought it was unsubstantiated, but the core of his fascination lay in how incomprehensible such a universe was to him: he could not understand "the imaginary circles with which the astronomers have encompassed the globe to explain the revolutions of the heavenly orbs."[93] After studying the works of German astronomer Friedrich Theodore Schubert, Adams confessed he was unable to understand the complex technical terminology. Still, reading about science remained "the most delightful of occupations" and left him wishing for forty-eight-hour days.[94]

As Secretary of State, Adams continued this occupation. This was not merely a dilettante passion; the government had to be involved. A firm supporter of internal improvements, Adams viewed astronomy as "the celestial equivalent of the journeys of exploration, discovery, and mapping he favored at home."[95] In 1823, he wrote a letter to the Harvard Corporation urging the construction of a world-class astronomical observatory. The same year, he offered to fund a dedicated professorship of astronomy at the University, and he pledged $1,000 for an observatory provided that the remaining requisite funds were raised within two years. Despite offering "a sum more suited to my circumstances & means than to my inclination,"[96] Adams found no success in this endeavor, nor in his second attempt two years thereafter. This intellectual lethargy deeply frustrated Adams, who believed one of the main responsibilities of the Department of State was to promote learning. Here, one most clearly sees Adams' seamless tying together of his personal interests and genuine societal improvements as facilitated by politics. No matter which office he held (and even when he held none), Adams would always claim that his current position mandated a strong investment in scientific and intellectual development. In reality, these were seldom real components of his job descriptions.

91 *The Diaries of John Quincy Adams*, September 13, 1809.

92 Nagel, *John Quincy Adams,* 213.

93 *The Diaries of John Quincy Adams*, November 27, 1813.

94 *The Diaries of John Quincy Adams*, November 30, 1813.

95 Traub, *John Quincy Adams,* 460.

96 John E. Ventre, "John Quincy Adams' Role in American Astronomy." Cincinnati Observatory, February 17, 2014, https://buhlplanetarium2.tripod.com/bio/jqa/astrorole.html.

Rather, he was superimposing his own interests onto a largely unwilling and untrusting population.

Public opinion was never a sufficient deterrent, though. From the very beginning of his presidential administration, Adams was determined not just to advance his own knowledge of science but also that of the country, for which robust government involvement was essential. In his inaugural address, he noted that the country needed more "scientific researches and surveys for the further application of our national resources to the internal improvement of our country."[97] Subsequent commercial benefit was welcome, but that was not the main issue. This belief in knowledge and scientific advancement as its own virtue to be pursued for its own sake sets him apart from his contemporaries. Henry Clay, for instance, based his American System almost strictly on economic gain. Adams supported the system because he thought that a governmental hand in a fledgling economy was advantageous, but almost every other politician's position on scientific advancement and funding, including Clay's, was fundamentally different from Adams'. Even when praising scientific discoveries, Clay connected them back to economic gain rather than emphasizing their inherent virtues.[98]

The only other previous presidents whose inaugural addresses mentioned scientific inquiry in the context of national improvement were the elder John Adams ("as the only means of preserving our Constitution from its natural enemies")[99] and James Madison, who wrote that a key purpose of government was "to favor in like manner the advancement of science and the diffusion of information as the best aliment to true liberty."[100] Yet even the elder Adams in his address mentioned science only in the context of universities, not going nearly as far as his son John Quincy. The latter's time at Harvard and Europe had cultivated an interest far beyond the educational demands and abilities of his father. These differences among the speeches cannot be seen as circumstantial: inaugural addresses set the tone for an administration.

Adams' first message to Congress took an even stronger position on science. In fervent, unyielding support of establishing a national university and astronomical observatory, he wrote,

> [I]t is with no feeling of pride as an American that the remark may be made that on the comparatively small territorial surface of Europe there are existing upward of 130 of these light-houses of the skies, while throughout the whole American hemisphere there is not one. If we reflect a moment upon the discoveries which in the last four centuries have been made in the physical constitution of the universe by the means of these buildings and of

97 John Quincy Adams, "Inaugural Address" (speech, Washington, DC, March 4, 1825), The Avalon Project, https://avalon.law.yale.edu/19th_century/qadams.asp.

98 Henry Clay, "The American System" (speech, Washington, DC, February 6, 1832), in Robert Byrd, *The Senate 1789-1989: Classic Speeches, 1830-1993*, ed. Wendy Wolff (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1988), 102.

99 John Adams, "Inaugural Address" (speech, Philadelphia, March 4, 1797), The Avalon Project, https://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th_century/adams.asp.

100 James Madison, "Inaugural Address" (speech, Washington, DC, March 4, 1809), The American Presidency Project, https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/inaugural-address-21.

> observers stationed in them, shall we doubt of their usefulness to every nation? And while scarcely a year passes over our heads without bringing some new astronomical discovery to light, which we must fain receive at second hand from Europe, are we not cutting ourselves off from the means of returning light for light while we have neither observatory nor observer upon our half of the globe and the earth revolves in perpetual darkness to our unsearching eyes?[101]

Here, one most clearly sees Adams' relentless thirst for improvement in all senses of the word. Just as he could not stand to see himself fall behind in any particular intellectual skill, so too could he not stand to see his country *already* so far behind the rest of the world in this realm. Again, public opinion was hardly a deterrent, but Adams did not seem to realize that calling the government "palsied by the will of our constituents"[102] was a self-defeating message.

This message received little sympathy. Andrew Jackson responded to it by writing, "I shudder for the consequence... The voice of the people... must be heard. Instead of building lighthouses in the skies, establishing national universities, and making explorations round the globe... pay the national debt."[103] Even Adams' own cabinet cautioned him against ever making any mention of light-houses of the skies (which, as Jackson demonstrated, opponents frequently misquoted as the more ridiculous phrase "light-houses *in* the skies"). The public thought of it no better. Newspapers turned to "bitter invective," allies and friends from William Wirt to Henry Clay called it "excessive" and "hopeless," and even Jefferson allegedly found it "full of heretical ideas."[104] It was Adams' desire to establish a national astronomical observatory, though, that won him the most ire. Most ironically, Jefferson and Madison had both previously proposed a national observatory,[105] but due variously to political apathy and the War of 1812 these proposals never materialized. Few people ever argued against *those* proposals by invoking states' rights against federal encroachment, but against Adams' administration they came out in droves. The rise of Jacksonian populism compounded the problem. Not a single member of Congress nor of Adams' cabinet believed the idea sound, let alone legal. Some senators even introduced a resolution to indict the President for usurpation of powers, though it got nowhere. "Conspiracy" seemingly flourished all around him, and although Adams consequently "blew up," he believed it necessary to press on.[106] In this zealous scientific crusade, Adams truly was alone.

Very little of Adams' internal improvements agenda was enacted during his one term, least of all his plans for an astronomical observatory. But Adams persisted in his unmatched devotion to science. The establishment of an astronomical observatory in par-

101 Adams, "First Annual Message."

102 Adams, "First Annual Message."

103 Harlow Giles Unger, John Quincy Adams (Cambridge: Da Capo Press, 2013), 246.

104 Nagel, *John Quincy Adams,* 303.

105 Bemis, *John Quincy Adams and the Union*, 503.

106 Nagel, *John Quincy Adams,* 301-302.

ticular became one of the central focuses of his remaining years. In 1830, Adams won a partial success when Congress authorized the establishment of the Naval Depot of Charts and Instruments, whose "modest" astronomical instruments included a 3.2-inch Simms refractor telescope used to observe the positions of stars.[107] Yet when, in 1831, a Congressional bill appropriated funds for a coastal survey of the country, it explicitly forbade the construction of an astronomical observatory.[108] This enraged Adams, but it also fueled the fires of his passion throughout his coming time in the House of Representatives. By now, the issue had become completely partisan: "to defeat it no language of contempt or of ridicule was omitted by the partisans of General Jackson. In every appropriation which it was apprehended might be converted to its accomplishment, the restriction 'and to no other' was carefully inserted."[109]

In 1835, fate gave Adams a curious opportunity that would evolve into one of his most potent yet least appreciated legacies on the collective American consciousness: a wealthy English scientist named James Smithson died without any heirs. Smithson's scientific interests ranged from geology to chemistry, and he was widely regarded as a tireless worker, dedicated to his craft beyond parallel. One French contemporary noted how Smithson even "risked drowning to gather geological observations on a tour of the Hebrides Islands."[110] It is not difficult to see why Adams, already deeply invested in procuring national funds for science and intellectual development, took an interest in this man's wishes and seized upon the opportunity. Smithson's will included a clause that would give the great sum of his wealth, over $500,000 or more than $10,000,000 in today's money, to the U.S. Why Smithson chose to bequeath such a vast fortune unto a country he had never visited remains a mystery, but the goal was clear: "an Establishment for the increase & diffusion of knowledge among men."[111] This bequest required the institution to be named after him and located in Washington, D.C. The U.S. government fought over this donation for nearly a decade. A congressional select committee was created just to deal with the issue, which Adams happily chaired near the end of his tenure in the House of Representatives.

In 1838, Adams also brought up the issue to President Van Buren, who entertained him in a half-hour conversation and seemed to agree on the necessity for a national observatory.[112] Still, Congress was incredibly slow, and the process enveloped slowly over the next ten years. That same month, Adams wrote two lengthy letters to Secretary of State John Forsyth in which he enthusiastically restated his support for an observatory. Adams was disappointed that many

107 Ventre, "John Quincy Adams' Role in American Astronomy."

108 U.S. Congress, House, *A Bill To carry into effect the act to provide for a survey of the coast of the United States*, HR 74, 22nd Cong., introduced in House December 22, 1831, https://www.congress.gov/bill/22nd-congress/house-bill/74/text.

109 Quincy, *Memoir of the Life of John Quincy Adams*, 412-417.

110 Smithsonian Institution Archives, "James Smithson: The Man Behind the Institution," 2017, https://siarchives.si.edu/history/featured-topics/smithson-smithsonian/who-was-james-smithson.

111 James Smithson, "The Will of James Smithson," October 23, 1826, Smithsonian Institution Archives, September 18, 2012. https://siarchives.si.edu/sites/default/files/pdfs/The%20Will%20of%20James%20Smithson.pdf.

112 *The Diaries of John Quincy Adams*, November 29, 1838.

members of Congress wanted to invest the Smithson bequest into state stocks, degrading it into "a pack of electioneering jobs."[113] Some Congressional comrades proposed applying it to the endowment of a school or university, but this equally infuriated Adams. Very literally-minded, he believed that such an investment would betray Smithson's intentions: "the immediate object of the education of youth is not the increase and diffusion of knowledge among men, but the instruction of children in that which is already known."[114] The key was to *gain* and *spread* knowledge; an astronomical observatory was the only way. It must, furthermore, be its own institution and not connected to any existing part of the government, as previous bills had proposed. Adams framed his observatory advocacy as a development that the "natural character of our country demanded of us," which would be "a debt of honor to the cause of science."[115]

Congress would not have it. Nearing the final session of the 25th Congress in 1839, Adams proposed his bequest-related bills, and Senator Robbins, Chair of the Senate Committee, proposed resolutions that did not include an astronomical observatory. Neither chamber of Congress ultimately acted on any of the several bills proposed. Even former President James Monroe, now agreeing with Adams, could not convince the body to print support Adams' efforts. The latter dejectedly wrote in his diary, "I am convinced that nothing good can be done upon this subject by this Congress."[116] All the familiar criticisms assailed him. Many claimed accepting the bequeath violated states' rights. John Calhoun, one of Adams' most vigorous opponents on this issue, pointed out that the Constitutional Convention had twice rejected efforts to establish a national university. Adams countered that there were no constitutional restrictions on establishing *research institutions* specifically. He wrote in his report for the House Committee, "The attainment of knowledge is the high and exclusive attribute of man... Whoever increases his knowledge... partakes in some degree of that goodness which is the highest attribute of Omnipotence itself."[117] Here, Adams demonstrated his Christian upbringing, seeing knowledge in manichean terms. It was the best means of connecting with the divine, but it was also a virtue on its own. Why more people did not seem to care about this issue absolutely confounded him.

The whole country was behind many of its European counterparts. Adams was particularly passionate about mending this scientific deficiency because he had witnessed a world in which these deficiencies did not exist firsthand. His lifelong travels to Europe, especially those of his youth, continued to influence him. Europe had more than 130 "light-houses of the skies," but when Adams first publicly spoke those words, the country had not a single one. Makeshift observatories had come and gone over the past few years, either being torn down due to insufficiency or burning down

113 Nagel, *John Quincy Adams,* 367.

114 John Quincy Adams to John Forsyth, October 8, 1838, in W.M. Ogden Niles, ed., *Niles' National Historical Register*, vol. 56 (Baltimore: 1839), 380.

115 John Quincy Adams to John Forsyth, October 11, 1838, in Niles, *Niles' National Historical Register*, 380.

116 *The Diaries of John Quincy Adams*, March 5, 1840.

117 John Quincy Adams, "Smithsonian Bequest," *National Intelligencer*, February 17, 1836, https://www.sil.si.edu/exhibitions/smithson-to-smithsonian/natinte2.htm.

in tragic and untimely accidents; the first permanent one was only built at Williams College in 1838.[118] At their observatories, Great Britain and France had already conducted several investigations into the Earth's curvature and pendulum vibrations.[119] America had not even started. Again, Adams was imposing his personal thirst for relentless self-improvement onto the whole country. Falling behind was inexcusable.

His hopes were more than just vague fantasies. Adams thoroughly outlined his plans for appropriating the funds and for precisely how the observatory would be staffed: one year of interest would fund the construction of the requisite buildings, two more years' interest would fund the astronomers' salaries, two more would fund the necessary instruments and books, and two more would fund their publishing efforts. Still, Adams acknowledged the reality of the situation: "Not so easy will it be to secure, as from a rattlesnake's fang, the fund and its income, forever, from being wasted and dilapidated."[120]

Although Adams owed his interest in astronomy largely to Harvard and his time in Europe, his astronomic advocacy eventually "formed a part of his policy of nationalism."[121] It was a way to form a unique, intellectually-driven American identity at a time when such an identity scarcely existed. For precisely this reason, he wrote that upon the creation of the observatory, "the reputation of our country will rise to honor and reverence among the civilized nations of the earth, and our navigators and mariners on every ocean [will] be no longer dependent on English or French observers."[122]

By now, the aforementioned Naval Depot of Charts and Instruments had independently morphed into the Naval Observatory, which greatly weakened Adams' ongoing efforts to use the Smithson Fund for such an institution.[123] Still, Adams was not content. In 1843, he received an invitation from the Astronomical Society of Cincinnati to deliver a lecture commending the building of the city's observatory and to lay its cornerstone. After a thousand-mile journey, on November 10, he delivered the two-hour long oration, which contained only half of the material he had written. Like every work he wrote (e.g. his *Report on Weights and Measures*), it was deeply interdisciplinary, reckoning with poetry, history, philosophy, math, and theology along with the primary topic of astronomy. With a Christian bent, Adams professed, "So peculiarly adapted to the nature of man, is the study of the heavens, that of all animated nature, his bodily frame is constructed, as if the observation of the stars was the special purpose of his creation."[124] God, he wrote, commanded humanity to turn its eyes to the heavens. He strongly emphasized the need to pursue science, without which "nothing useful" can ever be accom-

118 Bemis, *John Quincy Adams and the Union*, 514.

119 Traub, *John Quincy Adams,* 324-325.

120 John Quincy Adams to John Forsyth, October 11, 1838, in Niles, *Niles' National Historical Register*, 381.

121 Charles O. Paullin, "Early Movements for a National Observatory, 1802-1842," *Records of the Columbia Historical Society*, Washington, D.C. 25 (1923), 46.

122 John Quincy Adams to John Forsyth, October 11, 1838, in Niles, *Niles' National Historical Register*, 381.

123 Bemis, *John Quincy Adams and the Union*, 515.

124 John Quincy Adams, *An Oration Delivered Before the Cincinnati Astronomical Society* (Cincinnati: Shepard & Co., 1843), 17.

plished.[125] Adams then lauded other nations for their progress in establishing astronomical observatories and urged the U.S. to follow their lead. The "subject of astronomy," he declared en route to Cincinnati, is "one of the most important that can engage the attention of the human race."[126]

Popular reactions to the oration were mixed. The audience listened attentively and without interruption during the speech. After a meeting, the Astronomical Society unanimously adopted a resolution praising him for the speech and requesting a copy for publication.[127] The abolitionist (and therefore usually partial to Adams) newspaper *The Weekly Herald* claimed that Adams had "excited no enthusiasm," but the *Daily Advocate and Advertiser* of nearby Pittsburgh wrote that Adams "has met the sober second thought of the people."[128] By now, Adams had become an increasingly prominent speaker on scientific issues. The Cincinnati oration was thus not an isolated case but rather one of many of his public lectures that gradually helped sway public opinion. Most often, newspapers viewed them positively.[129] Adams eventually received so many invitations to lectures that he became unable to answer all of them individually, instead putting cards indicating his inability to attend in newspapers.[130]

In his last few years, Adams persisted in his advocacy for government involvement in astronomical inquiries. He visited the under-construction Harvard astronomical observatory in 1846, peering through a telescope and eagerly observing the planets. Although this upward-gazing posture caused him great pain, he found it worthwhile when the prize was the continued cultivation of such essential knowledge. His "last great journey"[131] occurred in the following year upon the discovery of Neptune. Traveling to the newly built Naval Observatory to observe the planets with his family one final time, he was absolutely delighted. By now and thanks to his advocacy, astronomical observatories had popped up around the country.

The Smithsonian Committee, meanwhile, kept trudging along. Six years prior, Adams had written a report that traced the history of astronomy and compared already established observatories in Pulkowa to his desires for the U.S.[132] Now, Adams continued his efforts to follow Smithson's will to the letter, standing firmly against investiture in schools and other institutions. Having chaired the special Smithsonian committee and proposed several reports and bills for each session, he ultimately lost his chairmanship during the 29th Congress after the Democratic victory of 1844.[133] Adams remained adamant about creating an astronomy-focused research institution, and he remained highly suspicious of any of his colleagues' efforts to di-

125 Adams, *An Oration,* 34.

126 Bemis, *John Quincy Adams and the Union*, 517.

127 Adams, *An Oration,* 66.

128 Traub, *John Quincy Adams,* 504.

129 Nagel, *John Quincy Adams,* 375.

130 Bemis, *John Quincy Adams and the Union*, 501.

131 *The Diaries of John Quincy Adams*, November 1, 1847.

132 Paullin, "Early Movements for a National Observatory, 1802-1842," 48.

133 Bemis, *John Quincy Adams and the Union*, 512.

vert the funds. Still, as long as there was an observatory first, he would accept proposals for gardens, museums, and libraries. His frustration remained. He wrote in his diary in February 1846, "In this Committee, no two members, excepting Mr. Marsh, and myself, have agreed in opinion... I doubt if there will be more harmony in the House, for never was there a benevolent and charitable purpose more unfortunately endowed [to] the North American Congress."[134] Still, popular opinion had steadily and undeniably moved toward his side. Whereas no "light-houses of the skies" had existed when Adams first spoke of them, the US Navy had begun construction of an observatory in Washington, DC, and more in Cincinnati and Cambridge were also underway. It was becoming the "national network"[135] for which Adams had so fervently hoped.

On August 10, 1846, the President finally signed a watered-down bill that Congress had earlier authorized to appropriate funds for an institution dedicated to the "increase and diffusion of knowledge," just as Smithson's bequest had put it. Adams voted for this bill, but there was ironically no provision for an astronomical observatory (although technically the bill allowed for it through a "clandestinely smuggled" provision "disguised" as the Navy Depot).[136] However, there was also no provision for appropriating the funds toward a school. Instead, by the direction of an independent board of regents, there would be a series of research institutions that eventually grew into the modern Smithsonian.[137] Already, it included sites for agricultural experiments, a geological and mineral cabinet, a chemical laboratory, and lecture rooms, but it would only grow from there.[138] In these ways, Adams had won, even though the main object had not been directly attained. He "claimed no merit for the erection of the astronomical observatory; but in the course of his whole life, no conferring of honor, or of interest, or of office, had given him more delight than the belief that he had contributed in some small degree, to produce these astronomical observatories, both here and elsewhere."[139]

History has vindicated Adams' position on this issue, as did the eventual vote on the matter. Yet history in turn has Adams, at least in part, to thank for the common societal view and normalization of such an institution, not to mention the intellectual benefits that have come therewith. Most modern citizens take it for granted that the state should support scientific development in some capacity, but were it not for Adams' insistence, the common American opinion on the matter might be very different today. Scientific advancement mattered more than anything else. The impact of Adams' work cannot be understated. The Smithsonian vision for America only prevailed "because Adams had been loudly indignant at every sly attempt by others to divert the funds for personal proj-

134 *The Diaries of John Quincy Adams*, February 27, 1846.

135 Traub, *John Quincy Adams,* 519.

136 Quincy, *Memoir of the Life of John Quincy Adams*, 412-417.

137 Traub, *John Quincy Adams,* 519.

138 U.S. Congress, House, A Bill To establish the 'Smithsonian Institution,' HR 5, 29th Cong., introduced in House January 9, 1846, https://www.congress.gov/bill/29th-congress/house-bill/5/text.

139 Cong. Globe, 29th Cong. 1st Sess. 15 (1846), 738, https://digital.library.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metadc30769/m1/786/.

ects."[140] He had worked for ten years to promulgate his principles with a vigor that even this unshakeable zealot seldom displayed. Little else he had done in his life with such fervor, and little could the country's intellectual progress on astronomy have done without his bold advocacy.

Conclusion

Adams had always been told that rising to anything less than the highest summit of American civic life would amount to total failure. But no matter what he did, he scolded himself for not doing enough. These feelings of constant inadequacy, stemming from his childhood lessons,[141] continued throughout the rest of his life and unquestionably contributed to his scientific and intellectual zeal. Frustrated by the political lethargy of his colleagues, he turned toward the disciplines that both his time in Europe and his Christian-classical education had taught him to appreciate: silviculture, metrology, and astronomy. From his constant pursuit of science Adams derived a sense of calmness and self-assurance. He was "a contender for the physical and moral improvement of man by the diffusion of knowledge and its application to government,"[142] but almost no one around him advocated the same degree of federal involvement in such projects. There was little he could do but keep studying on his own, dismayed by the "stolid ignorance and stupid malignity"[143] of his opponents. And still, when he was miles ahead of them, he scolded himself for not having started earlier and for not having learned as much as he wished. Because of this immense dedication, "[n]o nineteenth-century President, not even Thomas Jefferson, was more familiar with the progress and possibilities of science than John Quincy Adams."[144] He left behind an immense legacy of conservation and landscaping efforts, metrological research, and astronomical advocacy. Outside of his private studies, too, he was a member of nearly every contemporary science organization and urged exploration of the newly acquired western territories. Most of his wishes did not materialize, but with every little step Adams took, he moved the popular spirit of the country closer toward supporting the governmental institutions and responsibilities that most now take for granted. He saw that improvements in science would be improvements for the country. Without his bold advocacy, the U.S. and indeed the world would be far more intellectually barren and disjoint.

It may therefore sound very strange to hear Adams have written at the age of 42, "I was always of a studious turn and addicted to books beyond bounds of moderation, yet my acquirements in literature and science have been all superficial, and I never attained a profound knowledge of anything."[145] Nearing the end of his life in 1843, he echoed this sentiment, writing that his scientific pursuits had ultimately been worthless and "sought in vain." Ironically, he could not have been more wrong.[146]

140 Nagel, *John Quincy Adams,* 357.

141 David F. Musto, "The Youth of John Quincy Adams," *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 113, no. 4 (August 15, 1969), 281.

142 Bemis, *John Quincy Adams and the Union*, 501.

143 *The Diaries of John Quincy Adams*, February 20, 1831.

144 Lynn Hudson Parsons, *John Quincy Adams* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 1999), 243.

145 Shepherd, *The Adams Chronicles,* 142.

146 *The Diaries of John Quincy Adams*, June 22, 1843.

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Instrumentalizing Pseudoscience:
The Influence of European Scientific Racism on the Confederacy

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Abstract

Through the antebellum period and the American Civil War, American and European race theorists exchanged ideas through correspondence and scientific explorations asserting their belief in scientific racism. Scientific racist beliefs posited the natural superiority of white people and the inferiority of Black people based on what these theorists claimed were innate biological characteristics, and these beliefs served as a critical linkage between Europe and the United States. Utilizing correspondence and journal entries, this paper shows that this exchange of scientific racist ideas significantly influenced the Confederacy's political thought and policy positions, especially foreign relations, through the Civil War. Through the work of propagandist Henry Hotze, the Confederacy sought to gain support among the European public, particularly in Great Britain, by promoting scientific racist ideas justifying the Confederacy's defense of slavery. Such ideas were assimilated from American race theorists like Samuel George Morton and Samuel Cartwright, along with European race theorists like Arthur de Gobineau. This paper ultimately demonstrates the historical continuity of racist beliefs that unite actors across borders to uphold white supremacy into modern times.

Introduction

In March 1861, the Union arrived at a moment of grave peril. Following the 1860 presidential election of Republican Abraham Lincoln, Southern state governments subverted the Union through secession to protect slavery. From the pre-colonial period through the antebellum period, Southern states institutionalized a "slave society" that relied on the slave labor of over 1 million imported Africans to cultivate staple crops such as cotton.[1] Cotton cultivation accelerated through the early 1800s, which was fueled by American inventor Eli Whitney's invention of the cotton gin in 1793 and an increase in cotton prices from eight cents to eleven cents by 1847.[2] Declining trade protectionism with European powers further enabled the South to gain a large share of the international cotton marketplace based on their political economy of slavery. This entrenchment of slavery and the institution's oppression of Black slaves became the fundamental sociocultural and political force driving the South.

1 Ian Tyrell, *Transnational Nation: United States History in Global Perspective Since 1789* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2015), 74.

2 Matthew Karp, "King Cotton, Emperor Slavery: Antebellum Slaveholders and the World Economy," in *The Civil War as Global Conflict*, eds. David Gleeson and Simon Lewis (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2014), 38.

In the eyes of Southern politicians, Lincoln's record of abolitionism threatened this Southern institution and, thus, Southern civilization. By January 1861, Southern politicians channeled their anxieties through secession conventions across seven states.[3] These conventions resulted in proclamations, such as the 1860 South Carolina Declaration of Secession, that declared each Southern state to have control over the "right of property in slaves."[4]

One such politician who helped lead Southern secession was Vice President of the Confederacy Alexander Stephens. On March 21, 1861, Stephens delivered his "Cornerstone Speech" in Savannah, Georgia following the state's secession in January 1861. Speaking to a full-capacity audience of adoring supporters, Stephens vociferously defended Southern secession and the formation of the Confederacy. Stephens asserted that the Union established a constitutional system that was perversely influenced by the Founding Fathers, such as Thomas Jefferson, who believed that "the enslavement of the African was in violation of the laws of Nature."[5] Such a belief, according to Stephens, burdened Southerners by inhibiting their political sovereignty over their "peculiar" institution of slavery that served as the bedrock of their society.[6] The culmination of Stephens's speech was his stated opposition to egalitarianism. He claimed that the Confederacy's foundations were "laid... upon the great truth that the negro is not equal to the white man" and that "slavery, subordination to the superior race, is his natural and normal condition."[7] Stephen's claim that Black people possessed biological qualities justifying their oppression as an inferior class indicated a widespread acceptance of a virulent ideology among Southerners: scientific racism.

Scientific racism, a pseudoscientific group of beliefs asserting that certain racial groups possess innate physical, moral, and intellectual characteristics rendering them superior or inferior to other groups, greatly influenced Confederate political thought and policy. This influence did not emerge out of a vacuum. In fact, Southern race theorists assimilated scientific racist ideas that European race theorists formulated during the Age of Enlightenment. This paper illustrates how these exchanges of ideas impacted debates and policies that influenced the direction of the Civil War and the future of American racial relations. Starting with the Age of Enlightenment and through the antebellum period, European and American race theorists exchanged scientific racist ideas through correspondence and pseudoscientific publications to justify slavery. The commencement of the Civil War not only accelerated these transatlantic exchanges of racist ideas, but these exchanges became instrumental in shaping Confederate foreign relations.

Through the work of propagandist Henry Hotze, the Confederacy sought to gain support among the European public, particularly in Great Britain, by

3 Hudson Meadwell and Lawrence Anderson, "Sequence and Strategy in the Secession of the American South," *Theory and Society* 37, no. 3 (June 2008): 216, https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/40211035.pdf.

4 "Declaration of the Immediate Causes Which Induce and Justify the Secession of South Carolina from the Federal Union" (Declaration, Charleston, 1860), 8. https://www.atlantahistorycenter.com/app/uploads/2020/11/SCarolina-Secession-p1-13.pdf.

5 Alexander Stephens, "Cornerstone Speech" (1861), in *The Civil War and Reconstruction: A Documentary Reader*, ed. Stanley Harrold (Hoboken: Wiley-Blackwell, 2007), 61.

6 Stephens, 60.

7 Stephens, 61.

promoting scientific racist ideas justifying the Confederacy's defense of slavery. Hotze further conveyed how Confederate leaders and American and European race theorists made political and financial sacrifices to protect an institution upholding white supremacy.

The Origins of European Scientific Racism: The Age of Enlightenment

European conceptions of scientific racism emerged out of the theoretical and political debates of the Age of Enlightenment. Between the mid-seventeenth and late-eighteenth centuries, European race theorists explored philosophical and scientific questions through the scientific method. The scientific method, which involved the empirical study of natural phenomena through experimentation and observation, motivated theorists to determine universal scientific truths rooted in human behavior.[8] Theorists' use of the scientific method generated newfound ideas on a global scale. As Janet Giltrow outlines, an "information explosion," fueled by mechanical innovations like the printing press, democratized mass media that reached Western elites and the larger public.[9] Such democratization enabled these theorists to transmit scientific ideas through correspondence, pamphlets, and academic journals. Taxonomic theories that involved the classification of animals, human remains, and living individuals were exchanged through a transatlantic network of colonial settlements and scientific explorations.[10] Humanity was no longer solely conceptualized through philosophical moralizations of rationality that characterized classical intellectual debate. European race theorists shifted these debates to focus on scientific studies seeking to place humans within an empirically observed natural world.

These efforts to situate humanity within a natural context centered around the classification of racial groups, which served as the foundation for scientific racist theories. European race theorists united around three major beliefs that, as Richard Popkins outlines, were based on the findings of pseudoscientific studies on human physiology and social behavior. The first theory postulated that the "mental life of non-whites, especially Indians and Africans," was "significantly different from that of [Europeanized] whites."[11] The second theory negatively framed such mental differences as a sign of non-white inferiority, since the "normal, natural condition of man is whiteness" and being non-white was "a sign of sickness or degeneracy."[12] The third theory asserted that non-white people were not truly human. Rather, they were members of a subservient class who were "lower on the great chain of being."[13]

These assertions constituted a theoretical framework that promoted the pseudoscientific belief of polygenism. Polygenism, as Terence Keel explains, argued that "each [racial] group possessed its own

8 Linda Burnett, "Collecting Humanity in the Age of Enlightenment: The Hudson's Bay Company and Edinburgh University's Natural History Museum," *Global Intellectual History* 8, no. 4 (2023): 387-388, https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/epdf/10.1080/23801883.2022.2074502?needAccess=true.

9 Burnett, 388.

10 Burnett, 388-389.

11 Richard Popkins, "The Philosophical Basis of Eighteenth-Century Racism," *Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture* 3, no. 1 (1974): 247. https://muse.jhu.edu/article/789438/pdf.

12 Popkins, 247.

13 Popkins, 247.

unique ancestor," which caused racial groups to be intellectually and morally different from each other.[14] European race theorists not only supported polygenism, but they wielded its claims to justify a racial hierarchy that was also based on religious conceptions of morality. Based on racially biased methodologies, these theorists framed white people as "being the best" race, while non-white people were degraded as "pre-Adamithic creations" who "never contained the [spirit] of genuine men."[15] Race theorists moralized their scientific racism through their invocations of Christian theology, which allowed them to claim that "[different] races of men were created [by God] before the birth of Adam" as part of God's intelligent design of humanity.[16] Thus, racial hierarchy upholding white supremacy served God's will and could not be altered.

Enlightenment figures further promoted scientific racist theories based on their expertise in various disciplines, including physiology. Franz Joseph Gall, a German physiologist, was one such theorist. Gall conducted the first-known modern studies on the pseudoscience of phrenology, which posited a false association between scalp morphology and an individual's intellectual capacity.[17] In 1798, Gall published a letter in *Der neue Teutsche Merkur*, a pro-Enlightenment Weimar journal, where he presented his principles of phrenology. Gall claimed that the brain is the organ of the mind and the mind's qualities are "multiplied and elevated in direct ratio to the increase of the mass of [the] brain, proportionally to that of the body."[18] Certain brain areas were theorized to have specialized functions that were "distinct and independent of each other."[19] Individuals who were found to have "diseases and wounds" in such areas were "deranged, irritated, or suspended" from normal cognitive thinking.[20] Gall's conceptions enabled him to assert that Black people were "inferior to the [white] European intellectually" because they had "smaller heads and less cerebral mass than European inhabitants."[21] Based on his pseudoscientific analysis, Gall advocated for a racial caste system that consigned Black people to slave labor in service of white people.

As the future of slavery emerged as a leading political issue in Europe and the United States into the antebellum period, European race theorists built on Enlightenment theories of scientific racism. Figures including German naturalist Carl Vogt affirmed the theories of polygenism and phrenology through

14 Terence Keel, "Religion, Polygenism and the Early Science of Human Origins," *History of the Human Sciences* 26, no. 2 (2013): 4, https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/0952695113482916?casa_token=6F2 98o-NIAAAAA:fXhcqY1XlV 41cm7csWjRB0gTdPZG7amk3P0kAicGanQaTwHdaCYWtwchN4qeJyK30TtC8WMfWFnjbg.

15 Popkins, "The Philosophical Basis of Eighteenth-Century Racism," 247.

16 Keel, "Religion, Polygenism and the Early Science of Human Origins," 5.

17 Susan Branson, "Phrenology and the Science of Race in Antebellum America," *Early American Studies* 15, no. 1 (2017): 170, https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/90000339.pdf?casa_token=z0MBkN1OyjUAAAAA:Ykjp2OuzKxVbeXdK6FYYM qweR2kAcOnpr_S-g0kMRiYCIi9x1erjXbgQxPLEaJedlA4amZpZgH6FfkRA-VGPazi0UzmFsUG7Q8WGU-rrXoN 7ZvqywW4v.

18 Franz Joseph Gall, "Letter from Dr. F. J. Gall, to Joseph von Retzer, upon the Functions of the Brain, in Man and Animals," *Der neue Teutsche Merkur* 3, no. 1 (December 1798): 320, http://www.historyofphrenology.org.uk/texts/retzer.htm.

19 Gall, 320.

20 Gall, 321.

21 Franz Joseph Gall, *Research on the Nervous System*, in *The Invention of Race: Scientific and Popular Representations*, ed. Nicholas Bancel et al. (New York: Routledge, 2014), 55.

their globally distributed publications that popularized European scientific theories in elite circles.[22] Their academic work enabled them to find common cause with each other on the importance of upholding slavery. At the same time, these figures started exchanging their work with American race theorists who integrated their beliefs to manufacture their own justifications for slavery.

Samuel George Morton: The Father of the "American School" of Race Science

In the early 1800s, American physician Samuel George Morton incorporated European scientific racist ideas to generate his own theories that were used to defend Southern slavery. Morton started his career after he graduated from the University of Pennsylvania with a Doctor of Medicine in 1820 and the University of Edinburgh with an advanced degree in 1824. Morton developed an interest in anatomy based on his mother's experiences with physical ailments that were attended to by renowned Philadelphia physicians.[23] Utilizing his working relationships with these physicians, Morton became president of the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia, thereby cementing his status as an esteemed academic among his colleagues.[24]

Morton concentrated his work on craniological studies that sought to examine the size and structure of the human skull. The Enlightenment's promotion of the scientific method compelled Morton to frame human history as part of a natural history. As Ann Fabian outlines, Morton desired to answer questions that "comparative anatomists had asked about the shape and size of skulls of different animals" by conducting empirical studies comparing the skulls of different racial groups.[25] Morton used polygenism and phrenological theories formulated by Gall to construct diagrammatic methods utilized to form a correlation between cranial capacity and intelligence. Morton claimed that larger cranial capacity signified a higher intelligence, while smaller cranial capacity denoted lower intelligence.[26] From this theorization, Morton established the "American school" of race science, a pseudoscientific movement asserting white intellectual superiority based on "empirical" findings that sought to differentiate the brain sizes between white and Black people.[27]

Morton publicized his scientific racist theories in phrenological examinations he conducted between the 1830s and 1840s. Starting in 1830, Morton regularly traveled to Brazil, Egypt, and Mexico to excavate archeological sites and exchange scientific information

22 J. MacGregor Allan, "Carl Vogt's Lectures on Man," *The Anthropological Review* 7, no. 25 (April 1869): 177-178. https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/3025075.pdf.

23 George Bacon Wood, *A Biographical Memoir of Samuel George Morton* (Philadelphia: T.K. & P.G. Collins, 1853), 6.

24 Wood, 9.

25 Marianne Sommer, "A Diagrammatics of Race: Samuel George Morton's 'American Golgotha' and the Contest for the Definition of the Young Field of Anthropology," *History of the Human Sciences* (2023): 3, https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/09526951221136771?casa_token=wn84YmCvV5YAAAAA:6l092Jl4 5TsEdaXCMbw4L8s_E8MnKFseTl7xDCk4dLV3x5EBR3zpgzRoYHBkq-BxqVwbWoF-o-g5Ag.

26 Sommer, 3.

27 Adam Dewbury, "The American School and Scientific Racism in Early American Anthropology," *Histories of Anthropology Annual* 3, no. 1 (2007): 121, https://muse.jhu.edu/article/250548/pdf?casa_token=SRnEbkiIdm0AAAAA:albgupKRxjFkcW2USCkXppW4X6Wi 8sh7n-J5CC-ct2UgDedEqNs9g5RfxW06yFp5IleR6R4T4Ec.

with other American race theorists, including Josiah Nott and George Gliddon.[28] Morton accumulated a catalog of over 1,000 human specimens, including 600 intact human skulls that were housed at the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia. Named the "American Golgotha" as a reference to the location of Jesus's crucifixion and Morton's objective to determine how God created humanity, Morton's catalog became the world's largest collection of human skulls.[29] Morton used his increased international recognition to create widely distributed lithographs of skulls from different racial groups,[30] and he published his findings in his 1839 book, *Crania Americana; or, A Comparative View of the Skulls of Various Aboriginal Nations of North and South America*, and 1844 book, *Crania Aegyptiaca; or Observations on Egyptian Ethnography, Derived from Anatomy, History and the Monuments*.

In *Crania Americana*, Morton outlined the purportedly different physical qualities of the skulls of numerous racial groups. He classified humans into separate racial groups, including Caucasians and Black Ethiopians. Morton characterized Caucasian people as fair skinned individuals with large skulls and the "highest intellectual endowments."[31] In contrast, he described Ethiopians as Black people who had long, narrow skulls, expressed a "joyous... and indolent disposition," and constituted the "lowest form of humanity."[32] To measure these alleged intellectual differences, Morton filled up skulls with BB-sized lead shots to calculate the average skull volumes of different racial groups.[33] Morton determined that Caucasian skull volumes averaged 87 cubic inches, while the skulls of Ethiopians, referred to as "Negros," averaged 78 cubic inches.[34] Because Black people were theorized to have smaller brains, he asserted they possessed lower intelligence that caused them to have "little invention."[35] However, Black people possessed "strong powers of imitation" that enabled them to succeed as slave laborers.[36] Thus, Morton claimed that a racial hierarchy subjugating Black people as slaves was necessary to exploit their labor for the benefit of white society.

Morton solidified his scientific racist beliefs in *Crania Aegyptiaca*. Examining the skulls of ancient Egyptians, Morton sought to further differentiate Caucasian and Black skulls. Morton employed a methodology comparable to the one in his *Crania Americana* study, but he instead classified Black people as "Negroid" because he viewed them as subhuman.[37] Like in *Crania Americana*, Morton concluded that Caucasian skulls were larger than those of Black people.

28 Stephen Jay Gould, "Morton's Ranking of Races by Cranial Capacity," *Science* 200, no. 4341 (1978): 503, https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/1746562.pdf?casa_token=UNtkqdR_qjMAAAAA:-x_NKA50FM1q4NOqRtFnAWiFfggAF524yrRqBE-Tfrd5NLGlm5ENkyqHBUv4mY7NMw9ZwbkvPKt-j4Gn8F-8aIvWy9G6gC1PSwpIaH4olaclF FnU3ty8.

29 Gould, 503.

30 Gould, 504.

31 Samuel George Morton, *Crania Americana; or, A Comparative View of the Skulls of Various Aboriginal Nations of North and South America* (London: James Madden & Co., 1839), 5.

32 Morton, 7.

33 David Thomas, *Kennewick Man, Archaeology, And The Battle For Native American Identity* (New York: Basic Books, 1999), 40.

34 Samuel George Morton, *Crania Americana*, 260.

35 Morton, 88.

36 Morton, 88.

37 Samuel George Morton, *Crania Aegyptiaca; or Observations on Egyptian Ethnography, Derived from Anatomy, History and the Monuments* (London: James Madden & Co., 1844), 4.

Caucasian skulls were determined to have an average volume between 78 and 80 cubic inches, while Black skulls were determined to have an average volume of 75 cubic inches.[38] He asserted that Caucasian and Black intellectual differences were so stark that they were indications that God created different racial groups meant to serve different purposes. According to Morton, Black people were created in Egypt to be suitable "as [slaves] or bearers of tribute to [Caucasian] Pharaohs."[39] This subordinate social position of Black people in ancient times was "the same... as in modern times."[40] By establishing this historical continuity of slavery, Morton argued that racial hierarchies relegating Black people to slavery were foundational to human societies. In his view, slavery emerged from natural differences in intelligence between racial groups, and he argued for the necessity to maintain slavery to adhere to what he claimed was God's design for humanity.

Morton's scientific racist work served as a significant influence on Confederate political thought. Eager to defend slavery for their political and economic self-interest, Southern slaveholding elites gravitated towards Morton's work and used his arguments to defend slavery. Upon Morton's death in 1851, the *Southern Medical Journal*, then a pro-slavery medical journal serving Southern slaveholding political leaders, published a tribute which stated that Southerners "should consider [Morton] as our benefactor, for aiding most materially in giving to the negro his true position as an inferior race."[41] Morton further contributed to the development of physical anthropology as an academic discipline, which was consistently cited by Confederate elites to defend slavery. His phrenological methodologies would be used by Confederacy-supporting race theorists such as Gliddon to defend slavery as rooted in the natural truths of white supremacy.[42] Morton linked European scientific racist ideas with the political aims of Southern elites, and other American race theorists would continue this transatlantic exchange of ideas.

Samuel Cartwright and "Drapetomania": Black Existence as a Disease

At the same time Morton was conducting his pseudoscientific studies, American physician Samuel Cartwright began to advance theories of scientific racism that integrated aspects of European race science. Cartwright was first motivated to study physiology through his experiences as a soldier in the War of 1812, where he observed doctors' treatment of wounded soldiers.[43] After graduating with a Doctor of Medicine from Transylvania University in 1823, Cartwright received acclaim for his 1824 essay, "An Essay on the Epidemic Fever of Monroe County, Mississippi, in the Summer and Autumn of 1822," in which he detailed

38 Morton, 22.

39 Morton, 59.

40 Morton, 59.

41 Emily Renschler, "The Samuel George Morton Cranial Collection," Expedition Magazine, 2008, https://www.penn.museum/sites/expedition/the-samuel-george-morton-cranial-collection/#:~:text=In%20fact%2C% 20upon%20Morton's%20death,position%20as%20an%20inferior%20race.%E2%80%9D.

42 Dewbury, "The American School and Scientific Racism in Early American Anthropology," 128.

43 Mary Louise Marshall, "Samuel A. Cartwright and State's Rights Medicine," *New Orleans Surgical and Medical Journal* 93, no. 2 (August 1940): 74-75.

how cholera caused an "inflammation in the cellular tissue that envelope[s] the kidneys."[44] His findings on cholera contributed to a growing literature on the development of human diseases and enabled Cartwright to bolster his reputation among fellow scientists. Harvard University's Boylston Medical Library awarded Cartwright a gold medal for his research on the human cardiovascular system's response to cholera in 1826.[45] The Medical and Chirurgical Society of Maryland further awarded him a one-hundred-dollar prize for an 1826 essay he published on cholera.[46]

From the early 1820s onward, Cartwright based his physiological examinations on a reliance on Black bodies for autopsy. Citing Enlightenment principles of empirical research methods, Cartwright expressed a deep conviction in the importance of using human corpses for medical discovery that he believed could reveal universal natural truths about humanity. Cartwright used his autopsies of Black corpses to track the progression of numerous diseases in the human body, including yellow fever, syphilis, and epilepsy.[47] Cartwright opportunistically sought to use his racially biased conclusions of these autopsies to frame Black people as physiologically deficient. He claimed that "almost every year of my professional life... I have made post mortem examinations of negros... and I have invariably found the darker color pervading the flesh and the membranes to be very evident in all those who died of acute diseases."[48] Cartwright's autopsies enabled him to integrate scientific racist theories promoted by his contemporaries that asserted the biological inferiority of Black people.

Cartwright also based his work on a trip to Europe he took between 1836 and 1837. Cartwright traveled across Europe to form professional networks with physicians who advanced the "French school" of medicine, which emphasized the study of internal medicine using surgical observation.[49] Cartwright revealed that "a team of medical men" traveled with him to Europe to study human evolution, writing that "conscious of our deficiencies, we have... taken the trouble to visit London, Rome and Paris, and gather from the store-houses of science... to assist" his studies.[50] Cartwright assimilated the scientific racist beliefs of French Enlightenment philosopher Voltaire, who claimed that Black people were "not capable of paying much attention... and do not appear to be made...for the advantages" of modern society.[51] Cartwright professed his new conviction in polygenism, claiming that "the differences in organization" between white and Black people "are so evident... that in Paris, we found the savants denying the common origins of man."[52]

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44 Samuel Cartwright, "An Essay on the Epidemic Fever of Monroe County, Mississippi, in the Summer and Autumn of 1822," *American Medical Observer* 7, no. 4 (October 1824): 667.

45 Marshall, "Samuel A. Cartwright and State's Rights Medicine," 77-78.

46 Marshall, 77-78.

47 Christopher Willoughby, "Running Away from Drapetomania: Samuel A. Cartwright, Medicine, and Race in the Antebellum South," *Journal of Southern History* 84, no. 3 (August 2018): 588, https://muse.jhu.edu/article/699875/pdf?casa_token=OPX1m1T8-NAAAAAA:GCAqlPzCle-J5Lsnu81xKoA5ZsUwf lTDwMnuZT7x2rd1r5zcQ7RNou6tMb6lGMILYY0gd8qCe8VU.

48 Samuel Cartwright, "Philosophy of the Negro Constitution," *New Orleans Surgical and Medical Journal* 8, no. 1 (1852): 196.

49 Samuel Cartwright, "Cannan Identified with the Ethiopian," *Southern Quarterly Review* 2, no. 4 (October 1842): 328.

50 Cartwright, 321.

51 Voltaire, *Essai Sur Les Moeurs Et L'esprit Des Nations* (Paris: Werden & Lequien, 1756), 84.

52 Cartwright, "Cannan Identified with the Ethiopian," 328.

Cartwright was "cordially received by the medical faculty of the principal [European] cities" based on an appreciation for his autopsies on Black corpses to evaluate diseases.[53] Encouraged by this transatlantic exchange of ideas, Cartwright returned to the U.S. to disseminate his theories of scientific racism.

Upon returning, the Louisiana State Medical Convention tasked Cartwright in the mid-1840s to investigate alleged diseases unique to Black slaves.[54] Cartwright's racially motivated studies led to his conception of "drapetomania." He articulated this theory through his 1851 paper, "Diseases and Peculiarities of the Negro Race," which was published in widely read pro-slavery Southern journals like the *Southern Medical Reports* and *DeBow's Review*.[55] Cartwright conceived drapetomania, or "Free Negro Insanity," as a mental illness that caused Black slaves to run away from their white masters. Cartwright claimed that drapetomania fostered "mental alienation" in Black slaves, provoking them to experience mental schisms that falsely convinced them of their equality.[56] To quell this "rascality," Cartwright claimed to Southern slave owners that "with the advantage of proper medical advice... this troublesome practice of running away, that many negroes have, can be almost entirely prevented."[57] Such advice included whipping slaves with broad leather straps.[58] Through these methods, Cartwright claimed that slave owners could compel Black slaves to return to their natural position as subservient laborers. Any attempt by slaveowners to "oppose the Diety's will, by trying to make the Negro anything else than 'the submissive knee-bender'... by putting [white slaveowners] on an equality with the Negro" would result in slaves running away based on their delusional belief in their equality.[59] Cartwright conceived Black existence as a disease, and he asserted that this disease needed to be counteracted with violence to force Black slaves to adhere to God's will.

Cartwright's theories that incorporated European scientific racist ideas profoundly influenced Confederate political thought and policy. Cartwright was directly embraced by Confederate leaders, including Confederate President Jefferson Davis, who saw Cartwright as a leading intellectual aiding the Confederacy's cause. After reading Cartwright's "Diseases and Peculiarities of the Negro Race," Davis started corresponding with Cartwright from the late 1840s through the Civil War.[60] In their letters, both bonded over their shared belief in the virtues of slavery and their opposition to naturalization proposals seeking to make slaves American citizens amidst fallout over the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850.[61] Cartwright's friendship with Davis became so strong that in 1861, Davis introduced Cartwright to Confederate General Joseph

53 "Dr. Cartwright," *New Orleans Medical and Surgical Journal* 19, no. 3 (November 1866): 347,

54 James Guillory, "The Pro-Slavery Arguments of Dr. Samuel A. Cartwright," *Louisiana History: The Journal of the Louisiana Historical Association* 9, no. 3 (1968): 212, https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/4231017.pdf.

55 Willoughby, "Running Away from Drapetomania: Samuel A. Cartwright, Medicine, and Race in the Antebellum South," 593.

56 Samuel Cartwright, "Diseases and Peculiarities of the Negro Race," *DeBow's Review* 11, no. 3 (1851): 331-333.

57 Cartwright, 331.

58 Samuel Cartwright, "Remarks on Dysentery Among Negroes," *New Orleans Medical and Surgical Journal* 11 (September 1854): 155.

59 Cartwright, "Diseases and Peculiarities of the Negro Race," 331-333.

60 Willoughby, "Running Away from Drapetomania: Samuel A. Cartwright, Medicine, and Race in the Antebellum South," 613.

61 "Samuel A. Cartwright and Family Papers: Series 1, Professional Papers, 1826 - 1858," Louisiana State University Libraries Special Collections, Mss. 2471, 2499, 1826 - 1874, 5. https://lib.lsu.edu/sites/default/files/sc/findaid/2471m.pdf.

E. Johnston and told Johnston that "as a physician [Cartwright] holds the first place in my estimation."[62] Through his relationships with Confederate elites, Cartwright cemented himself as a reliable resource who provided "empirical" findings to Confederate leaders to defend slavery.

Cartwright's scientific racist ideas also sparked the formation of a Southern medical movement that further supported the Confederacy's defense of slavery. Cartwright became a leader of the "state's rights medicine" movement, which framed Southern medicine as distinct from Northern medicine. Northern physicians, as Cartwright argued, distorted Enlightenment-era practices by encouraging doctors to treat patients as equal descendants of a common ancestor.[63] Northern medicine was thus inadequate to remedy the diseases of Black slaves that were theorized to be indicative of their subhuman status.[64] Based on these beliefs, Southern race theorists like Cartwright formed the movement to popularize racist ideas among Southern elites against Northern intellectuals, who were viewed as supporters for dangerous egalitarian ideas. These physicians' advocacy for "state's rights medicine" directly influenced Confederate policy. The movement appealed to slave owners, who desired to exploit the most labor possible out of their slaves.[65] Confederate leaders like Davis cited the ideas of "state's rights" physicians in policies that incentivized slave owners to increase labor efficiency based, in part, on Cartwright's recommendations to treat drapetomania.[66] Cartwright's exchange of ideas with European race theorists and his incorporation of their theories into his work provided the foundation upon which he influenced Confederate policy and political thought.

Henry Hotze: Race Theorist and Confederate Propogandist

As the Confederacy waged war against the Union, Confederate leaders ordered Henry Hotze to promote scientific racist theories in Europe to increase public support among European elites and the public for the Confederacy's cause. After immigrating from Switzerland in 1855 and naturalizing as an American citizen in 1856, Hotze established himself as a prominent proponent of scientific racism in the United States.[67] Hotze constantly read Morton and Cartwright's work, and he expressed his support for their theories.[68] Josiah Nott, a "state's rights" physiologist revered by Southern academics, heard of Hotze through acquaintances and decided to meet Hotze near his residence in Mobile, Alabama in 1854. Upon

62 Jefferson Davis to Joseph E. Johnston, September 6, 1861, Box 11, Folder 53, Series 3, Rosemond E. and Emile Kuntz Collection, Tulane University Digital Library Archives, Tulane University, New Orleans, LA.

63 John Duffy, "The Evolution of American Medical Education, Institutional Histories, and the Medical College of Georgia," *The Georgia Historical Quarterly* 71, no. 4 (1987): 623-624, https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/40581739.pdf.

64 Duffy, 624.

65 Samuel Cartwright, "How to Save the Republic, and the Position of the South in the Union," *DeBow's Review* 11, no. 2 (August 1851): 191.

66 Willoughby, "Running Away from Drapetomania: Samuel A. Cartwright, Medicine, and Race in the Antebellum South," 613.

67 Stephen Oates, "Henry Hotze: Confederate Agent Abroad," *The Historian* 27, no. 2 (February 1965): 133, https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/24438124.pdf.

68 Robert Bonner, "Slavery, Confederate Diplomacy, and the Racialist Mission of Henry Hotze," *Civil War History*

51, no. 3 (September 2005): 291, https://muse.jhu.edu/article/186099/pdf?casa_token=aey0NNcaG-oAAAAA:UzgaSAEFF-elTrzZ2YOtnL-chlC-5qIY jSv0rF_2wUY3ENR78OFr-YwICzAwr4wss3rcG7V6y7qk.

meeting Hotze, Nott "suggested [that Hotze's] knowledge of foreign languages" and his belief in scientific racism would be useful in translating the work of European race theorists into English.[69] He agreed, and they began establishing relationships with European race theorists to distribute and popularize their ideas among Confederate political leaders.

Hotze and Nott's most important joint endeavor involved their English translation of French aristocrat Arthur de Gobineau's 1855 work, *An Essay on the Inequality of the Human Races*. Gobineau first promoted scientific racist theories following the French Revolution of 1848 that resulted in the establishment of the French Second Republic. Viewing the Revolution as a subversion of traditional social hierarchy, Gobineau advocated for slavery as a mechanism to achieve social order and suppress egalitarian values.[70] Gobineau's anti-egalitarianism culminated in *An Essay,* in which he contended that Black people constituted a separate and intellectually inferior racial group. Black people were "mere savages" compared to white people, who exhibited a naturally superior ability to build civilizations.[71] Hotze and Nott read Gobineau's *An Essay* and decided to correspond with him to express their interest in working with him on the publication of his work. Hotze wrote to Gobineau that he viewed his work as "the light I had sought for so earnestly," and he vowed to be Gobineau's "first disciple" in promoting his scientific racist theories throughout the United States.[72]

Hotze and Nott distributed Gobineau's work in the United States through the mid-1850s and the beginning of the Civil War. As part of the publication process, Hotze wrote an introduction that framed Gobineau's work within the larger context of American debates over the future of slavery. He wrote that "[when] we contemplate the human family from the... view of the naturalist... the marked dissimilarity of the various [racial] groups" emerges as a driving force of human nature.[73] Black people demonstrated a uniquely "monstrous stagnation" in their intellectual development,[74] while white people showcased intellectual progress that proved they were "incontestably and avowedly superior."[75] Hotze's English translation of Gobineau's *An Essay* became widely read by the Confederacy's foremost leaders. When the Civil War commenced in 1861, Hotze joined the Confederacy's Mobile Cadets and traveled through Montgomery, Alabama, where he worked closely with Confederate Secretary of War Leroy Walker and befriended powerful Confederate politicians. One such politician was Davis, who met Hotze in Montgomery and told Hotze he liked his work with Gobineau.[76] Davis believed that Hotze's work signified his commitment to promote the Confederate cause for slavery, and he sensed an opportunity to increase popular support for the

69 Bonner, 291.

70 Michelle Wright, "[Black] Peasants from France: Missing Translations of American Anxieties on Race and the Nation," *Callaloo* 22, no. 4 (1999): 833, https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/3299815.pdf.

71 Arthur de Gobineau, *An Essay on the Inequality of the Human Races* (London: William Heinemann, 1853), 133.

72 Henry Hotze to Arthur de Gobineau, January 1, 1856, in *Gobineau's Rassenwerk*, ed. Ludwig Schemann (Stuttgart: Sr. Srommanns Derlag, 1910), 196.

73 Gobineau, *An Essay on the Inequality of the Human Races*, 22.

74 Gobineau, 32.

75 Gobineau, 33.

76 Oates, "Henry Hotze: Confederate Agent Abroad," 134.

Confederacy abroad and pressure European powers to support them. Davis ordered Walker and Confederate Secretary of State Robert Hunter on November 14, 1861 to make Hotze a special agent.[77] Hotze would be using his editorial skills and transatlantic connections to implement a propaganda operation that promoted scientific racism to increase Confederate support in Europe.

Hotze arrived at Southampton, England on January 28, 1862 and stationed himself in London to begin his mission.[78] Hotze's first part of his mission required him to network with prominent British political figures, including Lord High Chancellor John Campbell, to generate elite support for the Confederacy. In February 1862, Campbell asked Hotze to prepare a section of a speech he would deliver to Parliament opposing the Union's blockade of Southern transatlantic trade through the Anaconda Plan.[79] Hotze succeeded, but he encountered his first challenges with his propaganda operation. Confederate supporters in Parliament showcased weak "demonstrations for [the Confederacy's] benefit."[80] In contrast, Confederate opponents depicted Southerners as animalistic supporters of slavery because it "grated on [Britons'] national conscience."[81] He articulated that although he "can be useful to [the Confederacy's] cause," he found it "difficult at times to restrain the expressions of pain... at the gross... and almost brutal indifference with which the great spectacle on the other hemisphere is viewed on this."[82] Hotze grew disillusioned with British elites' reluctance to support the Confederacy, fearing that he would fail to leverage European support to grant the Confederacy international legitimacy.

On February 20, 1862, Hotze ended his disillusionment by initiating the second phase of his mission. This phase involved him calling the editor of the London *Post*, Liberal British Prime Minister Henry John Temple's official publication, to obtain editorial space to publish an article he wrote that defended Confederate slavery based on his belief in polygenism.[83] Hotze's article exploded in popularity among British commoners, particularly those in Liberal urban coffee clubs who largely viewed Black people as inferior,[84] and he used this newfound popularity to expand his propaganda operation. By April 1862, Hotze wrote for *the Times, Standard*, and *Herald* in London, the former two being Liberal publications and the latter a Conservative publication.[85] He also wrote for the *Money Market Review*, which, as he explained in a letter to Hunter, possessed "great authority among [British] capitalists" who influenced British military appropriations policy.[86] He further gave his wages to staff writers to increase the production and distribu-

77 Oates, 134.

78 Oates, 135.

79 Oates, 136.

80 Henry Hotze to Robert Hunter, March 11, 1862, in *King Cotton Diplomacy*, ed. Frank Owsley Jr. (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2008), 361.

81 Owsley Jr., 361.

82 Owsley Jr., 361.

83 Oates, "Henry Hotze: Confederate Agent Abroad," 138.

84 Oates, 138.

85 Oates, 138.

86 Henry Hotze to Robert Hunter, March 24, 1862, in *King Cotton Diplomacy*, ed. Frank Owsley Jr. (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press,

tion of pro-Confederate articles to British commoners and elites.[87]

Based on positive feedback from readers, Hotze wrote to Hunter on April 25, 1862 that he wanted to "establish a newspaper devoted to [Confederate] interests" that would be "exclusively under my control" through finances from Confederate leaders.[88] On May 1, 1862, Hotze issued the first edition of *The Index,* a 16-page weekly political journal promoting Confederate propaganda that employed scientific racist theories to defend slavery as a righteous institution.[89] *The Index* carried news from "leading [Confederate] papers and extracts from Southern speeches, laws, and decrees"[90] to appeal to British politicians of different political parties and function as a "channel through which [Confederate] arguments... can be conveyed... to the [British] Government."[91]

The Index became an instrumental force for Confederate foreign relations with the British government. The journal carried articles that promoted the necessity of defending slavery for the preservation of white supremacy. In terms of policy, these articles specifically advocated for the abolition of the trade blockade that stymied foreign cotton trade with Great Britain. Writers urged the British government to publicly denounce it as an illegal measure against Southern sovereignty and recognize the Confederacy as an independent nation-state.[92] On an ideological level, *The Index* emphasized purported similarities between British and Southern culture. Staff writers cited Confederate leaders' promotion of scientific racist theories, including polygenism and phrenology, to demonstrate their support for ideas first developed by Enlightenment thinkers.[93] The Confederacy and Great Britain were framed as ideologically bounded societies that shared common scientific racist beliefs to safeguard white supremacy through slavery.

These articles left a positive impression on British elites. Many Liberal and Conservative leaders in Parliament contacted Hotze to express interest in *The Index*. One such leader was John Arthur Roebuck, a self-declared "independent" Member of Parliament who championed British recognition of the Confederacy. In a September 1862 meeting with Hotze, Roebuck promised him that by the spring of 1863, the British government would recognize the Confederacy as an independent nation due to pressure from Confederate-supporting media outlets like *The Index*.[94] Hotze's pressure on British elites and the government to support the Confederacy did not go unnoticed by Confederate leaders. Davis complimented Hotze as a "judicious and effective" representative of the Confederacy.[95] Confederate Secretary of State Judah Benjamin was so impressed by Hotze's propaganda opera-

2008), 371.

87 Oates, "Henry Hotze: Confederate Agent Abroad," 139.

88 Henry Hotze to Robert Hunter, March 24, 1862, in *King Cotton Diplomacy*, ed. Frank Owsley Jr. (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2008), 400.

89 Oates, "Henry Hotze: Confederate Agent Abroad," 140.

90 Oates, 140.

91 Henry Hotze to Judah Benjamin, November 7, 1862, in "Henry Hotze: Confederate Agent Abroad," ed. Oates, 140.

92 Oates, "Henry Hotze: Confederate Agent Abroad," 142.

93 Oates, 142.

94 Oates, 144.

95 Oates, 143.

tion that he awarded Hotze a $30,000 annual salary.[96] Hotze's propaganda operation to "make *The Index* a worthy representative in journalism of the highest ideal of that Southern civilization which is as yet only in its infancy" continued to expand, reaching the hands and minds of tens of thousands of British elites and commoners.[97]

However, Hotze's successes in implementing his Confederate propaganda campaign evaporated as quickly as they materialized. Lincoln's issuance of the preliminary Emancipation Proclamation on September 22, 1862, which changed the legal status of slaves in the Confederacy from enslaved to free, created political shockwaves throughout Great Britain. Initial reactions to the Proclamation from the *Times* were contemptuous.[98] The *Times* declared that the Proclamation was the "wretched makeshift of a pettifogging lawyer" who undermined natural law upholding the biological inferiority of Black slaves.[99] Hotze was ecstatic, writing to Benjamin that "more than I ever could have accomplished has been done by Mr. Lincoln's emancipation proclamation, which... appears to have awakened the fears of both Government and people."[100] The British media, as Hotze claimed, "has been unanimous... in its condemnation" of the Proclamation and generated popular discontent that aided the Confederacy's efforts to gain European support.[101]

As Confederate-allied media published articles opposing the Proclamation, liberal journals fomented popular support for the Proclamation, which sparked the formation of mass liberal movements in Great Britain. Viewing the Proclamation as the liberation from an institution that traumatized the Union and Great Britain, British liberals published articles that appealed to middle-class Britons' fears of slavery.[102] Such fears stemmed from their experiences with slaveholders' marginalization of working-class laborers.[103] British liberals paired their publication of widely distributed articles with mass protests meant to convince the British public to support the Proclamation. Through the spring of 1863, hundreds of meetings were organized and led by a diverse liberal coalition of political radicals, women, racial minorities, and middle-class workers.[104] Liberals collaborated with organizations like the London Emancipation Society to send "scores of speakers... to meeting halls across the country to summon British men and women" to support the Proclamation.[105] This mobilization of popular liberal discontent ultimately compelled the British government to not intervene in support of the Confederacy through their potential recognition of Confederate independence.

Hotze's propaganda operation could not overcome this liberal mobilization of the British public. Outmaneuvered by liberals' coordinated efforts to distribute anti-Confederate literature, Hotze became

96 J.F. Jameson, "The London Expenditures of the Confederate Secret Service," *American Historical Review* 35, no. 4 (July 1930): 815.

97 Henry Hotze to John Witt, August 11, 1864, in "Henry Hotze: Confederate Agent Abroad," ed. Oates, 141.

98 Oates, "Henry Hotze: Confederate Agent Abroad," 145.

99 Oates, 145.

100 Henry Hotze to Judah Benjamin, January 17, 1863, in "Henry Hotze: Confederate Agent Abroad," ed. Oates, 145- 146.

101 Oates, 145-146.

102 Don Doyle, *The Cause of All Nations: An International History of the American Civil War* (New York: Basic Books, 2017), 242-243.

103 Doyle, 242-243.

104 Doyle, 246.

105 Doyle, 246.

resigned to his mission's inevitable failure. Writing to Benjamin in May 1863, Hotze claimed that Confederate recognition of nationhood by British leaders "is farther off than it was 18 months ago" due to liberals' successful pressure campaign to vilify Confederates' belief in scientific racism.[106] Hotze's hopelessness was further compounded by Roebuck's attempt on June 30, 1863 to pass a resolution through Parliament that sought to recognize the Confederacy. Roebuck's proposal ignited blistering condemnation from Liberal and Conservative lawmakers, who believed that Great Britain would damage its reputation if they supported a government opposed to egalitarian principles.[107] Roebuck subsequently withdrew the motion, but the damage was done. *The Index*'s popularity declined through the remainder of the Civil War.[108] Confederate defeats at Gettysburg and Vicksburg in 1863 further dissuaded British elites from working with Hotze, who they now largely viewed as a pathetic representative of a lost cause.[109] Writing in *The Index*, Hotze sullenly proclaimed that he "lost" the battle of British public opinion.[110] Despite all of the political and financial sacrifices he gave to defend slavery abroad, Hotze recognized that his operation had no future, and neither did the Confederacy.

Hotze's propaganda campaign officially ended when *The Index* published its last issue in August 1865, four months after Confederate General Robert E. Lee's surrender at Appomattox.[111] The end of his campaign left Hotze more uncompromising in his belief in scientific racism, as he corresponded with his American friends to warn about what he claimed was an "Africanization of the Union" caused by efforts to make former slaves equal citizens.[112] Reiterating his belief in polygenism, Hotze claimed that granting equal citizenship to a separate and unintelligent Black slave class would enable the rise of a "centralized despotism" that undermined white supremacy and God's design for humanity.[113]

Although unsuccessful, Hotze's propaganda operation critically impacted Confederate foreign relations. Hotze's relationships with British elites enabled him to publish Confederate propaganda through *The Index* that influenced large swaths of the British public. Such propaganda centered around scientific racist theories that pressured the British government to support the Confederacy based on a perceived necessity to defend slavery. Hotze's work served as the culmination of transatlantic exchanges of scientific racist theories that began in the Age of Enlightenment and shaped Confederate foreign relations through the Civil War.

106 Henry Hotze to Judah Benjamin, May 9, 1863, in "Henry Hotze: Confederate Agent Abroad," ed. Oates, 147.

107 Oates, "Henry Hotze: Confederate Agent Abroad," 148.

108 Oates, 152.

109 Oates, 149.

110 Oates, 149.

111 Oates, 153.

112 Henry Hotze to Benjamin Wood, April 21, 1865, in "Henry Hotze: Confederate Agent Abroad," ed. Oates, 153- 154.

113 Oates, 153-154.

The Challenges of Transatlantic Exchanges of Scientific Racist Theories

Despite their successes in influencing Confederate political thought and policy, American and European race theorists confronted challenges that inhibited their transatlantic exchange of ideas. Strong public criticism inhibited their efforts to sway public opinion to support slavery.

Northern newspapers published articles deriding the scientific racist theories of theorists such as Cartwright. For example, the *Ripley Bee* reprinted a notice in 1854 that Cartwright supported the African slave trade. The *Ripley Bee*'s editors panned Cartwright's position as a byproduct of Southern pro-slavery ideology that threatened the political stability of the Union.[114] Northern medical reviews further publicly criticized these theories. In a review of Cartwright's paper on dysentery, physician Harty Wooten wrote that Cartwright's claim that Black slaves were more vulnerable to attract diseases than white people was incorrect. Cartwright, according to Wooten, relied on faulty data from politically biased pro-slavery sources that polluted his methodology.[115] This disagreement from academics and the general public limited the appeal of scientific racist ideas to Southern leaders who used such racism to justify slavery for their political and economic self-interests. Such limitations frustrated their attempts to achieve a broad-ranging national consensus that slavery was necessary to maintain a naturally rooted social order.

These limitations were exacerbated by a lack of organizational capacity that restricted the abilities of race theorists to influence public opinion and policy toward supporting slavery. While Confederate actors united with various European political figures on the necessity to preserve slavery, they lacked the resource capacity needed to operate a successful long-term propaganda operation. After *The Index* launched in 1862 with subsidies from Confederate leaders, Hotze had to rely on funds from personal friends and random financiers he befriended in England to keep his operation afloat.[116] His salary of $30,000, although extremely high adjusted for inflation, did not adequately cover the expansive responsibilities of his operation. Such responsibilities included compensating *The Index*'s staff writers as full-time workers, paying for the publication and distribution of *The Index* across hundreds of British towns, covering work-related and personal transportation costs, and subsidizing lobbying efforts in Parliament.[117] While British liberals were jointly networking and pooling resources to influence public opinion, Hotze had to largely command his propaganda operation by himself with minimal support from Confederate leadership. This lack of coordination arose out of a weak capacity to establish interdependent activist networks, which weakened Confederate efforts to impact British public opinion and policy towards slavery.

However, these limitations did not stop American and European race theorists from affecting public opinion and policy in the short term. Rather than fragmenting, these theorists united on a commitment to defend slavery that they viewed as rooted in human

114 Willoughby, "Running Away from Drapetomania: Samuel A. Cartwright, Medicine, and Race in the Antebellum South," 592.

115 Willoughby, 599.

116 Oates, "Henry Hotze: Confederate Agent Abroad," 140.

117 Oates, 141-142.

nature. This commitment persisted even as their efforts encountered significant political challenges and it became clear that they would not achieve their goals. These actors recognized that they needed to exert a sizable impact on public opinion and policy in a limited amount of time. Their successes within this short window of time showcase the importance of transatlantic exchanges of ideas in supporting political efforts that can impact the long-term future of racial equality.

Conclusion

These transatlantic exchanges of ideas between European and American race theorists demonstrate how ideas generated in one part of the world can influence policy in another part of the world. European race theorists' ideas were integrated into the scientific racist ideas of American race theorists. These theorists included Morton and Cartwright, who used such ideas to justify Southern slavery. As the Civil War involved European powers, Confederate propagandists like Hotze led political propaganda operations that utilized racist ideas from European race theorists, including Gobineau, to promote the Confederacy's defense of slavery abroad. Such propaganda attempted to convince the European public to support the Confederacy based on the perceived necessity of maintaining white supremacy. In totality, scientific racism functioned as a critical linkage between Europe and the United States that shaped Confederate political thought and policy, thereby impacting the direction of the Civil War.

The impacts of this transatlantic exchange of scientific racist ideas were not confined to the Civil War. The prominence of such theories directly contributed to the violent state of American racial relations through Reconstruction and Jim Crow. After Reconstruction ended with the Compromise of 1877 that ordered the withdrawal of federal troops from the South, Southern state governments escalated enforcement of systemically racist laws against African Americans. Jim Crow laws included the imposition of grandfather clauses and literacy tests that were implemented to marginalize African American political representation.[118] Despite violating the 14th and 15th Amendments that guaranteed African Americans equal protection and voting rights, Southern leaders justified Jim Crow by citing scientific racist ideas. White supremacist political leaders argued that African Americans possessed lower intelligence and were naturally more susceptible to diseases, thereby rendering them incapable of exerting agency over important political decisions.[119]

Combined with the ascendency of Social Darwinism in the late nineteenth century, Jim Crow brutalized African Americans based on interconnecting racist beliefs. Social Darwinists asserted that wealthy ruling elites possessed superior levels of intelligence that enabled them to govern over poorer and unintelligent underclasses based on a pseudoscientific interpretation of Charles Darwin's *On the Origin of Species*.[120] Southern leaders integrated Social Darwinist ideology

118 Brad Epperly et al., "Rule by Violence, Rule by Law: Lynching, Jim Crow, and the Continuing Evolution of Voter Suppression in the U.S.," *Perspectives on Politics* 18, no. 3 (September 2020): 761-762, https://www.cambridge.org/core/services/aop-cambridge-core/content/view/CBC6AD-86B557A093D7E832F8D821 978B/S1537592718003584a.pdf/rule-by-violence-rule-by-law-lynching-jim-crow-and-the-continuing-evolution-of-voter-suppression-in-the-us.pdf.

119 Andrea Patterson, "Germs and Jim Crow: The Impact of Microbiology on Public Health Policies in Progressive Era American South," *Journal of the History of Biology* 42, no. 3 (Fall 2009): 533, https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/20027786/.

120 Rutledge Dennis, "Social Darwinism, Scientific Racism, and the Metaphysics of Race," *The Journal of Negro Education* 64, no. 3 (Sum-

to justify Jim Crow dehumanization, claiming that intelligent and wealthy white rulers deserved to govern over unintelligent African Americans based on Darwinian natural selection.[121] This intersectionality of Jim Crow racism demonstrates that scientific racist ideas never truly vanish. As previous attempts to defend racial hierarchy end, new efforts emerge that refashion previous pseudoscientific theories to justify the oppression of marginalized groups. Thus, this transatlantic exchange of scientific racist ideas showcases the historical continuity of racist beliefs that unite actors across borders to uphold white supremacy into modern times.

mer 1995): 244, https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/2967206.pdf?casa_token=WjYDRD7VFSsAAAAA:VRrEJP6vC0Wl7ViXaAqXU MQUefun-Nmp_-K4t75LrLIZuzSaHK46SMjMG1MwlRUf_A_omnjvWKOXQcZj8Mvcc5hdN39VbHedZdyE8In-z vBlSr_CWjAZc.

121 Dennis, 247.

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Comparing Russian Empire Era and post-World War II Stalinist Era Manipulations of Historical Texts and their Intended Effect on Ukraine

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After World War II, Marshall Joseph V. Stalin ordered the rewriting of the USSR's history books as a form of state propaganda to legitimize the USSR's claim over states that it had newly reconquered from the Nazis, such as Ukraine and Belarus. This move was justified by the overwhelming sense of national pride that Russians felt after being on the winning side of World War II and becoming a superpower. It was also spurred by Stalin's horror at the show of weakness by the USSR during the initial years of the Nazi invasion. He believed this weakness could be counteracted after World War II by creating a solid barrier of satellite states between Russia and any aggressors.[1]

The rewriting of historical texts was soon felt in Ukrainian history texts and schools. This was an intensification of the repression tactics used by the USSR in Ukraine in the 1920s and 1930s. During both periods of repression, Ukrainian texts that asserted the history of Ukraine as a separate entity from Russia were banned and their writers exiled or murdered. The post-World War II rewrite of Ukrainian history texts relegated Ukrainian history to a sub-topic of Russian history, and portrayed Ukraine as subordinate to Russia in all ways from ancient to modern times. This was an effort by Stalin to justify Russia's claim over Ukraine, by portraying Ukrainian history, language, and culture as simply an inferior offshoot of Russia's history, language, and culture. It was an effort to create the lie that Ukrainians were Russians who had diverged from the main Russian culture and history for a bit but were now returning to the fold. If Russia's claim over Ukraine seemed historically legitimate and its population was forced to become culturally Russian, Stalin believed that Ukraine would never rebel against the USSR again.

These repressive literary tactics mirrored tactics utilized by the Russian Empire in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, when the tsars ordered historical literature in the Empire to portray Ukrainian culture and history as lesser kin to Russian history and culture. The historical works written under the Russian tsars and the historical works written under Stalin

1 Vladimir Pechatnov, "Soviet Union and the World" edited by Melvyn P. Leffler and Odd Arne Westad, in *The Cambridge History of the Cold War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 95-96.

post-World War II were created with the same motivation, to legitimize their control of Ukraine. In changing the historical texts, both states purposefully targeted Ukrainian schools, in an effort to keep Ukrainian culture and history subordinate to Russian culture and history and justify the regime's control of Ukraine and its people.

This paper will use Ivan Dzyuba's *Internationalism or Russification?* as a source of historical materials created under Stalin and his ideologically similar successors. Dzyuba's book participated in the call of many Ukrainians in the 1960s to allow the use of the Ukrainian language, literature and culture in public in Ukraine.[2] This call was a reaction against the harsh repression of accurate Ukrainian history in the 1950s after World War II. Dzyuba's writings were not, at least on the surface, anti-Russian, but instead were actually pro-internationalist and anti-Russification.[3] He wished to call attention to "The confusion, whether intentional or unintentional, of the USSR with "Russia one and indivisible" [which] had..."been absorbed into the bloodstream of many people.""[4] Dzyuba's views on the use of the word nationalist in regards to Ukraine align with the views expressed in this essay. He states that in the past "...it was permissible to label as 'nationalist' anyone possessing an elementary sense of national dignity, or anyone concerned with the fate of Ukrainian culture and language."[5] Thus, the USSR's suppression of the Ukrainian movement for cultural rights should rightly be termed nationalist, not the Ukrainian movement itself. Dzyuba did not call for a separation from the USSR but demanded democratic and human rights.[6] The USSR's suppression of this call can be seen as nationalist.

Interestingly, there were almost identical impetuses that seem to have driven both Stalin and the Russian tsars to dramatically push Russification in society at specific times, through the manipulation of historical literature. The similar impetus for these actions was a huge war in Europe that caused Russia great losses both economically and in terms of demography. For the tsars this event was the Napoleonic Wars, and for Stalin it was World War II. Shkandrij states that "Following the Napoleonic Wars, the reassertion of an imperial identity was accompanied by the drive to integrate a millennium of history into an overarching imperial narrative."[7] This operation, copied by Stalin much later, appropriated Ukraine's history and culture and absorbed it into Russian history in order to add prestige to Russian history.[8] In it, Ukraine was portrayed as a "borderland" that needed taming and instruction in order to become a proper nation with a proper people.[9] The texts suggested that Ukrainians should emulate the "Great Russians" in order to be-

2 Dzyuba, Ivan. 1970. *Internationalism or Russification? A Study in the Soviet Nationalities Problem*. (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson), 5.

3 Ibid.

4 Shkandrij, Myroslav. 2001. *Russia and Ukraine: Literature and the Discourse of Empire from Napoleonic to Postcolonial Times*. (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queens University Press), 250; Dzyuba, *Internationalism,* 165.

5 Dzyuba, *Internationalism,* 5.

6 Ibid.

7 Shkandrij, *Russia and Ukraine,* 4-5.

8 Ibid.

9 Ibid, 5.

come a good and productive nation.

The forced adoption of Russian culture, which Ukraine had undergone many times in different forms by the 1960s, was known first as Russification and later as Sovietization. Russification or Russianization was "the basic formula of the Russian tsarist nationalities policy."[10] This formula followed Machiavelli's idea that a conqueror needed to extinguish the culture of the peoples they seized because "'As long as a people preserves its faith, language, customs and laws it cannot be considered subdued.'"[11] In order to conceal the ultimate objective of the tsars' Russianization policies, the tsars developed stories of a "common Fatherland" that were inculcated into the Ukrainian people to explain why Ukrainians should adopt Russian culture.[12] Soviet historians writing about Ukraine were "taught to eulogize the Soviet present at the expense of the Ukrainian national past."[13] This was part of a dedicated campaign by the tsars, which was started by Catherine the Great after Ukraine signed a treaty with Russia to avoid more conflict with the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in 1654 and intensified after the Napoleonic Wars, to ensure that the tsars retained full control of Russia's borderlands. The Napoleonic Wars, like World War II, had been devastating for Russia and its people even though they were nominally the victors. In defeating Napoleon, Tsar Alexander had simultaneously shown Russia's strength, but the amount of damage done to the Empire also revealed Russia's weaknesses. The tsar was desperate to cover up this weakness, and used Russianization policies as part of his attempt to do so.

World War II had a similar effect on Stalin. Stalin's empire had come close to total destruction because of Hitler's unexpected invasion in 1941. The first two years of the conflict after the invasion were disastrous for Russia, and victory was not assured in the slightest. This weakness, though covered by the enormous military buildup of Russia during the later part of the war, had deeply terrified Stalin.[14] After the war, this fear drove him to build up the USSR's strength in an effort to ensure that the Soviet Union was never caught off guard like that again. In doing this, the dictator's "out-moded concept of security in terms of territory – the more you have got, the safer you are" reared its head, and significant effort was put towards making sure the states in the protective ring of satellite states around Russia would not be able to leave the USSR.[15] This concept of more territory equals a strong state was a concept inherited from the Russian tsars, and was given extra credence by the USSR experience of World War II, which had proved the importance of defense in depth.[16]

Adhering to the concept of defense in depth, Stalin strove to protect Russia not only by militarily repossessing all of the states he had temporarily lost during the war but also by Sovietizing the peoples of

10 Dzyuba, *Internationalism,* 83.

11 Ibid.

12 Ibid.

13 Yekelchyk, Serhy. 2004. *Stalin's Empire of Memory: Russian-Ukrainian Relations in the Soviet Historical Imagination.* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press), 71.

14 Pechatnov, "Soviet Union and the World," 95-96.

15 Ibid, 92.

16 Ibid.

those states to believe in the myth of Russian greatness and power. He believed that a stronger connection to Russian culture and history would provide extra protection for the USSR against rebellion in these newly re-acquired areas. Sovietization was the USSR's continuation of the imperial doctrine of Russianization used by the Empire. Like Russianization, Sovietization was the encouragement of "the adoption of the Russian language and a lifestyle built on Russian models."[17] It was used to conceal the intent of Stalin's "assimilation formula" which was "National in form, socialist in essence," the purpose of which was to destroy pre-existing power structures in each state.[18] This included attempting to eradicate non-Russian cultures, languages, and historical narratives from the satellite states of the Soviet Union. Stalin publicly began this movement with his toast at a banquet in May of 1945 that was thrown to honor the commanders of the Red Army and celebrate victory over Germany. [19] This toast was later named "To the Great Russian People!" and is seen as the speech that "inaugurated a celebration of Russian national greatness that knew no bounds" and set the tone for post-WWII Russification policies.[20] Stalin stated in his toast that "the Russian people...[were] the Soviet Union's guiding force among all the peoples of our country...[and] the leading people."[21] Thus, by his logic all of the other peoples of the USSR should strive to emulate Russians in every way, from adopting their culture to their language.

In tsar and Soviet controlled historical texts, Russians were portrayed as "having always been the greatest, wisest, bravest, and most virtuous of all nations."[22] Their claim to greatness was explained in their defeat of the terrible Nazis and their past history of defeating other would-be conquerors of Europe like Napoleon, whom all other European nations had been unable to defeat. In order to have a claim to this past "greatness," Stalin's historians portrayed the "Russian Empire's foreign and domestic policies in a positive light as the predecessor of the mighty Russian-dominated, multinational Soviet state."[23] This gave the USSR a claim to the long history of the Russian Empire in order to legitimize Soviet control of its satellite states, which they then defended through Sovietizing said states. Both times the tsars and Stalin encouraged Russification in their territories, they did so to ensure the security of the regime, which had recently suffered a blow to their reputation both at home and abroad because of a great European war. The impetus of a massive war in Europe drove Russian rulers to make a show of Russian power through its culture and history, or at least the history it had stolen from Ukraine for itself.

In a similar fashion, Pushkin wrote one of

17 Kassymbekova, Botakoz and Aminat Chokobaeva. 2023. "Expropriation, assimilation, elimination: Understanding Soviet Settler Colonialism." In South/South Dialogues, *Beyond the colonial vortex of the "West"; Subverting non-western imperialisms before and after 24 February 2022*, 2023.

18 Ibid.

19 Yekelchyk, *Stalin's Empire of Memory*, 88.

20 Ibid.

21 J. V. Stalin, "Toast to the Russian People at a Reception in Honour of Red Army Commanders Given by the Soviet Government in the Kremlin on Thursday, May 24, 1945," stanza 4-5. https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/stalin/works/1945/05/24.html

22 Yekelchyk, *Stalin's Empire of Memory*, 88.

23 Ibid, 89.

his most famous poems, "To the Slanderers of Russia," in the aftermath of a Russian military victory that had taken a concerning amount of time to win.[24] The poem was written directly after the Polish uprising of 1830-1831, in response to criticisms by French government officials that Russia was crushing Polish nationalism and calls for Western Europeans to come to Poland's aid. According to Shkandrij, "Russian nationalism...was used to justify policies of Russification" after the Polish revolt through propaganda like Pushkin's poem.[25] Nationalist phrases like "Who will win in the unequal contest:/Arrogant Pole, or steadfast Ross?" and "On the burning ruins of Moscow/We did not recognize the insolent will/Of the man before whom you trembled?," a reference to Napoleon and his loss to Russia, fill the poem.[26] Like the Stalinist and tsarist era historical rewrites, literature critic Edyta Bojanowska argues that Pushkin wrote the poem in an effort to mask Russia's weaknesses and insecurities. The poet feared that the western world had seen Russian weakness in the fact that it took a long time for the Russians to put down the Polish rebellion.[27] In his poem, Pushkin reduces the Polish uprising "to mere "agitation" ... (which) trivializes nearly a year of bloody war and the modern political grievance that gave rise to it."[28] The poet is making light of this year-long struggle by the Russian military to crush the Polish rebels in order to conceal the weakness that observers could have extrapolated from the extended time frame of the conflict. Bojanowska notes that "In imperial texts...behind strident assertions of power there often lurk the empire's perceived vulnerabilities."[29] The critic further states that the poet relies on historical examples of past victories, such as defeating Napoleon or stopping the Mongols, to shore up Russia's image as strong and unyielding.[30] In urgently declaring Moscow's superiority over and over again, instead of the intended reflection of Russian strength the poem reveals Moscow's weaknesses and fear of Western intervention in this conflict.

The poet Pushkin stirs up strong emotions with his references to Russia's repeated defense of Europe's continued freedom in his famous poem. He invokes historical events, such as Russia's defeat of Napoleon when Western Europe proved unable to, in order to encourage nationalistic sentiments and hide current Russian weakness.[31] Bojanowska argued that ""To the Slanderers of Russia" became a very successful item in the emotional repertoire of Russian nationalism" seen in how it was disseminated across the Empire for decades.[32] This is akin to the way rewritten history texts

24 Bojanowska, Edyta M. 2019. "Pushkin's 'To the Slanderers of Russia': The Slavic Question, Imperial Anxieties, and Geopolitics," *Pushkin Review 21*, 12.

25 Shkandrij, *Russia and Ukraine,* 13; Bojanowska, "Pushkin's 'To the Slanderers of Russia,' 12.

26 Pushkin, "To the Slanderers of Russia," in The Project Gutenberg EBook of *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, Volume 58, Number 358, August 1845. lines 11 and 12, lines 24-26. Lines 11-12 reference the Polish uprising of 1830-1831 against the Russian Empire. Lines 24-26 refer to when the Russian Empire defeated Napoleon after Moscow was razed to the ground in 1812.

27 Bojanowska, "Pushkin's 'To the Slanderers of Russia,' 27.

28 Ibid, 22.

29 Ibid, 29.

30 Ibid.

31 Ibid, 27.

32 Ibid.

inculcated the children of the USSR into Stalin's belief in the existence of the "Great Russian People."[33] Pushkin wrote "To the Slanderers of Russia" to cover up Russian weakness that had been revealed by the Polish uprising, and Stalin later rewrote the history texts of Ukraine to emphasize the USSR's "long and glorious" history to cover up a similar weakness in the USSR that had been exposed by the Nazi invasion.

The purpose of the forced rewriting of historical textbooks by the tsars and Stalin was not just to cover up the weaknesses revealed by these wars. Long before World War II, Russians had a history of using literature to show their pride in past military victories such as defeating the Mongols and Napoleon. This can be seen in imperialistic Russian literature like Pushkin's "To the Slanderers of Russia," mentioned above. This tradition of glorifying Russian imperial and military might was continued by Stalin after World War II. After all, in Stalin's eyes, Russia had effectively saved all of Europe from the Nazi regime through the sacrifice of millions of people and because of their overwhelming military might. This great victory drove Stalin to craft a new historical identity to match "the USSR's new self-identification as one of the world's great powers."[34] This new identity was based on modeling the USSR as the successor state of the Russian Empire which had a long and glorious imperial past of dominating its surrounding territories.[35]

Stalin manipulated historical literature after World War II for two purposes. To convince the Russian people of their right to dominance over the land that they had "rightfully" conquered because of their long victorious history both recent and ancient, and to convince the other peoples of the republic that they should emulate and bow down to the Russians. Stalin believed that "The great Russian people had grown in stature...Accordingly, non-Russians needed to revise their historical narratives to confirm their subaltern status as the Russians' 'younger brothers.'"[36] Furthermore, after the war Moscow felt the need to be recognized as a legitimate great world power and so Stalin had the history books changed to reflect a fitting history for such a "great power."[37] In order to match this new historical narrative, Ukraine's history "had to be entirely rewritten from the point of view of...the beneficence of ties with tsarist Russia."[38]

Stalin used similar tactics to the Russian tsars in his attempt to cover any perceivable cracks in the strength of the USSR after World War II. In the historical textbooks of the USSR from the 1950s and 1960s, historians emphasized the "metaphysical notion of a superior Great Russian character and destiny" with strong language.[39] These textbooks imitated the tactics used in tsarist textbooks, emphasizing the "foundation myth of a transnational Russian-Ukrainian identity [which] required the appropriation of Kyivan history

33 Bojanowska, "Pushkin's 'To the Slanderers of Russia,' 28.

34 Yekelchyk, *Stalin's Empire of Memory*, 90.

35 Ibid.

36 Ibid.

37 Pechatnov, "Soviet Union and the World," 95.

38 Yekelchyk, *Stalin's Empire of Memory*, 89-90.

39 Shkandrij, *Russia and Ukraine,* 160-1.

in order to establish an ancient lineage for Muscovy."[40] The theft of an ancient lineage from Ukraine gave the USSR two things. It gave the Soviets historical credibility to their claim that they were a great superpower with an equally great history to match, and it provided them with a false historically legitimate reason to keep Ukraine under its power. This tactic was part of the dedicated campaign after World War II to teach the peoples of the USSR to self-identify with both the present Soviet state and the Russian imperial past.[41] Nikita Khrushchev, future Premier of the Soviet Union, wrote in a report in 1947 that "The KP(b)U Central Committee is paying special attention to...nationalist errors and distortions...in the works of some Ukrainian scholars...measures have been taken."[42] In creating these imperial histories and denying facts that may have supported nationalist views, historians denied "evidence of cultural differences between the histories of Russia and Ukraine."[43] Historian Paul Magocsi agreed that "The confirmation of such differences not only would undermine the idea of a single Russian people, but also might threaten the link between medieval Kiev and Moscow."[44] The destruction of this link would destabilize the entire historical narrative on which the Russian imperialism conception of history had been built.[45] So, Stalin ordered that the historical narratives of the USSR should vigorously support this myth of an inextricably intertwined Russian-Ukrainian identity and banned any texts stating otherwise.

Stalin may have won World War II, but that outcome was not assured in the early years of the war. The USSR lost huge swathes of land and hundreds of thousands of people in those first few years, and Stalin's fear of losing his empire was almost realized. This close call translated into a harsher crackdown on its newly reclaimed territories to minimize the possibility of losing any of its newly regained borderland after the war.[46] This was especially pronounced in the case of Ukraine, which Russia had controlled at least part of in one form or another for centuries. Losing it after so long would have been a huge embarrassment for the USSR, and would have diminished its claim as the great successor of the Russian Empire. Soviet historians writing anything pertaining to Ukraine were "taught to eulogize the Soviet present at the expense of the Ukrainian national past."[47] This dedicated campaign after World War II to condition the inhabitants of the border states of the USSR to identify with the Soviet state and its purported Russian imperial past extended far past simply controlling historical publications and into the schools of the territories of the USSR.[48]

Both the Russian Empire and the USSR exerted substantial control over the educational systems of

40 Shkandrij, *Russia and Ukraine,* 161.

41 Yekelchyk, *Stalin's Empire of Memory*, 71.

42 Ibid, 89.

43 Shkandrij, *Russia and Ukraine,* 161.

44 Magocsi, Paul Robert. *A History of Ukraine.* Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996, 15; mentioned in Shkandrij, *Russia and Ukraine,* 161.

45 Shkandrij, *Russia and Ukraine,* 161.

46 Pechatnov, "Soviet Union and the World," 95.

47 Yekelchyk, *Stalin's Empire of Memory*, 71.

48 Ibid.

their states. Both regimes used their control to push a narrative that portrayed Ukraine's people and history as subservient to and less important than Russia's history and people. Shkandrij writes that under the tsars, "Russian hegemony was reflected in educational literature, which...depict[ed] Ukraine as a fully assimilated "Little Russia.""[49] In the textbooks used in imperial schools from the mid 1800s to 1917, Russians were portrayed as the dominant race in the Empire with the Ukrainians as a distant second.[50] An example of this from a tsarist era geography textbook published in the 1860s stated that Russians "are distinguished by their physical strength, enterprising character, industriousness...they surpass all other native inhabitants of the Empire."[51] This portrayal continued for decades, as evidenced by a geography book from 1905 containing a similar phrase: "Great Russians constitute the dominant and most active population in all parts of the Russian empire."[52] The Russian people were put forth as a people who had consistently "positively" influenced history because of their so-called innate superiority, while Ukrainians were shown as side characters who barely had any history of their own to speak of.

The basic template for the Russianization movement in the schools of Ukraine came from the tsar who ruled before the Napoleonic Wars. Catherine the Great began the manipulation of Ukrainian schools and textbooks in the 1780s, in order to better assimilate Ukraine into the Empire.[53] She also took care to ensure that the changes being made to Ukrainian schools looked like they had been requested by the Ukrainians themselves. She did this by writing to a contact in Ukraine and ordering him to "persuade some of the so-called pany [gentlemen] in the region to present a 'petition in which they might ask for a better system of schools and Seminaries.'"[54] She then exploited this "voluntary" request by Ukrainians for new schools to introduce the proto-Russification of schools in Ukraine.[55] This "better system of schools" were simply Russian "people's schools" that replaced "the traditional national schools which still existed in... Ukraine."[56]

The removal of Ukrainian traditional national schools was a catastrophic blow to Ukrainian culture and society. Pre-conquest Ukraine, especially Left-Bank Ukraine, had a long history of a robust system of schools that stretched across its territory. This system of schools included hundreds of parochial (the equivalent of elementary) schools attached to churches, which educated children of all classes "irrespective of

49 Shkandrij, *Russia and Ukraine,* 159.

50 Ibid.

51 Belokha, Porfiry. *Uchebnik geografii Rossiiskoi imperii* [Textbook on Geography of Russian Empire], 3d ed. (St Petersburg, 1864), 80–1; quoted in Iekelchyk, "Malorosiia."; mentioned in Shkandrij, *Russia and Ukraine,* 159.

52 Baranov, A., and N. Gorelov. *Geografiia Rossiiskoi imperii. Kurs srednikh uchebnikh zavedenii.* 18th ed. St Petersburg, 1905, 131. ; mentioned in Shkandrij, *Russia and Ukraine,* 159.

53 Dzyuba, *Internationalism,* 85.

54 Ibid.

55 Ibid.

56 Ibid.

financial and social standing."[57] Kubijovyc states in his concise encyclopedia of Ukraine that there was a very high level of education in "Hetman Ukraine" compared to Poland or Russia.[58] He explains that "memoirs of foreign travelers cite the fact that not only men but also many peasant women in Ukraine were proficient in reading and writing" and in the eighteenth century every sizable settlement had its own school.[59] Ukraine also had many secondary schools for pupils who performed well, and several well respected professional schools and historic colleges, though these were open more to children of nobles and the wealthy. These schools "contributed greatly to the development of Ukrainian...culture and the crystallization of religion and national feelings on the part of the Ukrainian people."[60] Since such a large portion of the population of Ukraine was literate, a stronger sense of Ukrainian culture has developed that the people held onto fiercely. When the tsarist government took over the Ukrainian schooling system, the number of schools plummeted and the elementary school system was almost completely demolished.[61] Destroying this school system and creating a system of tsarist schools, focused more on the children of nobility and clergy and purposefully neglecting the lower classes, allowed the tsars to mold elite children into Russian aligned adults and deprive peasants of literacy in order to stamp out Ukrainian culture and feelings of belonging between the upper and lower classes in Ukraine.[62]

These schools, being Russian, taught Ukrainian students the tsar approved version of Russian history. It was a history that glorified Russia and Russian historical actors and simultaneously diminished and disparaged Ukrainian history. Catherine the Great stated that with the new schools in Ukraine "the diverse customs in Russia will be brought into harmony and mores corrected."[63] These textbooks used in these schools presented the view that ""Little Russia" had accepted the metaphysical notion of a superior Great Russian character and destiny, that it had willingly identified with Great Russian culture and preferred to use the Russian language."[64] Moscow, in its effort to suppress "all manifestations of independent political and cultural life in Ukraine," strove to erase Ukraine's history in order to eradicate its culture.[65]

Following the example of the history texts written under Catherine the Great, history books written during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries under the Russian Empire presented Ukraine as "voiceless, and its history, language, and culture...now

57 Kubijovyc, Volodymr. *Concise Encyclopedia Ukraine*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1969, pg. 311 and 302.

58 Ibid, 311. Hetman Ukraine refers to the Ukrainian state before it was subjected under the Russia tsar, as the head of state of Ukraine (or the Cossack Hetmanate as it was called in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries) was called the Hetman. This position was abolished by the Russian government in 1764.

59 Ibid.

60 Ibid, 308.

61 Ibid, 311.

62 Ibid.

63 A.V. Khrapovitsky, 'Pamyatnyye zapiski', *Chteniya*, 1862, II (April-June), Section 2, p. 4; mentioned in Dzyuba, 85.

64 Shkandrij, *Russia and Ukraine,* 160-1.

65 Kubijovyc. *Concise Encyclopedia Ukraine*, pg. 308.

part of a greater identity that has been *gratefully* and *willingly* embraced in the name of enlightenment and progress."[66] This emphasis on maintaining the lie that Ukrainians asked for these new Russian schools, begun by Catherine the Great, showed that the tsars were trying to surreptitiously manipulate the Ukrainian people without admitting it openly. Russian history writer Ivan Bunin adhered to this lie in 1952 when he wrote of Ukraine "And the most important thing is that she has no history now – her historical life ended long ago, and once and for all."[67] This was a direct result of the manipulation of Ukrainian history texts during this period. Other lies made their way into history texts to support this false narrative. Historians like Ilovaisky and Belinsky incorporated into their texts "the view that "Little Russian" history was only a prehistory and had ended with its "successful" incorporation into the empire at the end of the seventeenth century."[68] Importantly, these history books emphasized "reunification" with Russia as voluntary. They portrayed Ukraine's continued subjugation under Russia power as something Ukrainians approved of and chose for themselves. Historian Sergei Solovev wrote that "The Little Russian people really did suffer greatly, not, however, from Muscovite tyranny but from their own Cossack *starshyna*."[69] Thus in this adjusted history, it was not the Russians who instigated the unification but the Ukrainians. This narrative reframing of history put all of the blame for any problems Ukrainans had with being under Russian control on themselves and their ancestors. This lie further fueled the anti-Ukrainian sentiment that the tsars tried to push alongside their pro-Russian history texts.

Ukraine's historical events after their "reunification" with Russia are only included in textbooks as a subtopic of Russian history. There was no separate Ukrainian history in the view of these texts. Ukrainians were positioned as "Little Russian" people who had always been part of the Russian triad of peoples and whose history and actions could be attributed to Russia's history, if not ignored entirely.[70] These texts set the stage for the brotherhood of nations argument. This argument appealed to the conscience of the subjugated peoples by rationalizing that it was wrong to separate two peoples that were so similar in culture and origin that they were "brother" cultures, and was based on the manipulated history Ukrainians had been taught.[71] The 'liberal' Professor Kapustin in 1909 stated that "One should not stir up questions that divide brothers, one should not say that Ukrainians and Great Russians do not speak the same language."[72] A newspaper from 1886 echoed this sentiment: "In regard to...the Little Russians...Russia bases herself on the most unquestionable of all rights - the moral right...the moral

66 Shkandrij, *Russia and Ukraine,* 160-1. Emphasis is mine.

67 Bunin, Ivan. *The Life of Arsenin: Youth*. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1994 (Orig. 1952), 212.; mentioned in Shkandrij, *Russia and Ukraine,* 167.

68 Shkandrij, *Russia and Ukraine,* 160-1.

69 S. Solovev, *Istoriia Rossii*, vol. 16, 376, quoted in Drahomanov, Politychni pisni, vol. 1, xvii.; mentioned in Shkandrij, *Russia and Ukraine,* 160. Starshyna means petty officers in Ukrainian.

70 Dzyuba, *Internationalism,* 97.

71 Ibid.

72 *Gosudarstvennaya Duma, III sozyv,* sess. 3, ch. I, St Petersburg, 1910, c. 3022.; mentioned in Dzyuba, 83-4.

duty of brotherhood."[73]

Similarly, Stalin era texts like the 1951 draft of the *History of the Ukrainian SSR*, used the phrase "Ukraine's reunification with Russia" when discussing Ukraine's union with Muscovy in 1654.[74] Using the term "reunification" instead of "incorporation" meant to indicate to the reader that Ukrainians and Russians were not two separate cultures with separate histories, but that Ukrainians had simply branched off for a time and were coming back into the fold. In effect, it was meant to suggest that Ukrainians were actually just Russians who had strayed from Russian culture for a time. Appeals and phrases like these showed how the historical myth of ancient brotherhood between Ukraine and Russia was inserted into school texts during this period and worked to keep Ukraine part of the Russian Empire by smothering Ukrainian history and culture.

This technique of inculcating school children with imperialist ideas through school history texts, used by the tsars, was very similar to how history textbooks were manipulated in Ukraine post-World War II under Stalin. Similar to Catherine the Great's assertion that Ukrainians needed to assimilate into Russian culture through the use of schools, at a meeting of the KP(b) U Central Committee in 1951, First Secretary Melnikov asserted that "Our people very much need a... good Stalinist textbook on the History of Ukraine."[75] A "Stalinist textbook" meant a textbook with historical information that adhered to the agenda of the Soviet government. Dyzuba asserts that Stalin era history texts encouraged a regression of Ukrainian society and culture to "a primitive, propagandist, nationalistic, Great-Power attitude...[which was] inculcated into generations of schoolchildren."[76] The author further states that for Ukrainian schools the classes on the history of the USSR did not start with the Russian Revolution of 1917 but instead with the history of the Russian Empire.[77] The Empire is thus portrayed as part of the history of the USSR. Combining these two histories was illogical because the USSR and the Russian Empire were two entirely separate states. The USSR violently overthrew the Russian Empire and rejected everything to do with the latter for decades, which should have precluded the USSR from being seen as a proud successor state of the Empire. But in post World War II school texts the history of Ukraine before 1917 was presented as an "organic, integral, and inseparable part of the history of Russia" and the USSR as the inheritor of the legacy of the Russian Empire.[78]

Similarly, the histories of Ukraine and Russia are separate histories though they often intersect. However, these histories were taught together in Ukraine under the tsars and Stalin, and Ukrainian history was

73 I.S. Aksakov, 'Pol'skiy vopros i zapadno-russkoye delo,' in his *Polnoye sobraniye sochineniy*, III, Moscow, 1886, p. 7; mentioned in Yekelchyk, *Stalin's Empire of Memory*, 95.

74 Yekelchyk, *Stalin's Empire of Memory*, 98-100.

75 The Ukrainian Central State Archive of Civic Organizations, former Party Archive, Kiev (TsDAHO), f. 1, op. 1 (Communist Party of Ukraine) op. 1 (opysy 1 through 9 contain minutes of the Central Committee's plenary meetings and other party forums), spr. 976, ark. 88; mentioned in Yekelchyk, *Stalin's Empire of Memory*, 93.

76 Dzyuba*, Internationalism,* 73.

77 Ibid, 91.

78 TsDAHO, f. 1, op. 30 (Special Section, General Files), spr. 1902, ark. 7; mentioned in Yekelchyk, *Stalin's Empire of Memory*, 101.

portrayed as subordinate to and lesser than Russian history. In fact, in USSR history texts, Ukrainian history "did not exist as a separate subject, although textbooks...covered landmarks of the Ukrainian past such as Kievan Rus', the Cossack Wars, and Shevchenko."[79] Ukrainians were forced to revise their historical narratives to confirm their subaltern status as the Russians' "younger brothers" in school texts through the erasure of most of Ukrainian history.[80]

For the purpose of spreading this narrative, during the reconstruction period after World War II the USSR funded dozens of historical surveys.[81] These included a survey of Ukrainian history which focused on Russia as a positive influence on Ukraine and its development as a nation, and spawned many history texts.[82] One of the texts that resulted from these surveys claims that the 1654 Pereiaslav Treaty "reunited 'two great Slavic peoples.'" It went on to stress that by rejoining Russia the Ukrainian people were not harming their "national identity...[but] 'furthered the development of the Ukrainian nationality and its transformation into a nation.'"[83] Other historical texts written during this period go as far as to suggest that Ukraine had only been able to become a state because the Ukrainian people were once a part of the Russian Empire.[84] By presenting the unification of Ukraine and Russia under the Pereiaslav Treaty as a "reunification" of two peoples rather than a union, they went against the Leninist era theory of "unification" which celebrated the cementing of friendship between two great people.[85] This movement away from the concept of unification towards the new Soviet concept of reunification was actually a shift back towards imperialist times.[86] The concept of reunification was really "a refurbished imperial concept" taken from imperial historians during the time of the Russian Empire.[87] It espoused the claim "that conquest by Russia had been an "absolute good" that had brought untold benefits to non-Russian people" like Ukraine.[88] This concept was used in historical texts like school history textbooks to gradually rehabilitate the idea of the Russian Empire and Russification in Soviet satellite states after World War II.[89]

One way historians erased Ukrainian history and absorbed it into Russian history was to take Ukrainian historical figures and "rather unceremoniously, without any reference to their nationality, label...[them] as Russian."[90] Examples of these figures

79 Yekelchyk, *Stalin's Empire of Memory*, 106.

80 Ibid, 89-90.

81 Ibid, 102.

82 Ibid.

83 Kasymenko, O.K., ed. *Istoriia Ukrainskoi SSR*. Lim. ed. Vol. 1. Kiev, 1951, 5. ; Mentioned in Yekelchyk, *Stalin's Empire of Memory*, 84, 258-9.

84 Yekelchyk, *Stalin's Empire of Memory*, 102.

85 Ibid, 96.

86 Ibid, 96-7.

87 Ibid, 97.

88 Shkandrij, *Russia and Ukraine,* 221-222.

89 Ibid.

90 Dzyuba, *Internationalism,* 92.

include Taras Shevchenko and Ilya Repin, creator of the famous painting "Ivan the Terrible and his Son."[91] Russian historians justified this by presenting Ukrainians as a 'Little Russian tribe' of the "Greater Russian people" and thus not technically separate from Russians in any meaningful way.[92] The *Istoriia Ukrainskoi SSR*, another USSR financed historical survey, cited "the unbreakable unity of their [Russia and Ukraine's] unity of their subsequent history development" as a reason for the lack of need to differentiate between Ukrainian and Russia history.[93] By this logic, there was no real need to draw any distinctions in historical texts between Russians and Ukrainians. Ukraine's history was therefore shown in history texts as having a "trajectory [that] mouthed into the Russian Empire..." like a river mouths into the ocean.[94] Importantly, Ukraine was almost unique in the USSR in this denial of a separate past from Russia, with only Belarus also being denied a separate history.

The USSR's treatment of Ukrainian history differed notably from how it treated the other states in the union of republics. The USSR "allowed non-Russian republics whose national histories did not lay concurrent claims on such signposts of Russian patrimony to teach them as separate school disciplines."[95] For example, in Armenia in the 1950s, school children spent over a hundred hours in grades 8-10 studying their national history.[96] In contrast, during the same time period history teachers in Ukraine were not allowed to have a separate class on Ukrainian history and were only allowed to touch on Ukrainian historical events when Ukrainian events appeared in USSR history.[97] An example of this is when the USSR's pedagogical journal *Radianska shkola* in 1954 ordered teachers to tell students that "in the course of the War of Liberation... the Ukrainian people's [demanded] reunification with the Russian people."[98] A standard USSR history textbook from 1955 repeated this narrative of this event, with one sentence reading "Expressing the Ukrainian people's striving for union with the fraternal Russian people, Khmelnytsky approached the Russian government with the proposal that Ukraine be reunited with Russia" through the 1654 Treaty of Pereiaslav.[99] In reality, in allying with Russia Khmelnytsky was simply trying to stabilize the Ukrainian Cossack state and save it from being forced back into the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth it had just rebelled against and escaped from.[100] The intent was to have more freedom and protection from a stronger military power, not to swap a Polish-Lithuanian regime for a Russian regime

91 Prymak, Thomas M. 2013. "A Painter from Ukraine: Ilya Repin." *Canadian Slavonic Papers* 55.1-2: 25.

92 Dzyuba*, Internationalism,* 92.

93 Kasymenko, O.K., ed. *Istoriia Ukrainskoi SSR* [History of the Ukrainian SSR]. Lim. ed. Vol. 1. Kiev, 1951, 258-9. ; mentioned in Yekelchyk, *Stalin's Empire of Memory*, 99.

94 Yekelchyk, *Stalin's Empire of Memory*, 102.

95 Ibid, 105-6.

96 Ibid.

97 Ibid, 106.

98 Ibid, 102-3. *Radianska shkola* translates to Soviet School.

99 Shestakov, A.V., ed. *Istoriia SSSR: Kratkii kurs* [Short Course on the History of the USSR]. Moscow, 1955, 62-3; mentioned in Yekelchyk, *Stalin's Empire of Memory*, 106 and Yekelchyk, *Stalin's Empire of Memory*, 20.

100 Yekelchyk, *Stalin's Empire of Memory*, 20.

and be absorbed into Russia.[101] But framing Ukraine's initial treaty with the Russian Empire as the voluntary and even ecstatic first step on the road to "reunification" with Russia allowed Stalin to lay a historically legitimate claim to Ukraine.

A parallel example from the tsarist era of this reasoning in school history books comes from N. Zuev's geography book from 1887. It comments: "Little Russians are a gentle people...They unwillingly submit to innovations, preferring ancient ways."[102] The belittlement of Ukrainians stretched to generalizations on their character, and these constant refrains reinforced the difference between subject and subordinate peoples, between Russians and Ukrainians.[103] The tsars blatantly manipulated Ukrainian texts in an attempt to instill a sense of inferiority in the Ukrainian people. This sense of Ukrainian inferiority would then theoretically make it easier for the tsars to keep control of Ukraine because Ukrainians would believe that their lives were better living under Russian rule than they would be without it.

These examples show Russia's intense focus on expunging all traces of a separate Ukrainian history, identity, and language from Ukrainian schools. Thus, these Ukrainian schools purposefully did "nothing to instil national dignity and national feeling, nothing to give an elementary consciousness of nationality and of the duties connected with it."[104] This calculated denial of Ukrainian history, culture, and language to Ukrainian students, simultaneously paired with a continuous "all-pervading atmosphere of the superiority and 'preferability' of Russian culture" in schools, aided in both Stalin and the tsars' goal of the Russification of Ukraine, though in different time periods.[105] The sense of shame in their native identity and desire to emulate Russian culture that was created by this manipulation would, in Stalin's view, serve to bring the people of the USSR together and strengthen the Russian state.

The control Stalin exerted over millions of malleable school children allowed him to encourage the concept of the USSR as the successor state of the Russian Empire and thus encourage the imperialist ideas the Russian Empire had based its power on to flourish in the USSR. The Leninist hatred for the "imperialist, colonialist essence of tsarist Russia has been lost, and the past [was]...redesigned...according to present needs."[106] These present needs included the strengthening of Russian imperial power at the expense of its borderlands through the glorification of its past in order to fulfill its dream of being a world superpower to rival the United States. Fulfilling this was achieved by advancing the concept "of the Russian people as the "elder brother" who...was entitled to deference on the part of the "younger" Ukrainian people" which if accepted by the population would give Russia greater control over Ukraine and its assets.[107]

101 Shkandrij, *Russia and Ukraine,* 13

102 N[di] Zuev, *Geografiia Rossiiskoi imperii (Kurs srednikh uchebnykh zavede-nii)*, (St Petersburg, 1887) 105, quoted in Iekelchyk, "Malorossiia."; mentioned in Shkandrij, *Russia and Ukraine,* 160.

103 Shkandrij, *Russia and Ukraine,* 160.

104 Dzyuba, *Internationalism,* 158.

105 Ibid.

106 Ibid, 69.

107 Shkandrij, *Russia and Ukraine,* 222.

Historical texts such as the *Theses on the Tercentenary of Ukraine's Reunification with Russia*, published in 1954, were required to celebrate Ukraine's "fraternal union" with Russia and portray Russia as a "great ally, faithful friend, and defender in the struggle for social and national liberation" to Ukraine.[108] The relationship between Ukraine and Russia in history was presented as a perpetually positive one, with Russia playing the older brother to the younger and thus weaker Ukraine. Stalin forced "a complete return to the pre-revolutionary idea of Russians as the leading people" and the creation of "an august ancient past for the great Russian people."[109] Historians created this past by both borrowing from Ukrainian history and subordinating Ukraine's historical presence under Russia's. In 1945 the Moscow journal *Voprosy istorii* indirectly admitted this policy change when it "announced... that the war had prioritized some historical problems, which had until then been seen as unimportant" and began publishing articles that downplayed Ukrainian historical events and historical actors.[110]

In both tsarist Russia and post-World War II Stalinist USSR, history texts were wielded as propaganda tools of the regime to strengthen Russian power and diminish Ukrainian culture. The emphasis on "the conception of 'union around the Russian principle'... cannot fail to promote...in the other peoples of the Union a complex of national inferiority."[111] The effects of both the tsarist and Stalinist manipulation of history texts were immensely negative towards Ukrainian culture and the remembrance of accurate Ukrainian history. Dyzuba states that because of this blatant manipulation of Ukrainian history, "it is not surprising that the school-leavers from Ukrainian schools [were] for the most part totally ignorant of Ukrainian culture" and even their own language.[112] Students in these schools were taught that Ukraine and its people were inferior in all ways to Russia, and the way to improve themselves was to assimilate into Russian culture.

An example of this is from Nikolai Zuev's geography book of 1887, *Geografiia Rossiiskoi imperii*, which declared that "Little Russians are...lazy and apathetic...In spite of their apathy and tardiness, they are capable of long, hard labour."[113] This definition leads the reader to infer that Ukrainains were incapable of governing themselves, only usefully as unskilled laborers. Another example comes from the Russian historian Dmitry Ilovaisky's history textbook, which was a staple text in Ukrainian schools in the early twentieth century. The edition of Ilovaisky's text released in 1912 stated that "The rather warm climate...[and] close proximity of the steppe and of wild hordes prevented the consolidation of a strong state structure and successful civil society" among the "Little Russians."[114]

108 *Tezisy o 300—letii vossoedineniia Ukrainy s Rossiei (Theses on the Tercentenary of Ukraine's Reunification with Russia)(1654—1954gg.)*. Moscow, 1954, 11, 18, 23, 25.; mentioned in Yekelchyk, *Stalin's Empire of Memory*, 155.

109 Shkandrij, *Russia and Ukraine,* 222.

110 Untitled editorial, *Voprosy istorii* , no. 1 (Moscow, Russia: 1945) 5; mentioned in Yekelchyk, *Stalin's Empire of Memory*, 93. *Voprosy istorii* translates to Problems/Questions of History.

111 Dzyuba, *Internationalism,* 90-91

112 Ibid, 158.

113 Zuev, *Geografiia Rossiiskoi imperii*, 105: mentioned in Shkandrij, *Russia and Ukraine,* 160.

114 D. Ilovaiskii, *Kratkie ocherki russkoi istorii*. *Kurs starshego vozrasta.* 36th ed. (Moscow, 1912) 4; mentioned in Shkandrij, *Russia and Ukraine,*

The Russian people are presented in contrast, as "the Great Russian tribe, which occupied a land with a rather severe climate ... [and thus] developed an enterprising, energetic character and talents for various activities."[115] The textbook presented Ukrainians as inherently lesser than Russians because of differences in their geographic location, which caused differences in the evolution of the two cultures. This textbook, created under the tsarist regime, helped to advance the idea of a subordinate Ukraine to the superior Russian brother. These negative presentations of Ukrainians and their capabilities would have led the student reader to infer that Ukrainians were an inferior people, incapable of further societal development. The constant drone about Ukrainian inferiority, both in Ukrainian schools and elsewhere, damaged Ukrainian culture because Ukrainians reflexively blamed all of the hardships they experienced on their own innate traits and culture.[116] This prevented them from connecting these hardships with the people who were actually causing them, the Russian government. Ukrainian "culture [was] being deliberately held back and impoverished... by administrative brutality...a 'deeply echeloned' bureaucratic 'vigilance', and by an automatically repressive reflex" conditioned by years of brainwashing in school.[117] This method of manipulation of Ukraine's people was later used by Stalin after World War II.

Ukrainian culture and historical remembrance was limited both by the conditioning of the population in schools to find anything Ukrainian boring and inferior and by the repressive publishing climate present during these Russification periods. Texts that celebrated a separate Ukrainian history from Russia or were written in Ukrainian were banned.[118] Under the USSR, text in the Ukrainian language or written by Ukrainian authors were highly discouraged in academia. Both the tsars' and Stalin's regimes strove to eliminate the Ukrainian language by portraying it as less cultured than the Russian language and thus unnecessary to use.[119] They followed the tsarist example, exemplified by a quote from Zuev's geography book from 1887. It asserted that in "Little Russia the Russian language is dominant. It is accepted in society, the press, in education, business, and the legal system."[120] This quote informed Ukrainian students that Russian was the language that was appropriate to use in public life, and thus the Ukrainian language was lesser and should not be used in public. This portrayal is even more egregious knowing that in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Ukrainian was seen "as a language of instruction [in schools]. It was generally used in academic life and sometimes even in academic publications."[121] It was not until 1765 that this changed, when the tsar changed the language of instruction in all

159.

115 D. Ilovaiskii, *Kratkie ocherki russkoi istorii*; mentioned in Shkandrij, *Russia and Ukraine,* 159.

116 Dzyuba, *Internationalism,* 143.

117 Ibid.

118 Ibid, 158.

119 Shkandrij, *Russia and Ukraine,* 161.

120 Zuev, *Geografiia Rossiiskoi imperii*, 106, quoted in Iekelchyk, "Malorossiia."; mentioned in Shkandrij, *Russia and Ukraine,* 161.

121 Kubijovyc. *Concise Encyclopedia Ukraine*, pg. 308.

subjects to Russian and forbade the use of Ukrainian in academic settings.[122]

The suppression of a native population's language has tremendously negative effects on that population's culture. Dzyuba states that "In scientific... thought it has long been an accepted view...that all culture begins with a knowledge of one's native language."[123] To scorn one's own language is an act of self-renunciation and an act of destruction against a society's culture. He further stated that "language is the living symbol of a people's collective individuality" and to extinguish that language is to destroy the entire culture.[124] Thus, the attempt by the tsars and Stalin era textbooks to erase the Ukrainian language was also an attempt to erase Ukrainian culture.

During these Russification movements, Russian language was prioritized in Ukrainian schools and Ukrainian society in an effort to eliminate the use of the Ukrainian language. In 1960s Ukraine, "all business and technical documentation [was] exclusively in Russian" as well as all documentation for schools and cultural institutions. The elimination of any language but Russian in the public sphere was justified in *Pravda*, the official newspaper of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, in 1965 as a practical decision: "...communist construction demands a constant exchange of cadres...Therefore any display of national separateness...of workers of various nationalities in the Soviet Republics is inadmissible."[125] By "displays of national separateness," *Pravda* meant allowing the use of any of the native languages of the republics instead of Russian in public life.[126] This repression of native languages, and the open hostility commonly exhibited by Russians towards spoken use of the Ukrainian language, caused many Ukrainians to stop using their native language.[127] This is especially apparent with Ukrainian workers, who often were forced to live outside of Ukraine in order to find work and who lost "the desire to use his language anywhere outside his own dwelling or hostel room."[128]

This persecution of the Ukrainian language had immense negative effects on the language's use, both in everyday life and particularly in schools. Portraying the Russian language as the more educated and cosmopolitan language, and basically outlawing the Ukrainian language's use in government and education caused the gradual erasure of the Ukrainian language. After World War II and the implementation of these policies, "the Ukrainian language gradually became a rudiment."[129] By the 1950s in Ukraine "the Ukrainian *language* has[d] been pushed into the background and [was] not really used in the cities of the Ukraine."[130] In Ukrainian universities during the 1950s and 1960s, "lectures [were] given in Russian, on the grounds that

122 Kubijovyc. *Concise Encyclopedia Ukraine*, pg. 308.

123 Dzyuba, *Internationalism,* 150.

124 Ibid.

125 'Leninskaya druzhba narodov'('The Leninist Friendship of Nations'), *Pravda*, 5 September 1965, p.1.; mentioned in Dzyuba, 111.

126 Dzyuba, *Internationalism,* 111.

127 Ibid.

128 Ibid.

129 "Hopeless Times: How Empire Prevented Us from Being Ukrainians," 2023. Ukrinform, 29 June.

130 Dzyuba, *Internationalism,* 14-5.

many Russians study there."[131] The underlying message of these policies and their effects was that Russians were more important than Ukrainians, and their culture and language was prioritized over Ukrainian culture and language. With the relegation of Ukrainian national culture to "a rather provincial position and... treated as 'second-rate'; its great past achievements... poorly disseminated in society" Ukrainian national culture and accurate knowledge of Ukraine's past were gradually eliminated from Ukraine's collective memory.[132]

These effects and the decline of Ukrainian culture was the aim of the tsars and Stalin when they implemented their Russification policies. Under the tsars, it was understood that "a genuinely anti-Ukrainian policy lay not in forbidding the use of the Ukrainian language (which is impossible), but in causing the people to abandon it by themselves" by manipulating Ukrainians into thinking it was undesirable to use.[133] Stalin copied this model and used it for the exact same purpose as the tsars of old, simply clothing it anew in the rhetoric of communism and the "brotherhood of nations."

As a result of these concerted efforts to stomp out Ukrainian culture and language, Russian books and the Russian press became very influential in Ukraine.[134] Dzyuba reported that in the 1960s, of every one hundred roubles' made from book sales in Ukraine, "barely five roubles come from Ukrainian books and ninety-five, if not more, from Russian books or foreign books in Russian translation."[135] Of the primary and secondary school books published in the USSR, one year in the 1960s only approximately twenty eight percent were written in the languages of non-Russian people.[136] Even worse, Dyzuba also noted that only approximately between one and five percent of books in the libraries of the Ukrainian SSR were written in Ukrainian.[137] These statistics showed the successful results from the concerted effort by Stalin and his successors to eliminate Ukrainian literature from Ukraine. These tactics of repression were disturbingly similar to Catherine the Great's policy of outlawing the publishing of any books in Ukrainian, which continued long after the end of her reign.[138]

An attack used simultaneously by Stalin to eliminate Ukrainian culture and limit its appeal to Ukrainians was "the artificial impoverishment of its past attainments and traditions, a pillaging...of Ukrainian cultural history."[139] He did this using the state's control of schools and the publishing industry, with the intent that as generations passed through schools and read these texts, gradually fewer and fewer

131 Dzyuba, *Internationalism,* 116.

132 Ibid, 14-5.

133 Ibid.

134 Ibid, 116.

135 Ibid

136 Ibid 122.

137 Ibid, 116.

138 Ibid, 85.

139 Ibid, 143.

Ukrainians would speak their own language or be interested in their own history.[140] Over time, "those who object [could] be dismissed as a small minority, crying for the artificially preservation of a dying culture."[141] A "dying" culture that the imperial regime purposefully had suppressed with the intent of completely replacing it with Russian culture. This was a subtler form of colonization that took place over a much longer period of time than traditional forms of colonial conquest. Dyzuba asserted that "The colonization of a country does not always take place by the simple process of direct and violent conquest."[142] In cases like Ukraine and Russia, where the invader did not have the excuse of having an obligation to "help" the weaker colony develop, "the process of penetration and eventual subjugation is often more subtle and gradual" by necessity.[143]

Another outcome of this altering of Ukrainian history was that the extreme repression and scrutinization of historical texts "kept historians' productivity low... [as] the preparation of a 'Stalinist textbook' of Ukrainian history consumed the time and energy of the republic's leading specialists for almost a decade."[144] This focus on the creation of a "correct" Ukrainian historical survey prevented these USSR historians from researching or writing about subjects outside of the immediate interest of the USSR's narrow historical focus, and thus stifled the possibility of dissent by these historians in their writings. Yekelchyk agreed that "Until Stalin's death and beyond... historians accomplished little."[145] This forced focus also prevented new research on Ukraine's past that the Ukrainian historians could have been working on while they were occupied with Stalinist textbooks. Not coincidentally, the new research they could have worked on could have threatened the veracity of Moscow's fabricated historical claim to Ukraine.

After World War II, Stalin ordered the rewriting of USSR history books as a form of state propaganda to legitimize the USSR's claim over the parts of Europe that it had newly reconquered from the Nazis. These repressive literary tactics mirrored tactics utilized by the Russian Empire in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, in which Russian historical literature portrayed Ukrainian culture and history as lesser kin to Russian history and culture. This post World War II rewrite of the history books relegated Ukrainian history to a subordinate position within Russian history, making it a sub-topic of Russian history from ancient to modern times. This was an effort by Stalin to justify Russia's claim over Ukraine, by portraying Russian history and Russian culture as superior to Ukrainian history and culture. The historical works written under the Russian tsars and under Stalin post-World War II were created with the same purpose, to legitimize these states' claims to Ukraine. They were also motivated by the same impetus, a massive European war that devastated Russia and its people. In altering Ukrainian historical texts, the tactics used by both

140 Dzyuba*, Internationalism,* 111, xii.

141 Ibid.

142 Ibid, 82.

143 Ibid.

144 Yekelchyk, *Stalin's Empire of Memory*, 104.

145 Ibid, 107.

states purposefully affected Ukrainian schools, in an effort to keep Ukrainian culture, history, and language subordinate to Russian culture, history, and language and used that fabricated sense of superiority to justify the regime's control of Ukraine and its people.

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N[di] Zuev, *Geografiia Rossiiskoi imperii (Kurs srednikh uchebnykh zavede-nii)*, (St Petersburg, 1887) 105, quoted in Yekelchyk, "Malorossiia."; mentioned in Shkandrij (2001), 160.

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Eugenics In the Press:
Francis Galton's Early Ideas and Public Responses (1870 – 1904)

Nathan Strang, Duke University

Vasant Kaiwar Prize Winner

Dr. Vasant Kaiwar, retired in 2023 after a thirty-year career at Duke, was a beloved teacher in the History Department. During his time at Duke, he taught courses on modern South Asia, pre-modern world history and a gateway seminar, "Empires in Historical Perspective." He is the author of *The Postcolonial Orient: The Politics of Difference* and *The Project of Provincializing Europe.* Together with Sucheta Mazumdar, he founded the journal, *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa, and the Middle East*. He has also co-edited two books, *Antinomies of Modernity: Essays on Race, Class, Orient,* and *From Orientalism to Postcolonialism: Asia, Europe and the Lineages of Difference*. Dr. Kaiwar was someone with a deep commitment to undergraduate research—including the sharing of undergraduate research through publication. Nathan Strang is the 2024 and inaugural winner of the Vasant Kaiwar Prize.

"No one can hate inaccuracy more than myself."

- Francis Galton

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Eugenics In the Press: Francis Galton's Early Ideas and Public Responses (1870 – 1904)

By Nathan Strang, Duke University

Introduction

In 1909, just two years before his death, Francis Galton published his famous *Essays in Eugenics*, a culmination of nearly thirty years of experimentation on inheritance, statistics, and human perception.[1] Within this book, Galton compiled his foundational work in eugenics, the discipline which he, himself, had founded decades earlier in 1870.[2] Galton, like many eugenicists to come, had become deeply interested in studying human populations and genetics following the release of Charles Darwin's *On the Origin of Species*.[3] From Darwin's study, Galton concluded that humans could manipulate evolution and rearrange human reproduction to increase the prevalence of "favorable traits" in society.[4] To this end, in his 1909 essay, Galton set forth one of the first political applications of eugenics. He argued that human populations are made up of distinct types, as determined by natural talent and ability, with the distribution of talent similar to that of a normal probability curve.[5] From this basic principle, Galton delineated a plan for selective breeding communities in England, where men and women "of worth" would be encouraged to reproduce for the advancement of the human race.[6] From all of this, Galton hoped that eugenics would become adopted as a "quasi-religion," a "national conscience" guiding England's social and economic advancement.[7] Galton's 1909 proposal is undoubtedly radical, yet his language is nonetheless distinct from the rhetoric of both future eugenicists and Galton's past self. The British polymath viewed eugenics as a philanthropic study – albeit racially biased – and a noble pursuit for societal advancement. However, his ideas would, in part, go on to inspire the racial hygiene program of Nazi Germany and the forceful sterilization of nearly 70,000 minorities, convicts, and disabled individuals in the United States during the 1930s.[8] Galton's ideas in 1909 also

1 Galton, Francis. *Essays in Eugenics* (London: The Engineers Education Society, 1909).

2 Ibid.

3 Nicholas W. Gillham. "Sir Francis Galton and the Birth of Eugenics," *Annual Review of Genetics* 35, no. 1 (2001): 83–101.

4 Galton. *Essays in Eugenics*.

5 Ibid.

6 Ibid.

7 Ibid.

8 Fresh Air. "The Supreme Court Ruling That Led to 70,000 Forced Sterilizations," *NPR*, 2016.

reflected a unique departure from Darwin's original theory of evolution. Here, Galton presented a developed argument for the inheritance patterns guiding human heredity. Darwin's work, on the other hand, made only modest observations about the phenotypic similarities between the adaptations of wild animals.[9]

So, how did the ideology and popularity of the initial eugenics' movement come to be? In this paper, I aim to elucidate some of this story, using contemporaneous newspapers and Galton's research publications as a proxy for both the original ideas of the eugenics movement and the public's perception of this theory. Starting in 1859, I aim to understand how Galton came to found the modern eugenics movement, whether intentionally or not. What were the key features of his brand of eugenics that allowed it to persist and develop throughout the late 1800s, and how did these features influence eugenics' initial reception in the popular press of the time? Through my research, I hope to provide potential answers as to whether Galton's eugenics movement was intentionally "racecraft," as was the case in later iterations. Lastly, I strive to properly characterize Galton's role in the emergence of modern eugenics, by examining his work of the late 1800s. We've already observed significant discontinuity between Galton's eugenics movement and that of the late 1930s. Undoubtedly, eugenics would evolve with or without Galton, but still we must ask: Did the movement need him in the first place? To historicize the popularization and early influences of eugenics, I will take a deep dive into the movement's first four decades (1870 to 1910) and spend extensive time examining Galton's ideas within his foundational papers, as well as his representation in popular European and American newspapers, to get a sense of the movement's appeal, growth, and rhetoric. Following Galton's death, the eugenics movement would go on to employ the fallacy of biological race as a strategy for advancing white racial supremacy in Europe and the United States. However, as I will illustrate, this was not the agenda of Galton's original eugenics theory. In the following pages, I hope to show what changed.

Who was Francis Galton?

Though best known for his work on eugenics, Francis Galton's contributions extend much further. An eccentric and inquisitive experimenter, a meteorologist, a geneticist, and a statistician, the importance of Galton's digressions from eugenics-related work cannot be understated when understanding the movement's early influences. The half-cousin of Charles Darwin, a descendant of the Barclay banking family, and the youngest of nine, Galton was born into the elite English ruling class.[10, 11] As an adolescent, he was exposed to rigorous competition and pressured to achieve academic notoriety.[12] This made Galton both arrogant and deeply insecure about his own talents, eventually pushing him to abandon his studies in medical school.[13] A true polymath, Galton was a travel writer, a geographer, and a meteorologist in his

9 Charles Darwin and Leonard Kebler. 1859. *On the origin of species by means of natural selection* (London: J. Murray, 1859).

10 Gillham, "Sir Francis Galton and the Birth of Eugenics." 83-101.

11 R. E. Fancher. "Biography and psychodynamic theory: Some lessons from the life of Francis Galton," *History of Psychology* 1, no. 2 (1998), 99–115.

12 Ibid.

13 Ibid

early life.[14] As an African explorer in the mid-1800s, he discovered the anticyclone and wrote a bestselling travel guide, its entertaining prose allowing Galton to ascend to widespread recognition.[15] In 1859, the eugenics chapter of Galton's career began when he read his cousin Darwin's *On the Origin of Species*.[16] At a time when studies of evolution and genetics were in their infancy, Galton's obsession with measuring human populations to improve society's "genetic stock" began without any established research to guide his methodologies or analysis.[17]

No doubt, Galton was both a racist ideologue and a pure Nativist, believing that heredity could predict almost all of an individual's characteristics, even coining the phrase "Nature vs. Nurture."[18] In Galton's *Hereditary Genius*, this is observed directly: "I have no patience with the hypothesis occasionally expressed, and often implied, especially in tales written to teach children to be good, that babies are born pretty much alike," he states when setting up the book's initial argument.[19] Yet, despite his biased presuppositions and pseudoscientific methods, Galton held steadfast to the importance of accuracy in the quantification of human talents, traits, and worth.[20] If he were to study such topics as intelligence, mental imagery, and "racial types," Galton believed that experimentally sound scientific methods and rigorous data collection would be essential to convince the masses of his initial theories on inherited talent.[21] Additionally, as a philanthropic socialist, Galton viewed his work not as unethical but as a noble pursuit to help guide society toward utopia: "The best form of civilization in respect to the improve-ment of the race," he states, "would be one in which society was not costly...where the pride of race was encouraged (of course I do not refer to the nonsensical sentiment of the present day, that goes under that name) ; where the weak could find a welcome and a refuge in celibate monasteries or sisterhoods, and lastly, where the better sort of emigrants and refugees from other lands were invited and welcomed, and their descendants naturalized."[22, 23] This was eugenics' original design.

14 Gillham. "Sir Francis Galton and the Birth of Eugenics," 83-101.

15 R. Sandall. "Sir Francis Galton and the Roots of Eugenics," *Society* 45 (2008): 170–176.

16 Gillham. "Sir Francis Galton and the Birth of Eugenics," 83-101.

17 Ibid.

18 Francis Galton. *Hereditary Genius* (London: Macmillan, 1869).

19 Ibid.

20 Ibid.

21 Ibid.

22 Galton, *Essays in Eugenics*.

23 Galton, *Hereditary Genius*.

The Founding of Eugenics: *Hereditary Genius*'s Initial Reception

With *Hereditary Genius* as eugenics foundational manifesto, it was Galton's obsession with accurately proving and quantifying the hereditary transmission of "civic worth" that set the eugenics movement into motion in 1870. Directly inspired by Darwin's theory of evolution, through genealogical examination of famous judges, statesmen, scientists, and other "men of eminence," Galton aimed to present preliminary "proof" that the heritable transmission of favorable traits was what created men of talent, a radical idea at the time.[24] *Hereditary Genius* also established eugenics' racist, sexist, and ideological undertones that would retrospectively come to define Galton's contributions to the movement.[25] Galton described Black men as "not wholly deficient," intentionally disregarded women in his analysis, and abhorred the idea that one's environment creates "exceptional talent," an obvious objection to the work's findings.[26] Undoubtably, these dangerous biases are pervasive in the post-Galton brand of eugenics. Yet, as I will argue, they were initially just supplementary conclusions in Galton's initial work, rather than guiding tenets of the early eugenics movement. *Hereditary Genius*'s pseudoscientific methods also reflect Galton's broader methodological shortcomings. His use of anecdotal evidence for included individuals, his subjective measurements of talent, and his flawed statistical analyses allowed Galton to manipulate collected data and force striking conclusions on inherited talent from otherwise inconclusive results.[27]

Perhaps surprisingly, responses to *Hereditary Genius* in major U.S. and English newspapers were quick to criticize Galton's biased and flawed methods. In an 1874 London Spectator article titled *Nuts and Men*, an editor responded to Galton's measurements of subjective human qualities by stating, "we can only express our wonder, and repeat our belief that what Mr. Galton has succeeded in doing, is in exposing the utter inapplicability of physico-scientific methods to intellectual and moral subjects."[28] Similarly, in 1874, the *Chicago Daily Tribune* critiqued Galton's experiments noting, "the fact is that Mr. Galton's data, furnished as they are by the very men whom they depict, are inevitably more or less rose-colored, and consequently untrustworthy."[29] In 1876, The Editors Table of Godey's Lady Book and Magazine (Philadelphia, PA) harped on Galton's exclusion of women in his analysis, calling him "hasty" and "prejudiced," exposing his manipulation of statistics to conform to his pre-existing beliefs.[30]

It was three key aspects of Galton and his ear-

24 Galton, *Hereditary Genius*.

25 Ibid.

26 Ibid.

27 Ibid.

28 Francis Galton. "Nuts and Men: To the Editor of the 'Spectator'," *The Spectator*, May 30, 1874.

29 "The Scientific Man," *Chicago Daily Tribune* (1872-1922), June 7, 1874.

30 "Editors' table: The Mothers of Scientific Men. Forty Years Ago, and Now. The Art of Cookery. For the Little Folk. Sabbath Morning. Tue Day After New Year. Notes and Notices," *Godey's Lady's Book and Magazine* (1854-1882), 1876.

ly work on eugenics, however, that allowed the movement to endure criticism and grow beyond its infancy stage: widespread support for *Hereditary Genius*' underlying thesis, Galton's obsession with accuracy, and Galton's persistent and entertaining media presence. Interestingly, many newspapers, including some which initially critiqued Galton, ultimately lent support for *Hereditary Genius*' radical thesis on the heritable transmission of talent, despite its pseudoscientific methods. An 1871 *New York Times* piece deemed the conclusion "interesting" and "logical," while an 1870 Springfield (MA) Republican article called *Hereditary Genius*' conclusion a "basic fact."[31, 32] With each subsequent mention in the press, Galton's popularity grew. In 1872, the *Chicago Tribune* noted Galton's "fame" from *Hereditary Genius*, and an 1875 *New York Times* piece hinted at a budding "Galtonian" political faction through the language, "those who believe with Francis Galton."[33, 34] Surprisingly, little was made of Galton's racial sub-conclusions in any of these publications.

Throughout *Hereditary Genius* – and all of his initial eugenics work – Galton frequently caveated his claims with a need for more experimentation. With the groundwork for a theory of heritable talent established, this gave Galton leeway to excuse his dearth of data with an outline of future experiments to further put *Hereditary Genius* to the test.[35] Within seemingly every conclusion, Galton addressed critical omissions in his reasoning or lack of data by arguing that more experimentation would prove the work's underlying thesis.[36] With proposals for future biometric studies of humans, including twin experiments and an anthropometric laboratory, Galton successfully fended off the initial objections of the popular press.[37]

In the first decade following *Hereditary Genius*' publication, Galton helped to maintain his fame by authoring numerous articles for major newspapers like *The Times* (London) and *The Spectator* (London), as well as through publishing follow-up works, including twin studies and an analysis of spelling bee champions.[38, 39, 40, 41] Galton's appealing ideas of heredity, paired with an entertaining prose and pre-existing fame from prior work, such as his best-selling travel guide, allowed eugenics to expand beyond a mere theory and into a budding ideology. With Galton's obsession to statistically prove the theory of *Hereditary Genius* as the lifeblood of eugenics, a powerful impetus for the movement's future decades was established.

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31 "*Hereditary genius*." *Chicago Tribune* (1860-1872), April 24, 1870.

32 "New Publication: *Hereditary Genius*: An Inquiry into Its Laws and Consequences. By Francis Galton, F. R.S.," *New York Times* (1857-1922). June 21, 1871.

33 "The Art of Spelling," *New York Times* (1857-1922), April 16, 1875.

34 "Article 3 -- no title." *Chicago Tribune* (1860-1872), Sepember 10, 1872.

35 Galton, *Hereditary Genius*.

36 Ibid.

37 Ibid.

38 Francis Galton. "Africa For the Chinese." *The Times,* June 5, 1873.

39 Galton, "Nuts and Men: To the Editor of the 'Spectator'," *The Spectator*, May 30, 1874.

40 "The Art of Spelling." *New York Times* (1857-1922), April 16, 1875.

41 "Article 7 -- no title." *The Albion, A Journal of News, Politics and Literature* (1822-1876), December 11, 1875.

Composite Photography & The Anthropometric Laboratory (1878-1888)

42

With his initial eugenics thesis on the heritable transmission of talent established, how did Galton propel the movement forward? Surprisingly, over the next twenty years, Galton acted not as a radical Nativist, as one might assumed, but as a robust scientist. Further, in the late 1870s and 1880s, Galton could only be described as a "reserved ideologue." Throughout the decade, we can see how Galton's deep concern for "accuracy" led him to pursue further experimentation on human populations and perception rather than spearhead a global eugenics campaign. Nonetheless, this drive would propel the movement to fame. This obsession with accuracy first manifested in the development of the Composite Photograph in 1879, one of Galton's most famous and intriguing legacies.[43] By superimposing images of various racial groups on top of one another, Galton used the composite photograph as a type of "pictorial statistic," something he believed to be a physical, measurable illustration of the mental classifications that grounded racial perception.[44] From these images, Galton created the idea of a racial and social type based on the "average" individual. Curiously, this was Galton's only work in which he directly applied race to his study, as he attempted to explain its social origins through quantification. For the next thirty years, Galton would refrain from directly mentioning race in any other publication.

The composite photograph was a scientifically unorthodox manifestation of Galton's conquest to identify a natural "truth" in society's racial hierarchy and mankind's proclivity for prejudice. For the eugenics movement, composite photography was well received in the press, with general support for Galton's attempts to quantify human perception. The *Chicago Daily Tribune* reported on these experiments twice over the decade (1878 and 1883), describing the work as "interesting and suggestive," though editors raised concerns over the legitimacy of composite photography as a valid scientific tool.[45, 46] In 1888, the North China Herald (the most influential foreign newspaper of the era) expressed considerable excitement for the methodology, proposing further applications of the technique onto the Chinese language.[47] In 1894, Photographic Times and the American Photographer noted that "COMPOSITE photography, since it was first proposed by Francis Galton, has occupied the minds of our most distinguished scientists," but that

42 Francis Galton. "Composite Portraits, Made by Combining Those of Many Different Persons Into a Single Resultant Figure." *The Journal of the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland* 8 (1879): 132–44.

43 Ibid.

44 Ibid.

45 "Sparks of Science: Composite Portraits." *Chicago Daily Tribune* (1872-1922), June 22, 1878.

46 W. R. H.. "The growth of the human faculty." *Chicago Daily Tribune* (1872-1922), July 07, 1883.

47 "Composite Photography." *The North - China Herald and Supreme Court & Consular Gazette* (1870-1941), March 23, 1888.

Composite Photo of Ideal Family Likeness (1882)[48]

Galton Jewish types photocomposite (1878)[53]

the methodology was never put to any significant use.[49]

Seeking additional data to bolster the logic of *Hereditary Genius* in the minds of the public, as well as to assuage his obsession over accurately proving its thesis, Galton established his Anthropometric Laboratory in London in 1884.[50] In this lab, Galton would spend the next year collecting thousands of measurements on physical characteristics such as strength of squeeze, breathing capacity, and head size.[51] The Anthropometric Laboratory was as much an appeal to public perception as to Galton's own internal psychology, as we will repeatedly see throughout the subsequent decade of his eugenics experiments. In the lab's very first publication, Galton noted that, "the object of the Anthropometric Laboratory is to show to the public the great simplicity of the instruments and methods by which the chief physical characteristics may be measured and recorded."[52] As is a trend in many of his publications, Galton was deeply concerned with the public's perception of his findings, and his methods were, once again, met with significant criticism in the press. An 1885 *New York Times* article titled *Objectionable Science* deemed Galton's work "shameless," noting the impossibility of relating physical measurements to abstract human concepts like love and affection.[54] The article even went on to condemn the highly subjective nature of Galton's findings, asking, "If Mr. GALTON'S report, published in a recent number of a scientific journal, is really a specimen of pure science, it would be interesting to know what in Mr. GALTON'S opinion constitutes the other kind of science?"[55]

While Galton was prudent in "validating" his theory of the heritable transmission of talent, he was erroneous in assuming that his ideas required further experimental evidence to garner substantial public support. In fact, his initial work in *Hereditary Genius* had already seeded a transatlantic eugenics faction.

48 Francis Galton, 'The application of composite photographic portraiture to the production of ideal family likenesses,' March 1882. 2.

49 "Composite Photographs." *Photographic Times and American Photographer* (1881-1894), October 05, 1894.

50 Francis Galton. "Anthropometric Laboratory." galton-1884-anthro-lab. 1884. Galton.org. Galton.org. https://galton.org/essays/1880-1889/galton-1884-anthro-lab.pdf

51 Ibid.

52 Galton, "Anthropometric Laboratory." galton-1884-anthro-lab. 1884. Galton.org.

53 Francis Galton. "Galton's Eugenics, Jewish Portraits, 1870s ." 1878. AKG Images.

54 "Objectionable Science." *New York Times* (1857-1922), February 2, 1885.

55 Ibid.

Even in light of eugenics' immense media criticism, in both Europe and the U.S., dozens of scientists had become inspired by Galton's ideas on heredity and had begun to experiment on human populations themselves. This is no more apparent than in an 1884 Life Magazine article addressed to Galton in which the author noted, "Mr. Galton has only to come to this country during a political campaign to be convinced that his science is not new. The various political leaders have established laboratories in all parts of the Union, where the capacity of good able-bodied voters is tested hourly with, in many cases, satisfactory results, politically speaking."[56] This moment was massive. With Galton's science no longer "new" in the U.S., we can infer that a growing divide would emerge between Galton's original movement and its budding American faction. Though a newspaper analysis alone is insufficient in charting this separation between Galton and his broader movement, it is clear that by 1885, Galton had, to some extent, lost control over the initial ideas in *Hereditary Genius*. His influence, while meaningful in the initial establishment of America's eugenics faction, was later strikingly absent from the American-branded eugenics theories of "racial and degenerate unit characters," which appeared to focus more on *Hereditary Genius*' sub-conclusion of racial variation in talent, rather than its primary conclusion that "genius" is hereditary in the first place.[57] These American theories would continue to diverge from Galton's, with their ugly products, mass sterilization campaigns in the U.S. and racial hygiene rhetoric in Nazi Germany, distinct from Galton's socialist eugenic vision.[58]

Galton's Miscellaneous Studies (1886-1898)

While Galton's role in the worldwide eugenics movement may have been waning by the 1800s, there is still much to learn about the ideology's popularization and growth, as well as Galton's role in the movement's origins, during his later years. The mid-1880s were perhaps the oddest decade of Galton's eugenics experiments. Over these roughly twelve years, Galton experimented with lunatic cats, moths, and horses; he studied blindfolded chess players to understand the source of their exceptional visualization abilities, and he mapped inheritance patterns of temper; he developed fingerprinting as a novel identification method and he even proposed an experiment to make contact with "Martial residents," if they did so exist.[59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64] This exploration, for Galton, was all in search of

56 "Article 3 -- no title." *Life* (1883-1936), Oct 30, 1884.

57 Alexandra Minna Stern. *Eugenic Nation: Faults and Frontiers of Better Breeding in Modern America* (Oakland, CA: University of California Press. 2015).

58 Ibid.

59 Francis Galton. "Three Generations of Lunatic Cats: To the Editor of the 'Spectator'," *The Spectator*, April 11, 1896.

60 Francis Galton. "Pedigree Moth-Breeding, as a Means of Verifying Certain Important Constants in the General Theory of Heredity," *Transactions of The Royal Entomological Society of London*, 1887.

61 Francis Galton. "An Examination into the Registered Speeds of American Trotting Horses, with Remarks on Their Value as Hereditary Data." *Proceedings of the Royal Society of London* 62 (1897): 310–15.

62 "Good and Bad Temper." *New York Times*. July 17, 1887.

63 "Mr. Galton on Finger Prints: Finger Prints. By Francis Galton, F.R.S. New-York: Macmillan & Co.," *New York Times* (1857-1922). 1893.

64 "To Signal to Martial Residents: Francis Galton Talks of a Plan to Send a Beam of Light," *Chicago Daily Tribune* (1872-1922), August 7, 1892.

some "rigorously tested scientific truth" of heredity. However, it is worth reemphasizing that Galton did not set out in search of some racialized "truth," or to explicitly "prove" racial supremacy through heredity, despite his own racist internal worldview; he says so himself. In an 1886 speech given before the London Anthropological Society, of which he was president, Galton stated "anthropology teaches us to sympathise with other races, and to regard them as kinsmen rather than aliens."[65] As an 1889 *New York Times* article described, Galton was "the last man in the world to ventilate startling theories or to assert ill-digested things as facts."[66] Throughout this decade, Galton was patient in his work and, despite his flawed and often anecdotally-based methodologies, was conscious not to over-extrapolate findings. In his study of blind chess players Galton stated, "trustworthy evidence for or against [mental arithmetic's] hereditary transmission could hardly be obtained."[67] His commitment to quietly experimenting, rather than advancing a eugenics political agenda, was even noted in the press by *Appleton's Popular Science Monthly* magazine (1896): "Of the books and essays which meet us at every turn, few have much basis in research, but those of Francis Galton are among the most notable exceptions. These books, which have appeared at intervals during the last twenty-five years, are nor speculations but studies. They describe long exhaustive investigations, carried out by rigorous methods, along lines laid down on a plan which has been matured with great care and forethought."[68] This claim was made despite later paragraphs challenging Galton's conclusions.[69]

Even Galton's most criticized studies, like his investigation of deaf cats (which led a *New York Times* journalist to call Galton "one of the most ingenious, yet useless, scientific persons now living") revolved around a tedious commitment to robust scientific investigation.[70] In his study of temper, Galton analyzed anecdotal recounts from nearly 2,000 individuals, declaring women to be better tempered than men.[71] His study of moths included nearly 800 observations in its investigation into the laws of heredity only recently established by Gregor Mendel.[72] His work on American racing horses reflected much of the same pioneering and patient inquiry.[73] For Galton, the results of these studies helped him develop the idea that stochastic variation from a mean "type" created men of eminence, something that would soon become deeply influential

65 Francis Galton. "Opening Remarks by the President." *The Journal of the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland* 15 (1886): 336–38.

66 "New Publications: From Father to Son. The Republic of Hayti. Stories from the French. New Books," *New York Times* (1857-1922). April 14, 1889.

67 Francis Galton. "Psychology of Mental Arithmaticians and Blindfolded Chess-Players." *Nature* 51 (November 22, 1894): 73–74.

68 W. K. Brooks, "The Study of Inheritance: A Review of the Writings of Francis Galton First Paper," *Appleton's Popular Science Monthly* (1895-1900), February 01, 1896.

69 Ibid.

70 "Improvements in Cats," *New York Times* (1857-1922), March 1, 1885.

71 "A Curious Study of Temper," *Christian Union* (1870-1893), August 04, 1887.

72 Francis Galton. "Pedigree Moth-Breeding, as a Means of Verifying Certain Important Constants in the General Theory of Heredity," *Transactions of The Royal Entomological Society of London*, 1887.

73 Galton, Francis. "An Examination into the Registered Speeds of American Trotting Horses, with Remarks on Their Value as Hereditary Data." *Proceedings of the Royal Society of London* 62: 310–15. 1897.

in his later attempts to stratify human populations for selective breeding. These studies also helped Galton integrate a law of normal distribution into his theory of inheritance. Again, all of this work was spurred by Galton's commitment to "accurately" characterize heredity; it was not motivated by a racial agenda, as was the case in the United States and elsewhere.

Once again, Galton's studies in the 1880s were met with resistance. As previously discussed, an 1885 *New York Times* article described Galton's discoveries as "the kinds that benefit nobody."[74] Likewise, an 1887 *Christian Union* (NY) article pointed out Galton's flawed sample selection of only wealthy Englishmen in his study of temper.[75] Interestingly, Galton's studies of fingerprinting as a means of identification (a scientific contribution still relevant today) were deemed "useless" by *the New York Times* in 1893, yet declared highly valuable in preventing fraud by an 1896 Baltimore Sun piece.[76, 77] Surprisingly, despite the persistent criticism, it is clear from my newspaper search of Galton throughout the 1880s that he had become incredibly famous during this time. As president of London's Anthropological Society, Galton helped to grow the influence of anthropological research around the world. In his own words he noted that "the appreciation of Anthropology is on the increase."[78] Mention of Galton in major publications often cited his prominence as well or assumed that the reader was already familiar with his work. An 1887 *New York Times* article avoided an in-depth description of Galton, instead reminding the reader that Galton was "a curious inquirer."[79] In an *Appleton's Popular Science Monthly* article, Galton was venerated for his almost "sacred" status in the world of statistics and heredity, with the author mentioning, "the attempt to question Galton's generalizations may therefore seem ungracious and presumptuous."[80]

At the end of the 19th century, however, Galton had a change of heart, straying from his long-standing scientific impartiality. Perhaps an especially compelling experimental result finally convinced him of a fundamental truth in his theories of heredity. Or is it possible that, as he approached the end of his life, Galton hoped to see his scientific discoveries influence the political trajectory of England? Regardless, Galton's rhetoric clearly displayed a notable shift towards an outward promotion of a radical eugenics political campaign. In 1897, Galton published *A New Law of Heredity* in the journal Nature. In this work, Galton updated his statistical theory of heredity. Of note is his discussion of the various "stochastic" contributions of each family member to the innate characteristics of their offspring.[81] Though not yet the final

74 "Improvements in Cats," *New York Times* (1857-1922), March 1, 1885.

75 "A Curious Study of Temper," *Christian Union* (1870-1893), August 04, 1887.

76 "Mr. Galton on Finger Prints: Finger Prints. By Francis Galton, F.R.S. New-York: Macmillan & Co.," *New York Times* (1857-1922), 1893.

77 "Identification by Means of Thumb-Marks," *The Sun* (1837-), December 2, 1896.

78 Galton, Francis. "Opening Remarks by the President." *The Journal of the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland* 15: 336–38. 1886.

79 "Good and Bad Temper." *New York Times*, July 17, 1887.

80 W. K. Brooks, "The Study of Inheritance: A Review of the Writings of Francis Galton First Paper," *Appleton's Popular Science Monthly* (1895-1900), February 1, 1896.

81 Francis Galton. "A New Law of Heredity." *Nature* 56: 235–37, July 8, 1897.

version of his eugenic theory, *A New Law of Heredity* certainly represented a dramatic culmination of nearly two decades of study. Here, Galton finally asserted that he had more or less identified concrete laws of inheritance. Galton, in Nature, stated that "The truth of a law of heredity...has [now] been verified in particular instances."[82] Though, even this work was heavily criticized, with Nature adding a note at the end of Galton's publication that stated, "Certainly no popular view at all resembles that which is put forward and justified in Mr. Galton's memoir."[83]

Yet, as is evidenced by Galton's subsequent change of stance on eugenics' broader applicability in the face of continuous criticism, his past studies on heredity were hardly about "proving" his theories to anyone but himself. Safe to say, one might reasonably argue that Galton was a bit of an oddball. He conducted work at the fringes of science and pseudoscience, largely unperturbed by objections to his work. For the egotistical Galton, criticism was expected when charting into unexplored territories.[84] He pursued both fruitless endeavors, like his attempts to communicate with Martians, and worthwhile ones, such as his contributions to fingerprinting, with all of this work revolving around a central ethos of exploration into heredity. [85, 86] Thus, with enough "proof" of concept established in his own mind, Galton finally came to terms with his eugenic theory initially set forth in *Hereditary Genius*. A valuable "truth" about heredity, he believed, had been uncovered, its ramifications of utmost importance to society. With his internal psychology resolved, Galton could now finally advance the radical political agenda of which he is, perhaps wrongfully, best known.

Mr. Galton and His Huxley Lecture (1901-1904)

In 1901, Francis Galton was given the honor of speaking at the Huxley Memorial Lecture's second annual conference, a privilege still awarded today to one distinguished researcher in the field of anthropology.[87] Now, nearly 80 years old, Galton's days of robust experimentation were certainly behind him. After decades of searching for nature's "laws of heredity," Galton believed that he had discovered a preliminary answer: a set of fundamental tenets of inheritance and statistics that could serve as a framework for future research.

In his Huxley lecture, Galton sought out to establish a path forward for the next generation of eugenicists. He stated his intentions upfront: "The aim of the lecture is to give a scientific basis to the problem of race improvement under the existing conditions of civilisation and sentiment."[88] For the first time, he didn't hold back any radical agenda: "Men differ as much as dogs in inborn dispositions and faculties," he stated, beginning his tirade on society's current organization.[89]

82 Ibid.

83 Ibid.

84 Nicholas W. Gillham, "Sir Francis Galton and the Birth of Eugenics," *Annual Review of Genetics* 35, no. 1 (2001): 83–101.

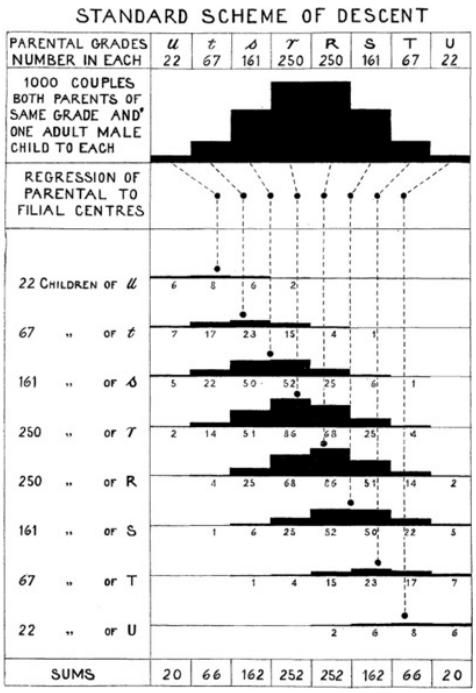
85 "To Signal to Martial Residents: Francis Galton Talks of a Plan to Send a Beam of Light," *Chicago Daily Tribune* (1872-1922), August 7, 1892.

86 "Mr. Galton on Finger Prints: Finger Prints. By Francis Galton, F.R.S. New-York: Macmillan & Co.," *New York Times* (1857-1922), 1893.

87 "Mr. Galton Has in His Huxley Lecture." *The Times*. 1901.

88 Ibid.

89 Ibid.



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He categorized men into distinct genera (as shown above) and bluntly discussed the economic value of a selective breeding program in raising the "civic worth" of England's population: "The most economical way of producing such men [of worth]," he stated "depends on confining attention to the best parentages."[91] To accomplish this, Galton proposed forming communities of "select men and women" to encourage intermarriage and reproduction at an early age.[92] Within these communes, Galton hoped to provide citizens all the necessities of life to incentivize participation.[93] To address the problem of recruitment, Galton suggested that "it might easily become an avowed object of noble families to gather fine specimens of humanity around them, as it is to produce fine breeds of cattle and so forth, which are costly in money but repay in satisfaction."[94]

Despite prior works remaining relatively impartial to the prospects of human race improvement, Galton's Huxley lecture was an eerie exception, applying the conclusions of *Hereditary Genius* to policy nearly two decades after eugenicists in the U.S. had first picked up on Galton's initial theories. He's forthright in his claims, objective in his analysis, and persuasive in his solution. His proposal of utopia was not outlandish but actionable. Galton presented a plan to modify an existing society (England), not to reconstruct an entirely new one. The creation of distinct parental classes provided a concrete strategy for future breeding programs. These simple features are arguably what made his ideas so dangerously influential. Though no overt racism is evident in the lecture (as we've seen in most of Galton's work), there are implications for "racecraft." The proposal was premised on the existence of "human types," types quite similar to the racial ones established in composite photography.[95] This feature of underlying, though not overt, racism, common in much of Galton's work, is potentially why eugenics so quickly devolved into a study of the races once outside of Galton's control, as other, more racially motivated eugenicists amplified this undertone. The conclusion of the lecture was just as dark: Galton reaffirmed eugenics as a moral endeavor and strengthened

90 Francis Galton, "132. The Possible Improvement of the Human Breed Under the Existing Conditions of Law and Sentiment," *Man* 1 (1901): 161–64.

91 Ibid.

92 Ibid.

93 Ibid.

94 Ibid.

95 Ibid.

calls for direct experimentation to advance mankind's improvement, something already widespread in the United States. Galton concluded, "The magnitude of the inquiry is great, but its object is one of the highest that man can hope to accomplish, and there seems no reason to doubt its practicability to a greater or less degree."[96]

The Independent in New York first picked up on the lecture a month later, the author stating, "under our present and fixed laws of social morals it is quite possible to raise the standard of human ability; and what nobler aim can be set before the race?"[97] Others took issue with Galton's strategy. On the creation of a "pampered" class of society, the *London Times* argued "with no initial difficulties to overcome, most members would become fat, lazy, conceited, and stupid."[98] An American publication went so far as to call Galton a "Marxist socialist," with the London Academy suggesting that his ideas were a significant infringement on liberty.[99, 100] Though perhaps not mainstream, Galton, nonetheless, wielded the support of a powerful transatlantic eugenics faction. He presented from one of the highest podiums at the London Royal Anthropological Society and remained relevant for decades as a household name. If not compelling, his ideas sparked significant debate, and his statistical methods were much more concrete than his prior anecdotal experimentation. In 1904, eugenics, in name specifically, made one of its earliest appearances in the press. In "Mr. Francis Galton on Eugenics" by the *London Times*, we see a recount of Galton's finalized prescription for the eugenics movement. Galton had reached the 1909 radicalized state, from which I began this essay. He had turned to eugenics as a quasi-religious pursuit of race improvement. The *London Times* noted, "He saw no impossibility in eugenics becoming a religious dogma among mankind, but its details must first be worked out sedulously in study."[101]

Even with significant media attention, an impressive platform, and a budding political base, eugenics failed to establish itself in the hearts and minds of English society. As Galton himself recognized, broad public support was required for any utopia to be actualized, yet this was never fully achieved by the early 1900s.[102] At the time of his death in 1911, Galton was a far cry from the mere inquirer who founded the eugenics movement. His 1909 *Essays in Eugenics* reflected an even more galvanized stance on race improvement than in 1901. "It seems to me," Galton stated, "that a few things are more needed by us in England than revision of our religion to adapt it to the intelligence and needs of the present time."[103]

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96 Ibid.

97 "Dr. Francis Galton's utopia," *The Independent ...Devoted to the Consideration of Politics, Social and Economic Tendencies, History, Literature, and the Arts* (1848-1921), Nov 21, 1901.

98 "Mr. Galton Has in His Huxley Lecture," *The Times,* 1901.

99 F. Legge, "Improvement of the breed of man.: Academy (London)," *Current Literature* (1888-1912), 1902.

100 "Medicine. To improve the race," *The Cincinnati Lancet and Clinic* (1878-1904) 48, (January 18, 1902): 70.

101 "Mr. Francis Galton on Eugenics." *The Times*. 1904.

102 Ibid.

103 Francis Galton, *Essays in Eugenics* (London: The Engineers Education Society, 1909).

It's important not to understate Galton's contribution to popularizing eugenics for a broad audience. His research was tangible, his prose entertaining. His composite photography made his conclusions visually appealing and easily accessible to a wide variety of scientific and non-scientific communities. The racial undertones pervasive throughout Galton's work, though not the primary conclusions of his studies, gave impetus for the later association of civic worth to phenotype. Through Galton's pseudoscience, biologically irrelevant characteristics like skin color, head size, and even strength of squeeze would eventually come into being as meaningful organizers for society's "racial hierarchy."[104, 105] However, Galton certainly was not primed to be a eugenicist – this was a product of his historical moment. At his core, Galton was a wealthy investigator, deeply motivated to accurately understand heredity at a time when little research had been proven. Galton was also a philanthropic socialist promoting a utopian vision. His brand of eugenics centered around societal improvement, not racial violence, and though Galton, in hindsight, was certainly a flawed scientist, there was no check on his authority to mitigate against the movement's devolution throughout the 20th century. At the time of his death, Darwin's theory of evolution was barely 50 years old.[106] This left Galton's initial theories vulnerable to distortion by more racially motivated actors in the U.S. and elsewhere.

The Future of Eugenics: A Discussion of Galton's Influence

For Galton, a lack of public and scientific understanding of the laws of heredity, combined with his persistent experimentation, provided powerful appeal to his novel discoveries, especially during the first decade of the 1900s. As both the founder of modern eugenics and statistics, Galton developed statistical tests to conform to his experimental findings, then presented his mathematical reasoning as irrefutable evidence for his faulty conclusions.[107] The radicalization of Galton's rhetoric and eugenics ideas, perhaps an immediate response to England's changing political climate, came at a time when the birthrate was declining amongst the country's upper class.[108] Concurrently, Darwin's theory of natural selection had become mainstream despite opposition from the Church of England.[109] Thus, a newfound social anxiety of "replacement" by the middle class made Galton's initial ideas resonate all the more strongly amongst the English bourgeoisie.[110]

Yet, it is highly probable that, with theories of evolution still primitive, other scientists were bound to investigate natural selection's relevance to human populations, even without Galton. With numerous other U.S. scientists already studying biometry and race

104 Francis Galton, "Anthropometric Laboratory," galton-1884-anthro-lab, 1884, Galton.org.

105 Francis Galton, "Composite Portraits, Made by Combining Those of Many Different Persons Into a Single Resultant Figure," *The Journal of the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland* 8 (1879): 132-44.

106 Nicholas W. Gillham, "Sir Francis Galton and the Birth of Eugenics," *Annual Review of Genetics* 35, no. 1 (2001): 83-101.

107 Ibid.

108 Ibid.

109 Ibid.

110 Ibid.

improvement by 1884, Galton's influence, though exceptionally important in directing the future of eugenics, might not have necessarily been paramount for the movement's emergence.[111] After all, Galton's ideas were not especially new. Government control over reproduction was first proposed in Plato's *Republic* in 375 BCE, and the ancient philosopher Seneca had long before defended the Roman practice of infanticide by stating, "we drown even children at birth who are weakly and abnormal, yet this is not the work of anger, but of reason – to separate the sound from the worthless."[112, 113] Though if not the candle, Galton was undoubtedly the match for eugenics' reemergence. Following his initial publication of *Hereditary Genius* in 1869, eugenics rhetoric exploded around the world. In 1881, Alexander Graham Bell began to study hereditary deafness in Martha's Vineyard.[114] In the late 19th century, the Australian government started a program to forcefully remove Aboriginal children from their families in fear that "full-blooded" Aborigines were "too biologically inferior" to survive.[115] Whether intentional or not, Galton played an integral role in reviving eugenics rhetoric for a modern audience.

The eugenics movement contributed to a troubling history of racial standards. Its proponents' belief in a measurable, often physical definition of excellence helped "whiteness" ascend beyond a norm of status to one of beauty and self-worth. Its methods were simple yet powerful; its proponents were not uneducated but scientists. Though Galton never brought eugenics to the state of widespread public acceptance that he so desired, he undoubtedly set the stage for successful future attempts in both the U.S. and Europe. The popularity of later movements was garnished by Galton's initial ideas on heredity, as well as the power of scientific authority. In 1904, Mr. Benjamin Kidd, an English sociologist, was quoted in an article on one of Galton's final publications, his analysis a dark prophecy of the movement's trajectory. For eugenics, a discipline guided by the academic elite, "in few other departments of study would there be so much danger of incomplete knowledge, and even of downright quackery, clothing itself with the mantle and authority of science."[116] Though Galton's inquiry on heredity did not necessitate "racecraft," the often unbridled authority of hereditarians in the early post-Darwin era, paired with an inclination amongst biased eugenicists to apply their work to race, made the racial hygiene and sterilization programs to come all the more likely.

111 "Article 3 -- no title." *Life* (1883-1936), October 30, 1884.

112 C. H. Güvercin and B. Arda, "Eugenics concept: from Plato to present. Human reproduction and genetic Ethics," 14(2) (2008): 20-26.

113 "Infanticide in the Ancient World," Early Church History, n.d. https://earlychurchhistory.org/medicine/infanticide-in-the-ancient-world/

114 "The Deaf-Mutes of Martha's Vineyard," *American Annals of the Deaf* 31, no. 4 (1886): 282-84.

115 Russell McGregor, *Imagined Destinies: Aboriginal Australians and the Doomed Race Theory*, 1880-1939 (Victoria: Melbourne University Press, 1997).

116 "Mr. Francis Galton on Eugenics." *The Times,* 1904.

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The Last Shall Be First:

The Genealogy of Russian Historical Exceptionalism and the Road to Revolution, 1830-1917

Patrick Duan, Duke University

William T. Laprade Prize Winner

The William T. Laprade Prize is awarded yearly by the Duke University History Department to the most outstanding thesis produced that year. William Thomas Laprade was Professor of History at Trinity College (now Duke University) from 1909 to 1953 and Chair of the Department of History from 1938 to 1952.

"Better the illusions that exalt us than ten thousand truths."

- Alexander Pushkin

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The Last Shall Be First:

The Genealogy of Russian Historical Exceptionalism and the Road to Revolution, 1830-1917

By Patrick Duan, Duke University

Abstract

The legitimacy of Russia's Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 is widely debated due to its divergences from a western-centric Marxist view of historical progression. In particular, socialism was hastily declared amidst underdeveloped economic conditions while being executed via authoritarian means. Scholars have long sought to either critique or justify such conspicuous departures from Marxist Orthodoxy and Occidental normativity. This thesis looks beyond the Marxist and western-centric parameters of discussion to instead investigate the indigenous intellectual traditions which prefigured, influenced, and shaped these peculiar characteristics of the Russian Revolution. Contrary to the dominant view that the revolution represented the culmination of the 'Westernizing' outlook of *Russian intellectual history,* this thesis discloses alternative roots in an anti-western philosophy that diametrically opposed the former ethos. To draw this connection across eight decades, this study uncovers ideological continuities across multiple movements, otherwise thought to be mutually-hostile, ultimately identifying and organizing a novel genealogy of ideas. This investigation finds that the non-western 'aberrations' of the Russian Revolution were rather a logical continuation of an intellectual heritage which precisely sought to bulk Western precedents for a historically-exceptional road of the nation's own.

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Introduction

IN THE PREFACE of his magnum opus *Capital*, Karl Marx presented a Western-centric roadmap to socialism. Each society, Marx asserted, had to fulfill a series of developmental preconditions prior to manifesting a socialist revolution.[1] Crudely put, this particular chronology of preliminary historical stages was modeled after Western Europe's transition from feudalism to capitalism: agrarian commerce had to succumb to industrial economies, while absolute monarchies were to give way to constitutional democracies.[2] The degree to which these characteristics had developed in a society indicated its proximity to unlocking the anticipated socialist era. Crucially, there were no shortcuts on this itinerary of historical progression, Marx decreed, for a society "can neither clear by bold leaps, nor remove by legal enactments, the obstacles offered by the successive phases of its normal development."[3] By this logic, societies that presently lacked such characteristics of Occidental modernity were fundamentally deemed to be trailing behind on the timeline of historical development.[4] Accordingly, Friedrich Engels declared that the West must show "the retarded countries ... by its example how it is done."[5] By this logic, Marxists deduced that the nations of Western Europe would be the first to reach the final stage of societal evolution: every country mentioned in the original *Communist Manifesto* as standing on the brink of a socialist revolution was a Western European one that had fulfilled such economic and political prerequisites of capitalist development.[6]

However, in 1917, the world's first 'Marxist' revolution occurred in Russia—a nation which scarcely resembled such descriptions of a society ripe for the socialist paradigm. Nearly two thousand miles east of the industrial fumes of London in which Marx published his works, Russia remained an "overwhelmingly rural, agrarian society."[7] Industrialization was but a recent development: over 90 percent of the labor force was still legally classified as peasants, who also constituted 85 percent of the entire empire's population.[8] Among the incipient population of urban workers, over 99 percent retained strong ties to the rural countryside, further testifying to the nascency and prematurity of the nation's transition into a modern econo-

1 Karl Marx, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*, trans. Ben Fowkes, vol. 1 (Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1982), 91–92.

2 Olivia Blanchette, "The Idea of History in Karl Marx," *Studies in Soviet Thought* 26, no. 2 (1983): 82–122.

3 Marx, *Capital,* 1:92.

4 Marx argued that the societies which did not possess such hallmarks of Western historical development were "less developed" nations that would have to inevitably follow the West's footsteps: "The country that is more developed ... only shows, to the less developed, the image of its own future." See Ibid., 1:91.

5 Friedrich Engels, *Karl Marx & Frederick Engels: Selected Works in Three Volumes* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1977), vol. 2, 403-4.

6 See Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The Communist Manifesto: A Modern Edition*, Pbk. ed (1848; repr., London: Verso, 2012).

7 Sarah Davies and James Harris, "The Working Class," in *Stalin's World: Dictating the Soviet Order* (Yale University Press, 2014), 113.

8 Theodore H. Von Laue, "Russian Peasants in the Factory 1892–1904," *The Journal of Economic History* 21, no. 1 (March 1961): 63. Furthermore, Von Laue notes that "the majority of workers themselves demanded to be called peasants." See ibid. Also see Dorothy Atkinson, "The Statistics on the Russian Land Commune, 1905-1917," *Slavic Review* 32, no. 4 (December 1973): 773-787, 773.

my when the age of socialism was already declared.[9] In the same vein, Russia's political progression remained a far cry from the liberal constitutions of the West that was expected to govern a capitalist paradigm. A mere 8 months of ineffectual and disputed attempts at a parliamentary democracy separated the end of the ancient Tsarist autocracy and the Bolshevik seizure of power.[10] In sum, the anomaly of the timing of the Russian Revolution, Polish historian Andrzej Walicki writes, concerns "the fact that [it] almost coincided in time with the overthrow of absolutism [while] socialist production ha[d] been organized despite the relative backwardness and isolation of the country."[11]

The Controversy of the Revolution

These divergences from the Western historical model and expectations of classical Marxism have sparked prominent controversies and debates. Ever since the Russian Socialist Revolution, a rich tradition of anti-Soviet literature emerged among Western radical circles, decrying the alleged heresies of the premature commencement of socialism, a preclusion of a liberal phase of governance, and the authoritarian character of the resulting state.[12] Such criticism began proliferating since the immediate aftermath of the revolution, perhaps best exemplified by the writings of the Polish-born German Marxist Rosa Luxemburg.[13] This stance has remained popular up to the present day, as many recent scholars of socialist theory and praxis continue to insist that the Russian example erroneously departed from the 'correct' blueprint. Overall, these critics argue that Russia did not possess the economic or political "preconditions" to introduce socialism at that time, while also rebuking the resulting dictatorial nature forcing such an untimely approach as fundamentally un-Marxist.[14]

Alternatively, numerous socialist theorists have also accepted the Russian peculiarities as valid

9 Additionally, Theodore Von Laue emphasizes how "Those ... who had broken completely with the village numbered one half of one per cent." Evidently, then, "the ties between city and country remained very close." In fact, most of these workers were also born in the village and moved to the city as the first generation to do so. See Von Laue, "Russian Peasants in the Factory, 1892-1904," 64-5.

10 Nicholas V. Riasanovsky, *A History of Russia,* 6th ed (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 457. Such a dwarfed period of 'liberal' history directly contradicted Marx's insistence on unhurriedly awaiting the full "matur[ation]" of each successive historical stage before moving on to the next. See Karl Marx, *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy,* trans. S.W. Ryazanskaya (Moscow, Progress Publishers: 1977), 21.

11 Andrzej Walicki, *The Controversy over Capitalism: Studies in the Social Philosophy of the Russian Populists* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969), 7.

12 Marx had insisted on the necessity of this liberal phase of political development, seen as the governmental superstructure behind capitalist economics, as essential for cultivating the working masses' political consciousness so that they could ultimately erect the socialist revolution through their own struggle. However, the Russian revolution's preclusion of such political developments in favor of an immediate socialist transformation instead saw the revolution essentially take place through a coup d'état imposed by the will of a small sect of revolutionary leaders from above, who implemented an authoritarian strategy that sought to force such unevolved conditions into existence—the dictatorial measures notoriously associated with the history of the Soviet regime. See Karl Marx, *The Revolutions of 1848*, Marx's Political Writings 1 (London ; New York: Verso, 2010), 341; Karl Marx, "Provisional Rules of the International," in *The First International and After*, ed. David Fernbach (Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1974), 375.

13 For instance, see Rosa Luxemburg's critiques of the Russian Revolution's contradictions against Marxist doctrine in *Leninism or Marxism?* (London: Independent Labour Party, 1935).

14 David Lane, "V.I. Lenin's Theory of Socialist Revolution," *Critical Sociology* 45, no. 3 (May 2021): 465; Gerald Meyer, "Anarchism, Marxism and the Collapse of the Soviet Union," *Science & Society* 2 (Summer 2003): 218-22; Ilias Alami and Adam D. Dixon, "State Capitalism(s) redux? Theories, Tensions, Controversies," *Competition and Change* 24, no. 1 (October 2019): 70-94.

adaptations of a flexible scripture. Influential Western Marxists such as the Italian thinker Antonio Gramsci supported the Soviet regime and its methods, while proclaiming that the Russian revolution had effectively revised Marx's insistence on the "fatal necessity of ... the inauguration of a capitalist era" as necessarily preceding socialist revolution, instead concluding that "facts have left behind the ideologies."[15] Later, the prominent American Marxist economist Paul M. Sweezy expressed a similar validation of the Russian revolution's departures from theoretical orthodoxy by pointing out the ubiquity of its approach among nearly all later socialist revolutions in the 20th century: "The revolutions that put socialism on history's agenda took place not in economically developed countries, as Marx and Engels thought they would, but in countries where capitalism was still in early stages."[16] In essence, the core question of the controversy is summed up by the former British Labour politician and writer Meghnad Desai: "How could a revolution so contrary to the predictions of Marxist theory be labeled Marxist? ... was the Russian Revolution an aberration, an accident of history? ... There is perhaps a never- ending debate on the nature of the Russian Revolution."[17]

This thesis does not seek to join the saturated

Rationale of Approach

scholarship and unresolvable debates regarding the legitimacy of the Russian Socialist Revolution apropos Marxist ideology, which has preoccupied much of the literature. Instead, this study is interested in the deeper intellectual roots underlying and prefiguring the revolution's controversial eccentricities. Within this topic, some intellectual historians have noticed an interesting turn in Marx's thought during the final years of his life: a handful of letters and unpublished drafts from the 1880s reveal that Marx began to accept the possibility for Russia to brew a socialist revolution along non-Western rhythms. However, as shown in British scholar Teodor Shanin's investigative study of this development, *Late Marx and the Russian Road* (1983), this revisionist perspective was deliberately prevented from being promulgated among the Marxist circles in Russia, where the ideology was instead established along the original principles of Western historical universalism.[18] In fact, these revisionist texts were kept secret until their rediscovery almost a decade after the Russian Socialist Revolution.[19] In other words, the Bolshevik generation of revolutionaries who ultimate-

15 Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from Political Writings 1910-1920* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1977), vol 1, 130.

16 Paul M. Sweezy, "Socialism: Legacy and Renewal," *Monthly Review* 44, no. 8 (January 1993): 6.

17 Meghnad Desai, *Marx's Revenge: The Resurgence of Capitalism and the Death of Static Socialism* (London: Verso, 2004), 110.

18 Upon receiving such a shocking concession from Marx, the leaders of the Russian Marxist movement, then (e.g. Georgi Plekhanov, Pavel Akselrod, etc.), refused to publish the document and even denied its existence when asked, once, about it. See Teodor Shanin, *Late Marx and the Russian Road: Marx and "the Peripheries of Capitalism,"* (New York: *Monthly Review* Press, 1983), 127–28. In the meantime, it is evident that these Russian Marxist leaders continued to abide by Marx's original framework, insisting that "in Russian history, there is no essential difference from the history of Western Europe," and continuing to proclaim the "universal historical" validity of the Western framework, valid to "all other countries," "as expressed in the works of Marx, Engels." See Georgi Plekhanov, "Our Differences," in *A Source Book For Russian History from Early Times to 1917*, ed. Ralph T. Fisher, Alan D. Ferguson, and Andrew Lossky, trans. George Vernadsky, vol. 3 (1885; repr., New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1972), 706–7; and "The Program of the Second Congress of the Russian Social Democratic Workers Party," ibid., 711-12.

19 In other words, the contents of this letter were kept secret until some copies were rediscovered much later and published in 1926—almost 10 years after the Russian revolution. See "David Riazanov: Discovery of the Drafts," in Shanin, *Late Marx and the Russian Road*, 129-133.

ly created Russia's final revolutionary formula in 1917 did not get their inspiration to do so from within the Marxist tradition, but from elsewhere.[20] Building on this finding, then, this thesis investigates the pre-Marxist roots of Russian thought that prefigured the particular non-Western approach taken in the eventual revolution that was ultimately declared in Marx's name. In doing so, it identifies a series of successive movements, across generations, which altogether constitutes a long line of continuous ideas that ultimately influenced and shaped the revolution's peculiar character in question.

Argument

I argue that there existed a distinct ideological tradition which centrally asserted Russia's historical exceptionalism from the Western European model of historical evolution—a particular set of ideas that can be traced into the Russian Socialist Revolution's controversial deviations from the Western paradigm. Specifically, I will track the genealogy of this intellectual heritage across three separate political movements: from the conservative Slavophiles of the 1830s-40s through the socialist Narodniks of the 1870s, and finally to Vladimir Lenin and the Bolshevik Marxists who crafted the revolution of 1917 that so defied Western models.

Further, I argue that this belief in Russian historical exceptionalism was underpinned by a particular interpretation of Russia's underdeveloped conditions. Here, the conceptualization of the nation's societal 'backwardness,' rather than denoting a developmental lag behind the more-advanced West, was transvaluated to signify an alternative non-Western path of societal evolution. Such a view promoted an accelerated historical trajectory for the country to pursue, which ultimately grew into the logic behind the eventual revolution's expedited timing and initiation amid such premature conditions. Additionally, I will demonstrate how this heritage of ideas, across different generations, consistently centered around an aversion to Western political liberalism. This commonality made possible an ideological continuity across otherwise politically-opposed movements; moreover, this anti-liberal stance ultimately evolved into the political strategy which justified the antidemocratic character of the Russian Revolution and its resulting dictatorial regime.

Thus, this thesis looks past the narrow Marxist parameters of debate that have engrossed much of scholarly attention. Instead, this study identifies an earlier lineage of Russian thought that deliberately sought to refuse the Western course of history, then tracking its evolution into the deviant 'Marxist' revolution in question. In doing so, this study challenges the popular narrative of an "aberrant" Russian Revolution that occurred in spite of its differences from the West,[21] instead revealing the inheritance of an intellectual tradition that had long anticipated and sought such a course of history.

20 Lenin first read Plekhanov's works, "without which one could not have arrived at Social Democratic [Marxist] positions."
Further, Lenin described Plekhanov's *Socialism and Political Struggle* as being the Russian equivalent of *The Communist Manifesto* in terms of generational significance and influence. See Leon Trotsky, *The Young Lenin*, trans. Max Eastman (New York: Doubleday): 131, 189-90.

21 Desai, *Marx's Revenge,* 110.

Historiographical Significance

But what is significant or interesting about locating the roots of the non-Western character of the Russian Revolution within non-Western thought? By tracing the revolution's ideological roots to an intellectual current that explicitly rejected the Western historical model, this thesis fundamentally clashes with one of the most established historiographical narratives of Russian revolutionary thought. Indeed, the Russian radical heritage which culminated in devising the socialist revolution is widely conceptualized as a linear tradition of thought that directly descended from the so-called 'Westernizer' philosophy.[22] Dating back to Tsar Peter the Great's campaign to 'Westernize' Russia, this was a worldview whose central doctrine was to shape Russia's future in accordance with Western European historical precedents. Glorifying the Western path of societal progression as representing "the universal progress of humanity,"[23] this philosophy was dedicated to bringing Russia out of its comparative 'backwardness' by precisely following in the footsteps of the Occidental example. As described in historian Marc Raeff's canonical work, T*he Origins of the Russian Intelligentsia*, the Russian revolutionary intellectual tradition had its origins in the ethos of Petrine Westernization—to which it is linked via "a straight line."[24] Historian Richard Pipes similarly argues that "in Russia, the intelligentsia, both as an historical phenomenon and a social concept, has been intrinsically connected with the process of Westernization. It has come into being as a by-product of that process."[25] Thus, scholars commonly conceptualize the Russian Revolution, the ultimate product of this line of thinkers, as attempting to fulfill that original Westernizer mission.[26] As such, the Russian revolution's non-Western characteristics have thus appeared as a historical anomaly, often explained as an deviation or lapse that diverged from the intended course of progression.[27]

Without intending to invalidate the Westernizing intelligentsia's connection to this tradition of thought, I will attempt to showcase the additional influential existence of another ideological lineage. In other words, this thesis seeks to illustrate how the

22 For the most renowned works on this topic, see Isaiah Berlin, *Russian Thinkers* (London: Penguin, 1978); and Marc Raeff, *Origins of the Russian Intelligentsia* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1966).

23 Petr Chaadaev, "Letters on the Philosophy of History," in *Russian Intellectual History,* trans. Marc Raeff (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1966), 169.

24 Marc Raeff, *Origins of the Russian Intelligentsia: The Eighteenth Century Nobility* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1966), 171.

25 Richard Pipes, "The Historical Evolution of the Russian Intelligentsia," *Daedalus* 89, no. 3 (Summer, 1960): 487.

26 For instance, the English historian A.J. Toynbee conceptualized the Russian Revolution as "a latter-day attempt at Westernization ... that ... puts Peter the Great's work into the shade." See A.J. Toynbee, *A Study of History* (London, 1936- 39), vol. III, 202. Additionally, Theodore Von Laue wrote a book titled *The World Revolution of Westernization: The Twentieth Century in Global Perspective*, conceptualizing an era of this Westernizing theme, beginning with the Russian Bolshevik Revolution as his first example. See Theodore H. Von Laue, *The World Revolution of Westernization: The Twentieth Century in Global Perspective* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987). Furthermore, Dmitry Shlapentokh describes the Russian historical experience of any "Russian modernization," in general, as "actually Westernization in the particular context of Russian history." See Dmitry Shlapentokh, "Bolshevism as a Fedorovian Regime," *Cahiers Du Monde Russe* 37, no. 4 (October – December 1996): 429.

27 For instance, see E.H. Carr, *The Bolshevik Revolution, 1917-23* (Penguin, London, 1973), 110-11; Frederick Busi, "The Failure of Revolution," *The Massachussetts Review* 12, no. 3 (Summer 1971): 397-408; David Cunningham, "A Marxist Heresy? Accelerationism and its Discontents," *Radical Philosophy* 1 (2015): 29-38.

revolution commonly believed to be the culmination of this Westernizer weltanschauung also held formative intellectual roots in the oppositional philosophical current which rejected Westernization. Thus, by providing a foregrounding of unexpected ideological seeds traced into core ideas of the revolution's creators, this thesis presents a new avenue of contextual explanations for the peculiarities of the Russian Socialist Revolution.

Furthermore, in tracing a timeline of ideological transmissions from origins to revolution, this thesis also penetrates the political barriers thus far believed to have separated the movements that I portray as deeply interlinked. Specifically, by uncovering a line of continuity between the Slavophiles, the Narodniks, and the Russian Marxists, this study challenges the established historiography pertaining to each of these individual milieus regarding their relationships to one another—for these schools of thought are typically regarded as mutually opposed and ideologically antithetical.[28] As such, no work has previously considered these three separate ideologies as part of one continuous ideological lineage for any theme. Indeed, the Slavophiles were anti-revolutionary conservatives, while the Narodniks and Marxists clashed in the nation's largest feud between rival socialist movements. Thus, by connecting such political rivals, this thesis constructs an intellectual genealogy which bridges the seemingly unbridgeable, thereby additionally contributing a reorganized pathway of Russian ideological history between the early-mid-19th century and 1917.

Methodology

Methodologically, I will draw from the most representative thinkers of each of the aforementioned movements, examining their views on Russia's historical development vis-à-vis the West—through essays, books, memoirs, letters, speeches, and party documents. The primary focus will be on how the ideas of each thinker contributed to the evolving intellectual heritage that ultimately influenced the Russian Revolution's divergences from Western expectations of its timing and politics. Accordingly, the ideas of Russian historical exceptionalism discussed in each chapter will be organized along two interrelated themes: 1) 'reversing backwardness' and 2) 'anti-liberal politics.' By maintaining this constant format across the analysis of different movements, I will track the continuity of ideas as they move across rivaling movements and time periods. Beyond observing analogous similarities in concepts and logic between thinkers, I will additionally supplement such parallels with more explicit evidence of ideological transmission, borrowing, and influence—to concretize the ties between these seemingly-unrelated milieus.

Chapter Outline

Chapter 1 demonstrates how the originally-conservative ideas of anti-Westernism were introduced into the Russian radical tradition, influencing the nation's earliest socialist theories. This section opens with a brief description of the Westernization

28 See Christopher Ely, *Russian Populism: A History* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2022), 176; Richard Pipes, "Narodnichestvo: A Semantic Inquiry," *Slavic Review* 23, no. 3 (September 1964): 458; Andrzej Walicki, *The Controversy Over Capitalism* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969), 26. Also see Samuel H. Baron, *Plekhanov: The Father of Russian Marxism* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1963).

ideals of the movement that is popularly believed to be the origin point of the Russian revolutionary tradition: the original 'Westernizer' movement of the mid-19th century. Then, the chapter will turn to the enemies of this worldview: the Slavophiles, a conservative faction of anti-revolutionary philosophers and theologians who constructed the first counterargument against the Westernization of Russia, which laid the foundations for the theoretical framework of Russian historical exceptionalism that will be tracked throughout the rest of this thesis. The Slavophiles posited a vision of Russia's historical evolution that celebrated the nation's underdeveloped conditions—its agrarian orientation and collectivist values—as a unique condition of Russia worth protecting from the specter of modernity. Advocating for a return to a pre-modern utopia exemplified by peasant communalism, the Slavophiles protested against the incursion of Western political liberalism. Instead, they sought the preservation of pre-liberal values, thereby calling for the Westernized Russian intelligentsia to return to the ways of the non-Westernized rural masses, who were to lead this restoration. Next, I will show precisely how these Slavophile ideas were transmitted into the Russian socialist heritage. The Slavophiles directly inspired one of the nation's earliest socialist thinkers, Alexander Herzen. His radicalization of such anti-Westernist principles produced the idea of reaching socialism through a non-Western route. Under this view, the 'backwardness' of Russian conditions presented a historically-exceptional situation in which the nation could bypass any intermediary historical stages, i.e., the communalist traditions of the Russian peasantry would provide a basis for the immediate construction of a socialist society. Herzen additionally inherited the Slavophile's anti-liberal stance—but now recontextualizing such conservative pre-liberal aims for the radical post-liberal goal of a socialist society.

Chapter 2 illustrates how the ideas of the previous chapter grew into forming Russia's first mass socialist following—the Narodnik movement. Through the works of leading writers Nikolai Mikhailovsky and Vasily Bervi-Flerovsky, I will show how the Narodniks promulgated an ideology of Russia evading Western Europe's capitalist stage of historical development through a direct transition into socialism made possible by Russia's uniquely underdeveloped conditions. By connecting the earlier intellectual milieus of the previous chapter to the Narodnik movement, I will not only be confirming the anti-Westernizer roots of Russian socialist thought but also arguing against the common historiographical notion that Narodnik ideas emerged only after the emancipation of the serfs and in response to the advent of Marxist thought.[29] Additionally, I will present the anti-liberal continuities that saw the movement abide by similar political values of the previous thinkers, principles that will be exemplified through the revolutionary strategists Mikhail Bakunin and Pyotr Lavrov. However, this chapter will additionally show how the new material realities of a modernizing Russia heightened fears of the imminent arrival of capitalism. Such concerns gave rise to critical revisions

29 This argues against Andzej Walicki's *The Controversy of Capitalism* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969), Richard Pipes, "Narodnichestvo: A Semantic Inquiry," *Slavic Review* 23, no. 3 (September 1964): 441-45. Alexander Gerschenkron, *Economic Backwardness in Historical Perspective* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1962), and Teodor Shanin, *Late Marx and the Russian Road* (New York: *Monthly Review* Press, 1983), all of whom portray the core ideas of Narodism as emerging in response to the post-emancipation era and contemporaneity of Marxist thought.

in revolutionary tactics, namely in retracting the trust once placed on the peasant masses to lead the anticipated transformation of Russia. Through the works of Petr [sic] Tkachev, this chapter concludes with a new logic of revolution: in order to ensure the successful execution of a historical shortcut to socialism amid the new, threatening conditions of modernity, the movement's ethos of anti-liberalism facilitated a seismic shift toward an authoritarian strategy of revolution—to forcefully align incompatible conditions with an anachronistic ideal.

Chapter 3 presents the final stretch of this intellectual timeline, illustrating how these ideas were ultimately inducted into the Russian Marxist consciousness that oversaw the actual revolution. This section opens with the decline of the Narodnik movement and the rise of Marxism in Russia as new economic trends seemed to confirm the latter's prognosis of historical development. The first half of the chapter will show how Marxism was established in Russia by Georgi Plekhanov, "the father of Russian Marxism,"[30] who sought to hegemonize Westernizing principles in his crusade against the Narodnik belief in Russian historical exceptionalism—by insisting on the necessity for Russia to follow the Western road of capitalist development and political liberalism. The rest of the chapter will analyze how his pupil, Vladimir Lenin, who ultimately directed the socialist revolution, surprisingly strayed from such Westernizing doctrines, while appearing to revive the Slavophile and Narodnik ideas of Russian historical exceptionalism. Through a series of revisions to Marxist stage theory, Lenin planned an accelerated revolution to be launched amid conspicuously underdeveloped economic and political conditions. Further, I will show how Lenin's anti-liberal departures from 'Orthodox Marxism' additionally facilitated the implementation of an authoritarian strategy of revolution inherited from the later Narodnik revisions of the previous chapter. By connecting the Narodnik movement to Lenin's thought and practice, I will thus challenge the popular historiographical portrayal of Narodism and Marxism as mutually-opposed and incompatible ideologies.[31] Further, in doing so, this chapter thus also contests a common historiographical explanation of Lenin's apparent deviations from 'Orthodox Marxism' as reflective of his individual innovations,[32] instead demonstrating that such ideas were inherited from earlier ideological movements in Russia. Altogether, this chapter thereby completes the intellectual genealogy linking the anti-Westernizer Slavophiles and the anti-Marxist Narodniks to the Russian 'Marxist' revolution of 1917, altogether providing a new explanation for the latter's peculiar divergences from Western precedents and expectations.

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30 This is a popular epithet of Plekhanov and the subtitle of his most authoritative biography in English. See Samuel H. Baron, *Plekhanov: The Father of Russian Marxism* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1963).

31 See Christopher Ely, *Russian Populism: A History* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2022), 176; Richard Pipes, "Narodnichestvo: A Semantic Inquiry," *Slavic Review* 23, no. 3 (September 1964): 458; Andrzej Walicki, *The Controversy Over Capitalism* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969), 26. Also see Samuel H. Baron, *Plekhanov: The Father of Russian Marxism* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1963).

32 Historians often claim that Lenin's apparent divergences from classical Marxism constituted a novel rendition: Michael Karpovich interprets such deviations as "Lenin's Marxism" being "*sui generis*." See Karpovich, "A Forerunner of Lenin," *The Review of Politics* 6, no. 3 (July 1944), 346. Similarly, Robert Mayer argues that Lenin was "a genuine innovator" and created a "novel" theoretical framework. See Robert Mayer, "The Dictatorship of the Proletariat from Plekhanov to Lenin," *Studies in East European Thought* 45, no. 4 (December 1993), 256-7.

Chapter One
Genesis: *A Slavophilic Socialism*

"Russia, having spiritually broken away from Europe, lived a life separate from Europe's ... for both his appearance and his inner cast of mind ... were the result of an entirely different type of life, flowing from an entirely different fountainhead."[33]

- Ivan Kireevsky

A RUSSIAN STATE decree of 1705 mandated that men "of all ranks" must shave their faces—or be fined. Any nobleman spotted in public with a beard was charged 60 rubles; uncomplying military officers were taxed 100 rubles, and any bearded peasant who stepped foot within city boundaries was fined 1 kopeck.[34] Why was the Russian government so preoccupied over the facial hair of its subjects? By this time, Tsar Peter the Great (1672-1725) had assumed the throne of the Russian Empire. His war on beards was but a microcosm of his larger campaign to 'Westernize' Russia. Beards had long constituted a symbol of one's allegiance to Russian Orthodoxy—particularly as a marker of difference from the Catholic and Protestant cultures of Western Europe, in which clean-shaven appearances were the norm.[35] In other words, the Russian monarch sought to systematically erase this traditional visual distinction between his people and other Europeans. Beyond beards, he instituted additional decrees that banned traditional Russian clothing, instead legally mandating that all subjects adhere to the latest standards of German and French fashion. The tsar scorned his nation's cultural differences from the West as representing what he called "Old Russian barbarism."[36] Accordingly, the crown attempted to remake Russia in the image of the West. In 1712, Peter dramatically moved the empire's capital from the historical heartland of Moscow to a new city built from scratch—deliberately situated at the Westernmost point of the Russian coast. He named it after himself, but specifically with a German suffix: 'Sankt-Peter*burg*' (St. Petersburg). Furthermore, the tsar hired only Italian and German architects in order to make the city look as 'Western' as possible in the latest Neo-Classical style.[37]

In addition to achieving outward conformi-

33 Ivan Kireevsky, "On the Nature of European Culture and Its Relation to the Culture of Russia," in *Russian Intellectual History,* trans. Marc Raeff (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1966), 180.

34 Lindsey Hughes, *Russia in the Age of Peter the Great*, 1st ed. (New Haven London: Yale University Press, 2000), 53.

35 The Official Russian Orthodox Church Decree of 1551: "The sacred rules to all Orthodox Christians warn them not to shave their beards or moustaches or to cut their hair. Such is not an Orthodox practice but a Latin and heretical bequest." See ibid., 7.

36 Ibid., 55.

37 Simon Sebag Montefiore, *The Romanovs: 1613-1918*, First Vintage Books edition (New York: Vintage Books, A division of Penguin Random

ty, the Russian sovereign also sought to 'Westernize' the Russian mind. Accordingly, Peter established the state-sponsored practice of regularly sending Russian nobles to Western Europe, where they would be educated in Western literature and philosophy. Equating 'the West' with modernity, the Russian emperor sought to bring home the latest achievements of the European Enlightenment to modernize his nation. 20 years after Peter's death, the Russian polymath Mikhail Lomonosov (1711-1765) reflected on what became a lasting national practice of Western tutelage:

> the sons of Russia, journeying forth to acquire knowledge in the various sciences and arts...foreigners arriving with various skills, books, and instruments ... What benefit was brought to us by all the different sciences and arts ... of which our forefathers, before the days of Russia's Great Enlightener, were not only deprived but in many cases had not even any conception ... through the enlightenment brought by Peter.[38]

However, this intellectual Westernization of the upper classes did not correspond, at all, to the socioeconomic conditions of the heartland. While the countries of Western Europe had ended the practice of legal servitude in the 15th and 16th centuries and began to govern via liberal constitutions in the 18th and 19th centuries, the tsars of Russia continued to rule through an unwavering autocracy, while perpetuating the ancient institution of serfdom.[39] The peasant population—most of whom were serfs until 1861—made up 97 percent of the empire's population under Peter the Great in the early 18th century, a figure that only declined to 85 percent by the 1917 Socialist Revolution.[40] Faced with such dissonant disparities between the Western ideals of progress in which they were educated versus the glaring underdevelopment at home, the Russian nobility could no longer ignore the increasingly-anachronistic realities of their society.

Over time, this pedagogical Westernization of the Russian aristocracy led to the emergence of a new sociological stratum known as "the intelligentsia," an elite circle of noble intellectuals dedicated to manifesting the Western ideals of progress in Russia.[41] The intelligentsia's *raison d'être* is often captured by the term "repentant nobleman": guilt-ridden and painfully-conscious of their privileged positions amid the suffering of the vast majority of their countrymen, these intellectuals, being the only literate segment of this bimodal society, felt an obligation to amend their nation's shortcomings.[42] Yet, unable to fight for change amid nonexistent institutions of legal reform beneath an unbending autocracy, the intelligentsia turned to formulating theories of societal transformation—to philosophize the way forward for their country's prog-

House LLC, 2017), 187.

38 Mikhail Lomonosov, "Panegryic to the Sovereign Emperor Peter the Great," in *Russian Intellectual History,* ed. Marc Raeff (1755; repr., New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1969), 35–36.

39 Paul Bairoch, "International Industrialization Levels from 1750 to 1980," *Journal of European Economic History* 11, no. 2 (Fall 1982): 269.

40 Dorothy Atkinson, "The Statistics on the Russian Land Commune, 1905-1917," *Slavic Review* 32, no. 4 (December 1973): 773.

41 See Marc Raeff, *Origins of the Russian Intelligentsia: The Eighteenth-Century Nobility* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1996).

42 C.A. Johnson, "The Eighteenth Century," *The Year's Work in Modern Language Studies* 27 (1965): 641-646.

ress.[43] In this manner, historian Marc Raeff describes how this intellectual class of Russia became possessed by an intense conviction to rectify the deficiencies of their nation, which they were so acutely conscious of, through abstract ideas: "they put all their energies and will power into ideas and doctrines aimed at bringing about a radical transformation of reality."[44]

Though as ambitious as they were, the Russian intelligentsia was also deeply detached from the oppressed and illiterate masses on whose behalf they spoke. Reared on a foreign academic culture in wealthy cities far removed from the rural heartland, these theorists were profoundly disconnected from the subjects of their theories. At the same time, facing constant Tsarist censorship, most thinkers could only vocalize their ideas abroad, in exile—further adding to the rift between their abstract conceptualizations and the material realities at home.[45] This perpetual distance between the intelligentsia's metaphysical visions and the actual conditions of Russian society would prefigure tragic impracticalities of putting theory into practice, a predicament that would slowly unfold throughout the following 19th century and into the next—and throughout the course of this thesis.

Context: The Westernizers & Western Historical Universalism

For a century since Peter's reforms, France had been the epicenter of Russian intellectual study and emulation. But following the French Revolutionary upheavals of 1789 and the Napoleonic invasion of Russia in 1812, climaxed by the Decembrist Rebellion in 1825, the tsarist autocracy became alarmed by the spread of radical philosophies and sought to divert Russia's learning model to a country with less subversive tendencies.[46] Consequently, Emperor Nicholas I chose the German state of Prussia, which, like Russia, maintained a despotic model of governance.[47] As a result, 19th-century German thought became the primary source of intellectual inspiration for the emerging Russian intelligentsia. Most significantly, this era of German thought popularized the philosophy of history: "the philosopher's role was now to discern 'the march of history,'" historian Isaiah Berlin notes, "to discover where it was carrying mankind."[48] Thus, this century of Russian thought became primarily preoccupied with the need to define the nature of Russia's historical trajectory.

The central issue facing this generation of Russian thinkers concerned the fact that Western- European ideas ran far ahead of Russian societal development. Reckoning with this disparity, the Russian intelligen-

43 Christopher Becker, "Raznochintsy: The Development of the Word and of the Concept," The *American Slavic and East European Review* 18, no. 1 (February 1959): 63–74.

44 Marc Raeff, *Origins of the Russian Intelligentsia*, 170.

45 Martin A. Miller, *The Russian Revolutionary Émigrés*, 1825-1870, The Johns Hopkins University Studies in Historical and Political Science (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986).

46 Berlin, *Russian Thinkers,* 136.

47 Ibid.

48 Ibid., 137.

tsia, the brainchild of Peter the Great's Westernization ethos, deduced a historical model in which Russia ought to follow and repeat Western historical precedents. Known as the 'Westernizers' of Russia, these thinkers conceptualized the history of Western Europe as representing "the universal progress of humanity."[49] This milieu unwaveringly relied upon "the intellectual life of Europe," deferring to "the more developed Western countries" as representing the objective societal standard to emulate.[50] Viewing their own nation as lagging behind in historical development, this era of Russian intellectuals sought to model their nation's future according to the Western European example. Thus, they argued that Western ideas ought to be universalized in application to Russia—to bring the latter from its "backward" condition into the perceived progressive trajectory that the Occident possessed, which they viewed as "the march towards light and freedom."[51] In other words, the West was seen as the trend-setter of global history, dictating what was objectively progressive and representing what all societies ought to aspire to become.

The Russian philosopher Petr Chaadaev (1794-1856) pushed this Westernizer premise to the logical extreme and exposed the humiliating implication of such a worldview. If Russia had to constantly mimic the West for any hope of historical progression, then what does that say about the nature of Russian civilization? He concluded that Russia lacked any historical originality of its own. The nation had no cultural contributions or innovations to make to the world and would forever play the role of a pupil learning from the achievements of the West. In this sense, Russians were deemed to be "children who have not been taught to think for themselves."[52] Chaadaev thus classified Russian culture as one that has become "wholly imported and imitative" of the West, with nothing home-grown from native roots; the country depended on endlessly appropriating the "ready-made" products achieved by the labor of Western advancement.[53]

49 Chaadaev, "Letters on the Philosophy of History," 169.

50 Andrzej Walicki, "Russian Social Thought: An Introduction to the Intellectual History of Nineteenth-Century Russia," *Russian Review* 36, no. 1 (January 1977): 1.

51 Berlin, *Russian Thinkers,* 136.

52 Chaadaev, "Letters on the Philosophy of History," 164.

53 Ibid.

The Slavophiles

Such a shameful self-image of Russia's culture and its position in world history did not sit well with all members of the intellectual class. Though reared on "the same philosophical texts" as the Westernizers, a rivalling circle of Russian philosophers and theologians emerged between the 1830s and 40s, upholding conservative and traditionalist principles with the aim of refuting the Westernizer outlook. Known as the Slavophiles, these writers sought to posit an ideology that restored pride and purpose to Russia's significance in history.[54] This section will represent their thought through the writings of the movement's three most prominent thinkers: Ivan Kireevsky (1806-1856), Alexei Khomiakov (1804-1860), and Konstantin Aksakov (1817-1860). Though the Westernizers are widely recognized as the forefathers of the philosophical heritage that ultimately led to the Bolshevik Revolution, the ideas of the *anti-Westernizer* Slavophiles thus marks the start of an alternative intellectual lineage behind the revolution, which this thesis presents. The ideology of Russian historical exceptionalism begins with these conservative, anti-revolutionary theorists.

Positing Russian Historical Exceptionalism

In response to the notion that Russia ought to continuously emulate the West as the universal blueprint for historical progression, the Slavophiles asserted a separate timeline of historical development for Russia. In other words, they de-universalized the Westernizer conception of history that had become normalized in the Russian intellectual consciousness. Rather than there existing a single objective timeline dictated by any one civilization for all others to follow, the Slavophiles asserted that each nation or people possessed "its own unique, individual, inner purpose."[55] In particular, these thinkers sought to define two separate teloses differentiating Russia from Western societies—the latter of which was conceptualized as a monolithic entity. Ivan Kireevsky, for instance, sought to "arrive at a general definition of two types of civilizations,"56 [56]declaring that,

> Russia, having spiritually broken away from Europe, lived a life separate from Europe's...for both his appearance and his inner cast of mind... were the result of an entirely different type of life, flowing from an entirely different fountainhead.[57]

In articulating this difference, the Slavophiles reasoned that the uniqueness of each civilization stemmed from

54 James Edie, ed., *Russian Philosophy, Volume I: The Slavophiles, The Westernizers*, vol. 1 (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1965), 160.

55 This nationalistic philosophy of history can be traced to German Romanticism. See Berlin, *Russian Thinkers,* 136.

56 Ivan Kireevsky, "On the Nature of European Culture and Its Relation to the Culture of Russia," in *Russian Intellectual History,* trans. Marc Raeff (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1966), 204.

57 Ibid., 180.

the particularity of its foundational values. Aleksei Khomiakov postulated that the "entire ... history of [a] society" was eternally governed by "its first principles, its organic origins," thus seeing each civilization "develop in its own way."[58] Similarly, Kireevsky explained that "the development of a state is simply the unfolding of the essential principles on which it is founded."[59]

Since the founding values of each society were believed to command its particular pattern of evolution and thereby determine its people's fate, the Slavophiles thus took to endowing oppositional 'foundational' characteristics between their nation and those of the West: "the principles underlying Russian culture are totally different from the component elements of the culture of European peoples," Kireevsky exclaimed.[60] But what exactly were these differences? The Slavophiles defined 'the West' as a civilization fundamentally built on the principle of individualism, whereas Russia was founded on the virtue of communalism.

Reversing 'Backwardness'

Using this dichotomy of civilizational identities, the Slavophiles developed a worldview that sought to reverse the Westernizers' conception of progress and advancement vis-à-vis 'backwardness' and underdevelopment. The Westernizers believed in a linear progression in historical evolution from "primitive" collectivistic living, which they scorned, toward an increasingly individualized society, which represented the modernity of Western Europe that they aspired to attain for Russia.[61] Against this view, the Slavophiles posited the opposite connotations of these values: they identified Western individualism as promoting a destructive principle while celebrating Russian collectivism as safeguarding a utopian paradigm.

The modern individualistic societies of Western Europe that the Westernizers adored, the Slavophiles argued, was not an enviable archetype to mimic but rather one destined for failure. Kireevsky claimed that "European societies," historically developing through "a spirit of individual separatism ... held together only by private and party interests," faced the inevitable fate of self-implosion: in such a society, "separate private parties ... pursued their own purposes and individual policies at the expense of the state as a whole," ultimately resulting in constant conflicts that would tear a people apart.[62] By this logic, he concluded that "European civilization was bound in the end to destroy the whole social and intellectual edifice which it had erected."[63] Likewise, Khomiakov proclaimed that the individualistic West "carried the seeds of its own destruction," deducing that the civilization's decline and collapse was "a historical necessity."[64] Such claims, though factually unfounded, nevertheless mark a significant departure from the norm of viewing the West as the exemplary model of history. These views ef-

58 Aleksei Stepanovich Khomiakov Khomiakov, "On Humboldt," in *Russian Intellectual History,* trans. Marc Raeff (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1966), 215.

59 Kireevsky, "On the Nature of European Culture and Its Relation to the Culture of Russia," 187.

60 Kireevsky, "On the Nature of European Culture and Its Relation to the Culture of Russia," 180.

61 See Walicki, "Russian Social Thought," 8.

62 Kireevsky, "On the Nature of European Culture and Its Relation to the Culture of Russia," 187.

63 Ibid., 188.

64 Khomiakov, "On Humboldt," 211–13.

fectively introduced, to the Russian intelligentsia, the notion that the Western mode of historical progression ought to not be followed but rather evaded. This belief would be passed down as a core premise of the later socialist generation that sought a non-Western path of development.

In defending the virtues of Russia's contrasting collectivistic structure, the Slavophiles did not merely paint it as a superior societal model but specifically portrayed this 'backward' culture as embodying the very form of society that the modern West had sought to attain. In this manner, Khomiakov declared that "only we [Russians]" could provide the answer to the "riddle" of the West's social strivings.[65] Russia's ancient communalistic ways, the Slavophiles believed, represented exactly what the progressive West was searching for: "they are looking for this idea in the West ... but they are unable to find it; for it cannot spring from the West's social principles."[66] In this sense, the Slavophiles alluded to how 19th-century Western radical movements had begun conceiving of the ultimate stage of societal evolution as one which fostered a collective freedom, i.e., striving for socialism. Specifically, Khomiakov explained how "the West, trying to reconcile freedom with unity," postulated visions "under the names of communism or socialism;" however, "all attempts to discover or create such a principle" in their culture "have failed."[67] Their individualistic mentality "was incapable of grasping that law" which the communalistic people of Russia had preserved in their "pre-individualized" ways of life.[68] Indeed, the latter had managed to preserve a certain premodern "wholeness" and "integrality" of life unspoiled by individualistic norms or a division of labor.[69] Similarly, Kireevsky boasted of how Russia's traditionally-communalistic society featured "neither a rigid separation of immobile social estates, nor privileges granted to one estate at the expense of the others ... nor class contempt, class hatred, and class envy."[70] Here, the Slavophiles presented their 'backward' world as exemplifying the haven from class struggles and social disparities that Western radicals had envisioned would be achieved in a socialist utopia.

Thus, the Slavophiles essentially argued that pre-modern Russia already possessed the elements for building the very kind of society that modern Western social theoreticians were unsuccessfully seeking to attain. In this way, the Slavophiles flipped the Westernizer view of historical evolution on its head by positioning an underdeveloped Russia as ahead of the advanced West on the timeline of progressive development. Hence, Khomiakov proudly proclaimed, "having first secured these principles for itself ... history calls upon Russia to take the lead in universal enlightenment."[71] In this manner, the Slavophiles effectively reversed the image of Russia as an eternal pupil of Western instructions; now, Russia would lead the West at its own game of spearheading the latest historical paradigms:

65 Khomiakov, "On Humboldt," 212.

66 Ibid., 220.

67 Ibid., 213.

68 Ibid., 212-13. Also see Walicki, "Russian Social Thought," 13.

69 Kireevsky, "On the Nature of European Culture and Its Relation to the Culture of Russia," 190.

70 Ibid., 197.

71 Khomiakov, "On Humboldt," 226, 229.

the last shall be first. This Slavophile trope would soon be passed down to later radical thinkers who believed that Russia would reach socialism before the Western world.

If the Slavophiles concluded that the most coveted forms of society were not to be found in the modernized West but rather in ancient 'communal' principles preserved by Russia, where were such glorified values to be found, exactly? Since Russia had been systematically westernized by the crown for centuries, where then were these non-Western traits stored in a post-Petrine[72] Russia? The answer thus necessarily lay in the segments of society most isolated from the cosmopolitan centers of Western education, i.e., the most unmodernized, underdeveloped, and 'backward' constituents of the empire: the rural peasantry. The Russian peasantry lived in the agrarian village commune, a social structure which the Slavophiles believed to be the basis of all their claims regarding Russia's 'communalistic' culture and the collective freedom sought after by Western dreams of socialism. So central was the peasant commune to the Slavophile ideology that Khomiakov claimed that "hardly a line of Russian history can be understood unless one has a clear idea of the commune and its internal life."[73] Historian Alan Kimball describes this institution as embodying "some of the most primitive agricultural practices known to Europe."[74] Accordingly, the Westernizers berated it as a 'primitive' relic of the past which must be cleared on the way to evolving "higher" forms of social organization.[75] Reversing such views, the Slavophiles declared that "the commune is that highest principle which is not destined to find anything higher than itself."[76] Moreover, the Slavophiles believed that the peasant commune—"the great repository of hope for the future of Russia"—served as the foundation of the utopian Russia which they sought to build.[77] Thus, Khomiakov claimed that "upon [the commune's] development can be developed the entire civil order."[78]

By believing the ancient peasant commune as constituting the basis of perfecting the social architecture of Russia, the Slavophiles thereby put forth the seemingly-paradoxical mentality of viewing the most underdeveloped parts of society as providing the key to reaching the highest ideal of societal evolution—a notion that would become central to every thinker of this intellectual genealogy from here on. Aware of the shocking transvaluation that such a claim made apropos the conventional views on linear historical progression, Aksakov swore that "Russia will put the [Westernized] theoreticians to shame and reveal an aspect of her greatness that no has ever suspected," i.e., a greatness contained in the aspects of Russian society typically least expected to yield promise.[79] Altogeth-

72 The term "Petrine" is the adjective denoting matters relating to Tsar Peter the Great.

73 Khomiakov, "On Humboldt," 228.

74 Alan Kimball, "The Russian Peasant 'Obshchina' in the Political Culture of the Era of Great Reforms," *Russian History* 17, no. 3 (Fall 1990): 259–60.

75 See Andrzej Walicki, "Russian Social Thought: An Introduction to the Intellectual History of Nineteenth-Century Russia," *The Russian Review* 36, no. 1 (January 1977): 13.

76 Aksakov, quoted in Christopher Ely, *Russian Populism: A History* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2022), 35.

77 Kimball, "The Russian Peasant 'Obshchina,'" 259-60.

78 Khomiakov, quoted in Ely, *Russian Populism,* 33.

79 Konstantin Sergeevich Aksakov, "On the Internal State of Russia," in *Russian Intellectual History,* trans. Marc Raeff (New York: Harcourt,

er, the Slavophiles introduced the concept of Russia possessing a superior, non-Western path of historical development made possible precisely by the purported advantages of its societal 'backwardness.' This particular argument for Russian historical exceptionalism will comprise the central logic of all following theorists and movements which this thesis will track.

Anti-Liberal Politics

If Russian society's most 'backward' and unwesternized aspects held the key to realizing the highest forms of freedom which the West themselves were striving for, the Slavophiles argued, then this premise additionally invalidated the need to adopt the modern political institutions of Western Europe. More specifically, this attitude amounted to a contempt for political liberalism as a concept. The Westernizers of Russia had long pleaded for the adoption of the Western liberal paradigm, which consisted of constitutional governance, property rights, and other legal institutions typically associated with a society's advancement past feudalism. For instance, Nikolai Fonvizin (1745-1792) typified this Westernizer demand for Russia to emulate Europe's liberal institutions. He cried out for "real political freedom," "the rights of property," and the need for a "stable code of laws" still absent in Russia.[80] Viewing Western Europe as embodying the most enlightened methods of societal organization, he hoped that Russia would adopt "those privileges which are enjoyed by the peoples of Europe, with their sound institutions."[81]

However, the conservative Slavophiles, believing that pre-liberal forms more closely approximated the societal ideal, rejected these Occidental norms—instead viewing the ancient peasant commune as exemplifying a superior way of social organization. Firstly, the Slavophiles repudiated the liberal conception of land division, i.e., the rights of private property. Preferring Russia's traditionally- communalist approach to sharing land among the community, Kireevsky derided the "private, personal character" that was "the foundation of Western development;" instead, he emphasized how "landed property, the source of personal rights in the West, was here [in Russia] the property of society," rather than that of any individual.[82] Secondly, the Slavophiles felt that the Western liberal conception of law was entirely inapplicable to the way in which the Russian peasant commune governed itself. Elaborating on the alleged uniqueness of the traditional commune's administrative framework, Khomiakov held that the peasant inhabitants operated "on legal principles which are peculiar to our people," which he cited as "another proof of the gulf dividing us [from Westerners]."[83] Similarly, Kireevsky asserted that, in contrast to the "Western jurisprudence," Russian society did not depend on "jurists" or "some legislative assembly," but rather rested solely on the "customs and way of life" of the agrarian masses and their unwrit-

Brace & World, 1966), 233.

80 Denis Fonvizin, "A Discourse on Permanent Laws of State," in *Russian Intellectual History,* trans. Marc Raeff (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1966), 96–105.

81 Ibid.

82 Kireevsky, quoted in Ely, *Russian Populism,* 33.

83 Khomiakov, "On Humboldt," 225.

ten forms of "local" self-governance in the communal village.[84] Further, beyond cultural incompatibility, the Slavophiles also rejected the practical efficacy of Western liberal legislation. For instance, Kireevsky ridiculed the "formalistic tendency of European jurisprudence," which he claimed "concentrated on the wording at the expense of true justice."[85] In contrast, the Russian communal traditions, devoid of legal formalities, "gave preference to genuine equity over superficial formalism ... preferring evident genuine justice to literal formal meaning."[86] This belief in the futility of perceived justice via written codes, as opposed to material social justice via a fair distribution and sharing of resources, would reappear among the later socialist thinkers of this chapter and beyond—in the form of a revolutionary anti-liberalism.

Above all, the Slavophiles rebuked the liberal notion of constitutional rights and political liberties as inapplicable to the governance of Russian communal life. Aksakov insisted that "political freedom is not freedom," fixating on the notion that true liberty came only with the pursuit of "communal freedom"—as if the two were diametrically-opposed concepts.[87] Generalizing the dispositions of his nation's rural constituents to characterize a monolithic Russian identity, the Slavophiles extrapolated the peasants' lack of involvement in political affairs to signify the complete irrelevancy of politics in the Russian mentality. Aksakov observed that there is simply "no desire for political rights" among the peasantry, thereby making the lofty conclusion that "The Russian people is not a people concerned with the government:" they were essentially "apolitical" and did not possess even "a trace of desire for a constitutional order."[88] Thus, Aksakov dismissed all "Western concepts of liberalism" as an inferior and foreign philosophy that could only impede the natural communal way of life in Russia.[89] Hence, adopting such modern institutions would only take the society farther from the utopia that it, allegedly, already approximated in its most unmodernized form.[90] This Slavophile aversion to constitutionalism and political rights would interestingly constitute another central point of continuity in political stances between this conservative milieu and later radical movements.

However, the Slavophiles believed that these traditional, anti-liberal societal ideals, exemplified by the premodern communal peasantry, had come under threat due to the Westernizing forces promulgated by the nation's educated demographic. As such, Kireevsky criticized the new influx of modern liberal attitudes as having "arisen in the upper strata of society," among intellectuals who have sought to "embrace foreign forms and a foreign spirit."[91] Aksakov, too, claimed that the "upper class," indoctrinated by "the

84 Kireevsky, "On the Nature of European Culture and Its Relation to the Culture of Russia," 198.

85 Ibid., 178.

86 Ibid., 197-8.

87 Aksakov, "On the Internal State of Russia," 237.

88 Ibid., 233.

89 Ibid., 232-3.

90 Ibid.

91 Kireevsky, "On the Nature of European Culture and Its Relation to the Culture of Russia," 199, 206.

foreign influence" of Westernization, "had renounced its Russian principles."[92] Specifically, the Slavophiles were reprimanding the Westernized intelligentsia—the sociological product of Peter the Great—whom they believed were poisoning the ancient communalistic harmony of pre- modern Russia: "Under Peter began that evil," Aksakov asserted, "a dangerous deep-lying cancer for Russia."[93] Here, the Slavophiles bemoaned the consequent fissure that had been created between the nobility and the agrarian masses: "a cleavage had taken place in Russian society," Aksakov cried, in which "the upper class had been torn loose from Russian principles, concepts, and customs, as well as from the Russian people."[94] Khomiakov insisted that this "cleavage" was "a historical accident," imported from another historical timeline, i.e., that of Western Europe.[95] Should such foreign attitudes continue to permeate the society, the Slavophiles believed, Russia would lose its unique and superior historical trajectory and instead be inducted into the dreaded Western path of development.[96]

Political Praxis

The Slavophile solution to guaranteeing and manifesting Russia's promised course of exceptional historical development, then, was for the nation's Westernized intelligentsia to return to the ways of the native communal peasantry, whom they believe, alone, had preserved such sacred principles. Indeed, Aksakov described the Russian peasantry as "the keeper of our historical instinct ... [who] alone have largely preserved the essence of the Russian tradition in all its purity."[97] Similarly, Kireevsky claimed that "the ideas of our former learning has survived almost without a change among the lower classes of the people," who still lived in pre-modern, pre-liberal communes.[98] In this manner, the Slavophiles argued that the only way for Russia to fulfill its historically-exceptional path—evading the scourge of modernity and liberalization—was for the Westernized segment of society, i.e., the intelligentsia, to bow before the un-Westernized populace, i.e., the peasant masses, for the latter to lead the nation back to a sort of paradise lost. Thus, Kireevsky asserted that this can "be carried out only when that class of our nation ... which is still saturated with Western ideas" returns to the people's "ancient" ways and "former native life," i.e., the communal principles of old.[99] Therefore, Aksakov concluded that "the specific remedy for the disease [is] to abandon that unnatural course of action [i.e., Westernization] and to return to one which is in conformity with Russian concepts and the essence of Russia," which he believed was embodied by the traditional societal values of the peasant commune.[100] As will soon be evidenced, this Slavophile narrative of the

92 Aksakov, "On the Internal State of Russia," 244.

93 Ibid., 242.

94 Ibid., 243.

95 Khomiakov, "On Humboldt," 217.

96 Kireevsky, "On the Nature of European Culture and Its Relation to the Culture of Russia," 207.

97 Aksakov, "On the Internal State of Russia," 249.

98 Kireevsky, "On the Nature of European Culture and Its Relation to the Culture of Russia," 195.

99 Ibid., 206-7.

100 Aksakov, "On the Internal State of Russia," 248.

illiterate peasant masses leading the educated nobility to societal redemption would be inherited by the next generation's socialists as a central ethos of their revolutionary vision.

Basing their vision of societal transformation via a national return to the peasants' traditional ways, the Slavophiles clarified that their image of an achieved utopia would simply be the proliferation of the old peasant commune's structure nationwide. Kireevsky, at the end of his long treatise, concluded that "My only wish is that these principles of life ... should become part and parcel of the beliefs of all estates and strata of our society."[101] Hence, the Slavophiles hoped that all of Russian society would be re- organized along this model of living. But what was this model of living in political terms? The answer is revealed in Kireevsky's description of the ideal future socio-political landscape of the nation:

> a countless multitude of small communities scattered over the face of the Russian land ... each of them representing *its own consensus* ... serving as the foundation for the edifice of society, the groundwork for its political structure.[102]

In other words, the Slavophiles hoped for Russia to develop into a federation of self-governing communes.[103]

Crucially, this emphasis on the devolving of political governance to the local sovereignty of each community translated into a staunch opposition to any overbearing central authority that may infringe upon the individual autonomy of each commune. Though they were monarchists insofar as they were, politically-speaking, conservative traditionalists, the Slavophiles were so ardently against the idea of governmental interference that they even dared to critique the tsarist regime. This stance was especially salient in the writings of Aksakov, who disdainfully described how Russian monarchical rule had become "a domination of the state over the land," insisting that the government had "encroached upon the people [and] invaded their life and customs."[104] Portraying such a development, though perhaps inaccurately, as a Western-inspired political model introduced by Peter the Great, Aksakov mourned how, since the Petrine precedent, "the Russian monarch was transformed into a despot, and his willing subjects into slaves."[105]

But in refusing the liberal model of limited government and constitutional rights as an effective check against authoritarian abuses, the Slavophiles instead sought to keep government entirely out of all local communal self-administration. Indeed, in preaching this principle of "noninterference," Aksakov claimed that the ideal Russian society was one in which "the state ... does not meddle in the life and ways of the people, does not force them to live according to its rules."[106] Even arguing that "Order has never been [successfully] maintained in Russia by governmental measures," Aksakov claimed that a harmonious and functional Russian society was one that consigned all

101 Kireevsky, "On the Nature of European Culture and Its Relation to the Culture of Russia," 207.

102 Kireevsky, "On the Nature of European Culture and Its Relation to the Culture of Russia," 197.

103 Ibid.

104 Aksakov, "On the Internal State of Russia," 242-3.

105 Ibid., 243.

106 Aksakov, "On the Internal State of Russia," 239.

governing affairs and power to the self-management of each communal unit.[107] Thus, the Slavophiles' political opposition to liberalism, for sake of "retain[ing] ... communal freedom," translated into an opposition against centralized authority altogether.[108] Not only would the broader anti-liberalism of these conservatives be shared by later socialists from the opposing end of the political spectrum, but the Slavophiles' repudiation of tsarist authoritarianism and critique of the ruling state would provide further cross-political commonalities for the radical revolutionaries of the following generation.

Alexander Herzen

In 1847, the out-spoken Westernizer Alexander Herzen (1812-1870) left Moscow to evade further state persecution, as his radical activities had confined him to house arrest in the previous years.[109] He departed for Western Europe, not knowing it would be the last time he would ever walk on Russian soil. Most remembered for his London-based journals *The Bell* and *The Pole Star*, Herzen regularly published revolutionary material abroad, in Russian, to be then smuggled into Russia beneath the Tsarist censors.[110] Though constantly writing about his homeland, Herzen would remain removed to this distant setting in which he imagined all his visions of a Russia he never saw again.

Herzen traveled to Western Europe at the peak of the region's revolutionary events. Wielding the Westernizer faith in the progressive direction of the Occident's teleology, he had high hopes that this wave of social upheavals would finally see the West establish what was anticipated to be the ultimate form of societal freedom: socialism. However, his hopes were quickly shattered by the famous failure of the 1848 revolutions.[111] Disillusioned, he began to look toward his native Russia for an answer to his philosophical dissonance.

In doing so, he was inspired by the very Slavophiles whom his fellow Westernizers viciously opposed. Herzen was thus a peculiar Westernizer for

107 Ibid., 232-234.

108 Ibid.

109 Martin Malia, *Alexander Herzen and the Birth of Russian Socialism: 1812-1855* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1961), 134-151.

110 Ibid.

111 Ibid., 374-77.

frequently treading between the lines of factional hostility, particularly in his sympathy for Slavophile ideas. Consequently, Herzen occupied an awkward middle ground in the polarized arena of 19th-century *Russian philosophy,* often rejected by both ends of the political extreme: "My position is a strange one," he wrote in his diary, "to [Slavophiles], I am a man of the West; to their foes, I am a man of the East ... in our age these one-sided definitions have no place."[112] In a later essay, Herzen revealed that his peculiar views could not be categorized into any one particular allegiance: "The Slavophiles accuse us of a Western turn of mind. The Westernizers accuse us of Slavophilism."[113] Upon hearing about the death of Konstanin Aksakov in 1861, Herzen published a poignant eulogy in which he disclosed his great reverence for his ideological "opponents," referring specifically to "Kireevsky, Khomiakov, and Aksakov," i.e., the three Slavophile thinkers discussed earlier:

> these noble, tireless activists, these *opponents*, who were closer to us [the Westernizers] than many of *our own,* ... with tears and a pious feeling we close the lid on their coffins ... *The turning point in Russian thought* began with them ... Yes, we were their opponents, but very strange ones. We had a *single* love ... we and they were struck by a single, powerful, instinctive ... passionate feeling .... A feeling of boundless, all-embracing love for the Russian people, the Russian way of life, and the Russian way of thinking. And like Janus or a two-headed eagle, we gazed in different directions while *our heart beat as one.*[114]

Here, Herzen validated the Slavophile contribution to Russian thought and social discourse, specifically regarding the turn away from Western models and toward indigenous concepts. Crucially, he did not conceive of their principles as necessarily conservative; rather, he was able to draw radical implications from their ideas of Russian historical exceptionalism: "The point is that we have not joined the *conservative era* of our existence ... for us conservatism is ... ideological imitation of the West."[115] Ultimately, Herzen would borrow the ideas of the conservative and anti-revolutionary Slavophiles and radicalize them into a revolutionary philosophy for socialism.

Radicalizing Russian Historical Exceptionalism

In reaction to the failure of Europe's revolutionary wave, Herzen became disillusioned with the progressive direction of the Western historical trajectory altogether. Regarding "the question of the future of Europe," he wrote, "after studying it for ten years

112 Alexander Herzen, *Dnevnik* (17 May, 1844), quoted in Malia*, Alexander Herzen,* 312.

113 Herzen, "We Stand Accused," in *A Herzen Reader*, ed. and trans. Kathleen Parthe (1858; repr., Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 2012), 85.

114 Herzen, "Konstantin Sergeevich Aksakov," in *A Herzen Reader*, ed. and trans. Kathleen Parthe (1861; repr., Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 2012), 124–25.

115 Herzen, "At This Stage," in *A Herzen Reader*, ed. and trans. Kathleen Parthe (1863; repr., Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 2012), 84.

... I am bound to say that I see neither a speedy nor a happy outcome."[116] Reflecting on what he described as "the complete failure of the revolution in France, the unfortunate outcome of the revolution in Vienna, and the comic finale of the revolution in Berlin,"[117] Herzen shockingly turned to Russia, whose stubborn economic underdevelopment and unbudging Tsarist autocracy typically rendered the nation one of the least likely candidates for a revolutionary transformation. In doing so, he reinstated the Slavophile call for Russia to reject Western models of development and to instead cultivate a course of societal evolution allegedly particular to the nation. In this manner, Herzen proclaimed a uniquely-Russian path to socialism.

Reversing 'Backwardness'

In order to justify this apparent paradox of turning away from the advanced West and toward an underdeveloped Russia as the source of future progressive hopes, Herzen challenged the standard linear conception of historical development. Citing the failure of Western societies to reach the anticipated era of socialism, Herzen derived a peculiar theory on the exhaustion of a nation's capacity for further progressive evolution. Specifically, he argued that the countries of Western Europe had been leading the vanguard of global progress and the forward motion of universal history for too long and, as a result, have now "tired" out and hit a plateau.[118] Drained from an industrious past of constant progress and advancement, the West could go no further—it had retired from societal evolution: "Europe is close to 'satiation,'" Herzen declared, "and in her tiredness she tries to settle down and crystallize, finding her enduring social situation in *a petit-bourgeois way of life*."[119] In other words, the West had stagnated, and its present condition would be its final form. Bearing a "worn-out morality,"[120] it would "settle down for the rest of time."[121]

Thus, like the anti-Westernizer Slavophiles, Herzen was postulating a theory on the decline of Western civilization. However, unlike the Slavophiles, Herzen conceded that the West had in fact been exemplary up until this point. Indeed, it is *because* it had been so historically industrious that it was now hitting a limit for any further growth. Consequently, its rich history of progressive achievements had now become a "burden" weighing it down from making any new historical innovations: In a series of letters titled *From the Other Shore*, Herzen argued that "Europe would never create the 'new world' of democratic socialism" precisely due to "the burden of her past."[122] Through this logic, Herzen argued that the West was held back from

116 Alexander Herzen, "A Letter to I.S. Turgenev," in *A Source Book For Russian History from Early Times to 1917*, ed. Ralph T. Fisher, Alan D. Ferguson, and Andrew Lossky, trans. George Vernadsky, vol. 3 (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1972), 634.

117 Herzen, "On the Development of Revolutionary Ideas in Russia," in *A Herzen Reader*, ed. and trans. Kathleen Parthe (1851; repr., Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 2012), 22.

118 Herzen, "Robert Owen," in *Documentary History of Russian Thought: From the Enlightenment to Marxism*, trans. W.J. Leatherbarrow and D.C. Offord (1861; repr., Ann Arbor: Ardis, 1987), 157.

119 Ibid.

120 Herzen, "The Russian People and Socialism," in *Documentary History of Russian Thought: From the Enlightenment to Marxism*, trans. W.J. Leatherbarrow and D.C. Offord (1851; repr., Ann Arbor: Ardis, 1987), 147.

121 Herzen, "Robert Owen," 157.

122 Herzen, *Frantsiia i Italiia*, thirteenth letter (June 1849), quoted in Malia, *Alexander Herzen,* 374.

moving forward by the amount of previous progress it had accumulated: "your road has become so encumbered by the monuments of the past that you hardly are able to take one single step ahead."[123]

Though Russia's old teacher had become paralyzed, Russia need not also emulate its stasis, Herzen asserted; rather, the nation now ought to trailblaze its own way forward. In this manner, like the Slavophiles, Herzen sought to liberate Russia from Western tutelage: he asserted that "we are finished with pupil-like imitation ... we should be leaving Peter's school ... instead of parroting the words of others ... we ought to [find] ... something in the life of our own people, in our national character."[124] In this way, Herzen borrowed another page from Slavophile doctrine and proclaimed that Russia was not tied to the patterns of Western history: "Russia ... is a quite special world, with *her own* natural way of life, not European ... but Slavic."[125] Thus, Herzen resisted the universalist premises of historical development touted by his Westernizer comrades.

So, if the West had hit a wall in its attempts to reach the socialist stage of history, Russia, in occupying a separate trajectory, was therefore unaffected. On the contrary, Herzen reasoned that it was now time for Russia to lead the way forward to the socialist goal that the West was now failing to reach: "Now the West has been shaken, while we have emerged from our torpor; we ... advance, while it tries to hold its place."[126] Thus, when analyzing the prospects of evolving socialism, Herzen wrote that "There is no such possibility in the West," but "in Russia I see the possibility at hand."[127]

What was Herzen's reasoning behind such lofty claims that pronounced the end of Western historical growth and the dramatic rise of Russia? Whereas the Slavophiles had posited such theories to invalidate the Westernizer self-scorn of Russia lacking original historical achievements of its own—having supposedly appropriated all innovations from the West, to quote Chaadaev from earlier—Herzen actually embraced this humiliating premise for his nation. Indeed, he admitted that the West had always been more advanced than Russia, who was the student: "there can be no doubt that European forms of civic life were incomparably superior, not only to those of ancient Russia, but also to our present ones."[128]He also stomached the idea that Russia did not have its own long list of historical achievements like the West and thus had to learn everything from the Occident.[129]

However, it was precisely through this premise that Herzen extrapolated the opposite conclusions: "We have nothing legitimately ours ... We have received

123 A.I. Gertsen (Alexander Herzen), *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii i pisem* (Complete Collection of Works and Letters), ed. M.K. Lemke (Petrograd, 1919-1925), VIII (1854-1887), 151, quoted in Gerschenkron, *Economic Backwardness in Historical Perspective*, 168.

124 Alexander Herzen, "Russian German and German Russian," in *A Source Book For Russian History from Early Times to 1917*, ed. Ralph T. Fisher, Alan D. Ferguson, and Andrew Lossky, trans. George Vernadsky, vol. 3 (1859; repr., New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1972), 635–36.

125 Herzen, "A Letter to I.S. Turgenev," 635.

126 Herzen, "Russian German and German Russian," 635.

127 Herzen, "A Letter to I.S. Turgenev," 635.

128 Herzen, "Russian German and German Russian," 635.

129 Herzen, "The Russian People and Socialism," 147.

our education, our learning, at the end of a knout," but "We are independent *because* we have nothing."[130] In this way, he built atop the Westernizer critique of Russian 'backwardness' and flipped the implications of being an underdeveloped nation. Under this view, Russia "was a sort of moral *tabula rasa*" without the "debris of centuries" that "encumbered" the further growth of the over-developed West.[131]Thus, whereas Western civilization was now exhausted and "old," Russia would arise with "the freshness of youth," having all of its creative energies still in the tank.[132]

Herzen, like the Slavophiles, thereby transvaluated the image of Russia's 'backwardness' to now denote an *advantage* in attaining the very social forms which the West could not manifest itself. The West's developed condition was thus now seen as an impediment to further advancement, while Russia's lack thereof would now prove beneficial for its future progress:

> The stumbling blocks over which Europe has tripped scarcely exist for us. In the natural simplicity of our village life, in our uncertain and unsettled economic and judicial conceptions, in our vague sense of property rights, in our lack of a strong middle class .... we have an *advantage* over nations that have been completely formed and are exhausted.[133]

Here, Herzen highlighted Russia's lack of socioeconomic development, by Western standards of modern society, as a redeeming quality. But more specifically, he believed that this absence of modern infrastructure in Russia allowed the nation to preserve a particular social structure that would allow this 'lagging' society to surpass the advancements of Western Europe: "a social organization incomparably superior to that of the West," i.e., the peasant commune.[134]

Herzen theorized that the archaic peasant commune would serve as the vehicle through which Russia would manifest an exceptional road to socialism. He held that the peasant commune of Russia stood as "the basis of our national life" and one which embodied the principle of a "communistic possession of land."[135] Consequently, he believed that such a social structure had imbued the Russian people at-large with "a natural tendency toward socialist institutions."[136] In other words, Herzen argued that the ancient and rudimentary model of communalistic living, preserved by the peasants of Russia, constituted a foundation on which a socialist society could be more easily established. Explaining his logic, he clarified that these traditions of "*communal possession* presuppose a strong *communal organization* as the prime basis of the entire edifice of the [new] state which must evolve on these foundations."[137] Hence, Herzen proclaimed that the old peasant commune would be the spine on which the new

130 Herzen, "The Russian People and Socialism," 147.

131 Malia*, Alexander Herzen,* 307.

132 Herzen, "On the Development of Revolutionary Ideas in Russia," 23.

133 Herzen, "A Letter to I.S. Turgenev," 635.

134 Herzen, "Russian German and German Russian," 635.

135 Herzen, "A Letter to I.S. Turgenev," 635.

136 Herzen, "On the Development of Revolutionary Ideas in Russia," 23.

137 Herzen, "Russian German and German Russian," 636.

socialist society would be directly constructed: "on it will be built the Rus[sia] of the future!"[138]

In this way, Russia's premodern condition thereby more closely approximated a socialist paradigm than the modern West: Herzen boasted that the communal peasantry of Russia were therefore "nearer to the new social system by their way of life than all the European peoples."[139] The peasant commune, then, provided Russia with a unique highway to socialism—one which was unavailable to Western society: the Russian commune "constituted the soil in which a new social order may easily arise, a soil that ... scarcely exists in Europe."[140] Through the preservation of this ancient communal structure in Russia, Herzen alleged that the basis of the final form of societal evolution was already in place: "the rural commune in Russia [had] long ago raised a feature of socialist utopias to the status of a *fait accompli*."[141] In this view, again reminiscent of the Slavophile outlook, Herzen proclaimed, "what is only a hope for the West ... is already an accomplished fact for us."[142] In other words, the very underdevelopment of Russia, in retaining the primeval commune, had thus ironically positioned the nation closest to reaching what was deemed to be the most advanced state of societal development.

Accordingly, Herzen argued that Russia, in already possessing these proto-socialist structures through its old communal arrangements, therefore need not give them up to adopt the presently-more-modern institutions of the West—since the final goal of evolving socialism constituted a return to a communalistic society at the end, anyway. Such a step 'forward,' then, would seem pointless and counterintuitive if one's starting point was already closer to the final objective. As such, Herzen explained that for Russia to achieve socialism,

> we need not pass through those swamps which you have crossed; we need not exhaust our forces in the twilight of [your] political forms ... We have no reason to repeat the epic story of your emancipation ... Your labors and your sufferings are our lessons. History is very unjust. The latecomers receive instead of gnawed bones the [right of] precedence [at the table] of experience. All development of mankind is nothing else but [an expression of] that chronological ingratitude.[143]

138 Herzen, "Revolution in Russia," in *A Herzen Reader*, ed. and trans. Kathleen Parthe (1857; repr., Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 2012), 64.

139 Herzen, quoted in Georgi Plekhanov, *Selected Philosophical Works in Five Volumes*, trans. Julius Katzer (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1974), vol. 1, 130.

140 Herzen, "A Letter to I.S. Turgenev," 635.

141 Herzen, quoted in Aileen Kelly, *The Discovery of Chance: The Life and Thought of Alexander Herzen* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2016), 325.

142 Herzen, quoted in Alexander Polunov, *Russia in the Nineteenth Century: Autocracy, Reform, and Social Change, 1814- 1914*, ed. Thomas C. Owen and Zakharova (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2005), 68.

143 A.I. Gertsen (Alexander Herzen), *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii i pisem* (Complete Collection of Works and Letters), ed. M.K. Lemke (Petrograd, 1919-1925), VIII (1854-1887), 151, quoted in Gernschenkron, *Economic Backwardness in Historical Perspective*, 168. Gernschenkron's brackets.

In other words, Herzen reasoned that Russia did not have to first 'catch up' to Western Europe's level of development before setting its sights on a transition to the final stage of societal evolution. Specifically, he ridiculed the notion of having to relive all of the historical intermediary steps that Western societies had to process through on its way to finally deriving the concept of socialism as an ideal: "In our ideas ... in [our] literature ... we have lived through Western history, and it would hardly seem necessary for us to repeat in toto."[144] Here, Herzen touted the "latecomer" advantage that his trailing nation possessed— the fact that Russia could instantaneously adopt the originally-Western objective of achieving socialism without having to wait and endure through those intermediary periods of historical development themselves. Rather, Russia could aim at a direct socialist transition from its presently underdeveloped state. Thus, Herzen, when asking "[why] we should attempt to overtake [the West] over the same long road when we can take a *shortcut* instead," concluded that "Good pupils often *skip* classes."[145] This line of reasoning would later be inherited by the following chapter's thinkers, who sought an expedited road to socialism for Russia—one that skipped the capitalist intermediary stage of the West.

Anti-Liberal Politics

If Russia was indeed poised to make this direct leap into the socialist age, Herzen believed, then it also did not make sense to adopt the present political paradigm of Western Europe, i.e., its liberal- political institutions, which were otherwise viewed as a more progressive governing system than Russia's monarchical despotism. Here, the Slavophiles' pre-liberal principles converged with Herzen's post- liberal aims upon similar political conclusions—united in a firm rejection of liberalism's relevancy and desirability to Russia's peculiar situation.

Regarding the constitutional frameworks and legislative systems of the West typically associated with increased liberty, Herzen repudiated them all—not necessarily for being completely ineffective, but for falling short of the socialist standard of freedom which he believed was so imminent in Russia. For instance, on the topic of reforming the judicial system along the Western liberal standard, Herzen declared, "I agree that the daily brigandage of the Russian law-courts is even worse, but it does not follow from this that your laws and your courts are just."[146] Here, it becomes clear that Herzen, though acknowledging the greater degree of injustice perpetuated by the presently-'backward' institutions of Russia and even the relative superiority of Western ones, nevertheless refused to adopt such a step forward; he would only accept the maximum, which he believed would come through the socialism that Russia was allegedly on the brink of establishing.

Explaining his stubborn impatience, Herzen moaned, "we are too oppressed, too unfortunate to be satisfied with *half-freedom*," a term with which he used to describe the Western system of constitutional rights and liberties.[147] In fact, like the Slavophiles, Herzen deemed political rights to be "a disgusting lie,"

144 Herzen, "Russian German and German Russian," 635.

145 Ibid.

146 Herzen, "The Russian People and Socialism," 147-8.

147 Ibid.

even ridiculing the liberal motto of "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity" as failing to grant the people a de facto freedom.[148] In other words, Herzen rejected the utility of the Western norm of legal formalities and written code that only granted liberties *de jure*, thus echoing another Slavophile stance. Insisting that "the difference between your [Western] laws and our [Tsarist] decrees lies only in the formula which introduces them," Herzen did not believe that true social justice was attained until there was a just, socialist re-allocation of physical resources among the populace.[149]

Focused on liberating the agrarian peasant masses, Herzen additionally warned that a liberal paradigm would help to bring about the rise and empowerment of a bourgeois social class, as seen in the West, which would constitute another oppressing force over the working classes and thus delay their liberation further: "All efforts to create in our midst an urban bourgeoise in the Western sense ... result in empty and absurd consequences."[150] In this way, he concluded that "We already bear too many chains to fetter ourselves with new ones voluntarily."[151] Thus, Herzen believed that a liberal era of Russian history would only excessively delay the complete eradication of social inequities and injustices that could otherwise be achieved via a more direct path of societal evolution. This stubborn avoidance of intermediary political improvements, in addition to seeking to prevent the development of a 'liberal bourgeoise' in Russia, would become central doctrinal tenets among the later thinkers of this intellectual genealogy.

Herzen also rejected the liberal approach toward land-ownership laws, i.e., private property, as incompatible with the superior land-sharing practices preserved by the communal Russian peasantry. While abroad in Europe, Herzen recorded his observation that the Western sense of property was historically absent among Russian peasants, thereby echoing Slavophile arguments. In one of his letters from France, Herzen poetically shunned the Western conception of an individualistic possession of land as a foreign notion to his nation's people:

> One thing offends the eye and wrenches the Slavic soul: high stone walls, encrusted with broken glass, separate the gardens, the *potagers*, and sometimes even the fields. They represent a certain immortality of exclusive possession, a certain insolence of the right of property.[152]

In contrast, he praised the Russian peasantry, for "in their eyes the land was still common property, the *res nullius* to which every man has a right."[153] Here, Herzen again emphasized how Russia allegedly possessed a unique institution uncorrupted by such Occidental practices: "Our peculiarity, our originality is the village [commune] with its communal self-governance, with the peasants ... with the absence of personal land ownership..."[154]

148 Herzen, "The Russian People and Socialism," 148.

149 Ibid.

150 Herzen, "Revolution in Russia," 63.

151 Herzen, The Russian People and Socialism, 148.

152 Herzen, *Frantsiia i Italiia*, fifth letter, quoted in Malia*, Alexander Herzen,* 366.

153 Herzen, "A Letter to I.S. Turgenev," 635.

154 Herzen, "Forward! Forward!," in *A Herzen Reader*, ed. and trans. Kathleen Parthe (1856; repr., Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University

Political Praxis

In spurning the Western blueprint of political progression into liberalism, Herzen instead sought for Russian society to model its future around, what he believed to be, the pre-existing foundations of a socialist polity: the peasant commune. Untouched by the scourge of liberal politics, the agrarian peasantry had purportedly preserved the basis of cultivating a communist future. Accordingly, he urged his fellow Russian intellectuals to find the correct formula of societal evolution not from the modern-political theorists of Western Europe, but from the illiterate villagers of the domestic Russian countryside. In this spirit, Herzen commanded the revolutionary youth of Russia: "Where then are you to go ...? *To the people! Toward the people!* That is your place ...!"[155]Like the Slavophiles, Herzen used the term 'the people' to specifically denote the peasantry. In this way, he similarly instructed the Russian intelligentsia to return to the un-westernized agrarian masses: to "live with the common folk" and "take [up] the work of social reconstruction together with them."[156] Just as the Slavophiles had mourned, Herzen rued how his intellectual social stratum had alienated itself from the broader populace: in describing "the terrible result of the complete rupture between national Russia and Europeanized Russia," he noted how "Every living link had been broken between these two parties and they had to be renewed."[157] Herzen poignantly described the tragedy of this social divide that resulted the Westernization of the Russian intelligentsia class:

> For us [the intelligentsia], brought up away from home, that tie had weakened. A French governess had charge of us and we learned later on that our mother was not she, but a downtrodden peasant woman.[158]

In this mission of returning to "the people," Herzen sought "to unite the two Russias [sic] between whom Peter's razor has passed."[159] Here, Herzen thus inherited, from the Slavophiles, what was originally a conservative reaction against the Westernization of the Russian intellectual society; in radicalizing these ideas into a socialist philosophy, Herzen laid the roots of a revolutionary movement whose political methodology and praxis was centrally premised on a reliance upon the uneducated masses to realize the intelligentsia's utopian visions. This notion would be passed down as a core—and later, problematic—principle of the following generation's thinkers in the next chapter.

Ultimately, Herzen, like the Slavophiles, believed that a successful realization of the envisioned utopia—in his case, the direct establishment of a socialist society in Russia—would be achieved by standardizing the commune model across the nation: "[to] spread the customs of the rural commune to all estates,

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Press, 2012), 49.

155 Herzen, "The Colossus Awakens!," in *A Source Book For Russian History from Early Times to 1917*, ed. Ralph T. Fisher, Alan D. Ferguson, and Andrew Lossky, trans. George Vernadsky, vol. 3 (1861; repr., New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1972), 636.

156 Herzen, "Revolution in Russia," 63

157 Herzen, "On the Development of Revolutionary Ideas in Russia," 9.

158 Herzen, "Konstantin Sergeevich Aksakov" 125.

159 Herzen, "Revolution in Russia," 63.

cities, and the entire nation."[160] Again echoing the Slavophiles, Herzen emphasized the self-governing nature and local autonomy of the peasant commune system: "each rural commune in Russia is a little republic, self-governing for its internal affairs," he claimed.[161] In this way, Herzen similarly reached a firm stance against the prospect of a central authority infringing upon the local self- administration of each community.

But perhaps more so than the Slavophiles, Herzen took this notion of devolving power to a more extreme extent—often approaching conclusions that appeared to renounce the institution of a state altogether. Indeed, he believed that the commune represented the freedoms of a "pre-governmental state and condition."[162] Furthermore, he conceptualized the exemplary peasant inhabitants of the communes "as apart from and hostile to the state."[163] In fact, he opposed the prospect of a 'liberal revolution,' i.e., replacing an autocracy with a constitutional democracy, to avoid the continuation of another form of formal authority, no matter how reformed it may be: "Russia will never make a revolution with the aim of doing away with Tsar Nicholas only to replace him with tsar-members of parliament, tsar-judges and tsar-policemen."[164] Regarding such anti-statist principles, it is worth noting that Herzen worked with the French thinker Pierre Proudhon, often known as the "father of anarchism,"[165] on the latter's Parisian newspaper, *La Voix du Peuple*.[166] Overall, this hostility toward centralized authority would be passed down to the following generation's socialist movement that Herzen inspired. However, this version of anti-liberalism would eventually undergo deep revisions by the end of the following chapter, when the political logistics of the revolutionary process was strategized amid new challenges.

Conclusion

Peter the Great's campaign to Westernize the Russian nobility created an intellectual class deeply conscious of their nation's underdevelopment vis-à-vis Western Europe. As philosophies of history became popularized in the 19th century, crucial questions emerged around what was to be done about Russian society's persistent 'backwardness' and the nation's evolutionary trajectory. The Westernizers surmised the need to follow in the footsteps of Western European development, modernizing Russia along the historical precedents and societal models demonstrated in the Occident. However, the Slavophiles arose to oppose this linear view of progress in which Russia forever trailed behind the West. Instead, they defended Russia's underdevelopment as rather indicative of a non-Western historical path—one that would lead to a superior form of societal freedom: a communalistic society predicated on the ancient peasant commune. It is within this anti-Western, conservative milieu of the 1840s that a peculiar ideology of Russian historical exceptionalism began—one that will be traced into

160 Herzen, "On the Development of Revolutionary Ideas in Russia," 24.

161 Herzen, quoted in Ely, *Russian Populism,* 45.

162 Herzen, "Revolution in Russia," 64.

163 Herzen, quoted in Ely, *Russian Populism,* 47.

164 Herzen, "The Russian People and Socialism," 148.

165 See Daniel Guerin, Anarchism: From Theory to Practice (New York: *Monthly Review* Press, 1989).

166 Judith E. Zimmerman, "Herzen, Proudhon and '*La Voix Du Peuple*': A Reconsideration," Russian History 11, no. 4 (Winter 1984), 422-450.

the Russian Revolution of 1917. A contemporary of the Slavophiles, *Alexander Herzen,* borrowed and integrated these originally-conservative ideas into a radical framework forecasting Russia's unique road to a socialist future. Arguing for the historical advantages of underdevelopment, Herzen posited the notion that Russia's lack of modernization had instead positioned the 'backward' nation to be closer to attaining the highest form of society than the advanced West. Specifically, through Russia's preservation of the old peasant commune, the nation thus possessed a collectivistic model of living on which it could directly evolve a socialist paradigm.

In believing that it was precisely their nation's 'backwardness' that allowed this exceptional road of development, both the Slavophiles and Herzen repudiated Western Europe's model of modern political liberalism as a counterintuitive turn for their society's trajectory. Believing that the desired political model to aspire to was instead held by the communal peasantry, they preached a return of the intellectuals to the agrarian masses as the method of moving forward and realizing the vision. Further, in emphasizing the commune's self-sufficiency and self-governing practices, they concluded that the ideal Russian societal model, based on this communal structure, would also lack the need for centralized authority.

But ultimately, this grandiose faith in an exceptional course of historical progression was premised upon a romanticized perception of the Russian masses as embodying the values and foundations of the perfect society that these intellectuals imagined and hence sought to attain through them. Indeed, Khomiakov confidently defended his abstract evaluations of the communal populace without citing evidence, claiming that, "There is no need to look for proof—anyone who searches his conscience will admit that I am right."[167] Similarly, Aksakov held that his propositions "require no proof—for a close look at ... the Russian people as they are today will suffice."[168] In reality, the Slavophiles were gentry aristocrats who never lived among the agrarian peasantry.[169] Herzen was also outside of Russia when he began to formulate these theories and remained abroad until his death.[170] Consequently, the viability of their prescriptions for the illiterate masses to lead the educated intelligentsia into the utopia of the latter's dreams would precipitate a logistical crisis when the revolutionary inheritors of these ideas sought to develop a practical strategy for actualizing such visions in the next chapter.

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167 Khomiakov, "On Humboldt," 223.

168 Aksakov, "On the Internal State of Russia," 234.

169 Michael Hughes, "'Independent Gentlemen': The Social Position of the Moscow Slavophiles and Its Impact on Their Political Thought," *The Slavonic and East European Review* 71, no. 1 (January 1993): 66-88.

170 Martin Malia, *Alexander Herzen and the Birth of Russian Socialism: 1812-1855* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1961), 134.

Chapter Two
The Narodniks: Old Dreams, New Realities

"It was a revelation, rather than a propaganda ... It was a powerful cry which ... summoned the ardent to the great work of the redemption of the country and of humanity. And the ardent, hearing this cry, arose, overflowing with sorrow and indignation ... with a joy, an enthusiasm, a faith, such as one experienced only once in a life, and when lost one never found again ... It was not a political movement. It rather resembled a religious movement ... this movement did not and could not bear contact with the stern and horrible reality."[171]

- Sergei Kravchinsky

ON THE FOURTH of April 1866, Dmitry Karakozov restlessly stood by the gilded gates of the Summer Garden in St. Petersburg. The twenty-six-year-old, a twice-expelled student of noble birth, was waiting to see the Tsar—to kill him. When the monarch finally strolled out of his royal estate to greet an enthusiastic crowd of his subjects, Karakozov emerged with a pistol. Yet just before the shot was fired, a peasant courageously rushed forward to shove the armed assailant, diverting the bullet that would have marked the first regicide in Russian history. As more peasant witnesses converged to defend their beloved ruler, Karakozov cried out in disbelief: "Fools! I did this for you."[172]

Karakozov was typical of his milieu: an intellectual from an aristocratic background who came to scorn his own class as the oppressors of the downtrodden masses. Like the thinkers of the previous chapter, the revolutionaries of this era continued to pin their grand visions of a seismic transformation of Russian society on the alleged virtues and potentialities of the rural peasantry on whose behalf they spoke, wrote, and philosophized. During his trial, when asked why he cultivated such murderous ambitions, Karakozov replied, "Your Highness, you offended the peasants! ... you swindled the people."[173] Yet, 'the people,' whom the intelligentsia had upheld as the cornerstone of their revolutionary vision, were disarming the subversive endeavor launched in their name.

Five months later, Karakozov was sentenced to death by hanging. However, the way in which his attempt on the Tsar's life was thwarted by the very subjects of his radical theories foreshadowed a fundamental issue of the Russian revolutionary movement that would arise at the end of this decade. Found in Kara-

171 Sergei M. Kravchinsky, *Underground Russia: Revolutionary Profiles and Sketches from Life*, 2nd ed. (1882; repr., London: Sagwan Press, 2015), 25–26.

172 Claudia Verhoeven, *The Odd Man Karakozov: Imperial Russia, Modernity, and the Birth of Terrorism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2009), 177.

173 Ibid.

kozov's pocket, that day, was a hand-written manifesto addressed to "my beloved simple Russian people," whom he sought to save and liberate.[174] In it, he wrote "I have looked for the reason for all this [suffering] in books, and I have found it."[175] Here, Karakozov exemplified the separation between the abstract philosophies of the intelligentsia and the realities of the illiterate masses whom they claimed to represent. This divide between the visionaries of revolutionary change and the actual subjects of their theories would become increasingly exposed over the following decades, forming the backdrop behind the evolution of the inherited ideas in this chapter.

Context: The Abolition of Serfdom and a Changing Russia

Karakozov was specifically acting on the unsatisfactory results of the long-awaited abolition of serfdom, enacted five years earlier by the very sovereign whom he tried to murder. In 1861, Tsar Alexander II issued the Emancipation Manifesto, which formally brought an end to Russian serfdom, legally freeing over 23 million peasants who had been generationally tied in bondage for centuries.[176] The revolutionary writer Peter Kropotkin, in his memoirs on the day of the emancipation, quoted Herzen: "Alexander Nikolaevich [Tsar Alexander II], why did you not die on that day? Your name would have been transmitted in history as that of a hero."[177] In the wake of this apparent triumph for progressives, it became clear that the long-awaited liberation of the peasantry had failed to bring them real freedom. Above all, this so-called "Great Reform" immediately resulted in devastating economic consequences for the people it had claimed to emancipate. Specifically, the peasants were heavily burdened by mandatory retribution fees called "redemption payments" and new taxes, coupled with a loss of sufficient land to farm on.[178] Consequently, this agrarian populace was subjected to a harsher state of suffering, which would not be addressed by the government over the following two decades.[179]

It is within this setting of a worsened oppression of the masses, exacerbated by governmental reform, that the ideas of the previous chapter grew into the basis of a mass revolutionary-socialist movement: "Narodism"—also known as "Narodnichestvo," whose followers are called the "Narodniks." The movement's name was derived from the Russian word "*narod*," which translates to "the people," a term that specifically connotated "the working people" of Russia, who, in this era, "consisted almost entirely of peasants."[180] Accordingly, the movement is also frequently translated into English as "Populism," whose followers

174 Geoffrey A. Hosking, *Russia: People and Empire, 1552-1917* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, n.d.), 347.

175 Ibid.

176 Arthur Mee, J.A. Hammerton, and Arthur D. Innes, *Harmsworth History of the World*, vol. 7 (London: Carmelite House, 1907), 5193.

177 Peter Kropotkin, "Memoirs of a Revolutionist," in *A Source Book For Russian History from Early Times to 1917*, ed. Ralph T. Fisher, Alan D. Ferguson, and Andrew Lossky, trans. George Vernadsky, vol. 3 (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1972), 604.

178 Vladimir P. Tomoshenko, "The Agrarian Policies of Russia and the Wars," in *Readings in Russian History*, ed. Sidney Harcave, vol. II: The Modern Period (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1962), 8.

179 Ibid., 11.

180 Richard Pipes, "Russian Marxism and Its Populist Background: The Late Nineteenth Century," Russian Review 19, no. 4 (October 1960): 328; Pipes, "Narodnichestvo," 442-43.

were known as "the Populists."[181] Though their identity was centered around the rural peasantry, the Narodnik movement and its doctrines were entirely formed by the intellectual class.[182] As such, the Russian philosopher Nikolai Berdyaev recounted the Narodnik movement as "a pure product of the intelligentsia."[183]

In light of the failure of the emancipation policy, the Narodniks were furious on behalf of the downtrodden people whom they claimed to represent. Yet 'the people' themselves did not elicit the same reaction. Kropotkin, continuing in his memoirs, noted,

> Where were the uprisings which had been predicted? ... With their usual good sense, the peasants had ... accepted the conditions imposed upon them, although these conditions were heavy ... They knew perfectly well how difficult it would be to pay the redemption tax for the land, which was in reality an indemnity to the nobles in lieu of the obligations of serfdom ... they accepted the ruinous charges.[184]

Thus, just like the story of Karakozov, the intelligentsia's visions did not always align with the sentiments of the people who constituted the basis of their dreams. Historian Christopher Ely describes how "Russian Populists [Narodniks] constantly imagined and reimaged the *narod* ('the people'/peasantry) in ways that suited their own needs."[185] Moreover, the revolutionary writer Nikolai Morozov claimed that the Narodnik leaders "turned the peasantry into a god,"[186] while intellectual historian James Billington characterized the movement as "a new Christianity."[187]

Additionally, the abolition of serfdom initiated a gradual transformation of the Russian socioeconomic landscape that would see the ideas of the previous generation grow increasingly unfeasible, impractical, and anachronistic apropos the original setting in which they were first formulated. Before 1861, Russia truly lacked nearly all of the hallmarks of the modern industrial-capitalist West. Such a paradigm appeared plausibly out of reach, while the agrarian communal structure of the nation showed no signs of decay. Russia, unlike the West, did not even have "a real credit system" nor "any capital market" until the emancipation of the serfs.[188] Historian Roger Portal concluded that "We can establish the fact of a rapid and massive change in technological development only after 1860," and the resulting social transformations "was the result of the law liberating the serfs and took place after 1861."[189] Specifically, there was then a rapid expansion of railroads, an influx of foreign capital, and the con-

181 This thesis will use the term "Narodnik" and "Narodism," as opposed to "Populist" and "Populism"—though synonymous and interchangeable—to avoid the potentially-misleading connotations which the latter terms hold outside of the specific Russian socialist movement's context.

182 Lazar Volin, "The Russian Peasant and Serfdom," *Agricultural History* 17, no. 1 (January 1943): 41.

183 Nikolai Berdyaev, quoted in Ely, *Russian Populism,* 4.

184 Kropotkin, "Memoirs of a Revolutionist," 605.

185 Ely, *Russian Populism,* 4.

186 Nikolai Morozov, *Povesti moei zhizni* (Moscow: Akademiia Nauk, 1947), 91, quoted in Ely, 88.

187 See James H. Billington, *Mikhailovsky and Russian Populism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1958).

188 Roger Portal, "The Problem of an Industrial Revolution in Russia in the Nineteenth Century," in *Readings in Russian History*, ed. Sidney Harcave, vol. II: The Modern Period (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1962), 25.

189 Ibid., 24-26.

struction of new networks connecting the once-isolated agricultural regions with the big cities amid an expansion of the commercial market.[190] Moreover, Portal notes, the emancipation,

> ... freed the labor market, established new legal relationships in production, and opened the way for the emergence of a genuine proletariat ... industrial development [and] the accelerated expansion of the consumers' market, [which] ended the limited market, almost exclusively peasant, that had kept the social system in a relatively passive condition.[191]

Thus, during this era, the peasant commune began to indicate its first signs of decline as Russian society appeared to be entering an era of increasing modernization akin to the Western European experience, which the theorists of the previous chapter had believed Russia would skip over. Thus, the idealized communal instincts and values of the peasants, who were now economically freed from bondage—and their commune, which was now falling under the stresses of capitalist forces—would have to stand the test of time.

Yet significantly, these modernizing conditions would not fully pick up until the last two decades of the century. As economic historian Alexander Gerschenkron noted, "The emancipation of the peasantry was no doubt a decisive step in widening the tension and thereby facilitating subsequent economic development;" however, this "did not lead immediately to a period of rapid industrialization," which would not come to Russia until the mid-1880s and 1890s.[192] This thus left the era in an awkward position in which the material conditions of the nation were still distanced from a capitalist paradigm of Western modernity enough for the revolutionary theorists to continue to dream of a historically-exceptional, direct transition to socialism. However, at the same time, the gradual rise in signs of socioeconomic advancement would begin accumulating enough doubts within the movement to eventually necessitate revisions to the political praxis of the old ideals. In short, this post-serfdom era, in which the Narodnik intelligentsia wrote, constituted an ambivalent setting. As such, this chapter will trace the profound continuities of the ideas of the Slavophiles and Herzen within the Narodnik movement—in addition to tracking the ideological turns and adaptations made in the wake of increasingly sober assessments of shifting Russian realities and the true nature of 'the people' whom the intellectual class had idealized from afar.

190 Tomoshenko, "The Agrarian Policies of Russia and the Wars," 10.

191 Portal, "The Problem of an Industrial Revolution in Russia in the Nineteenth Century," 26-7.

192 Gerschenkron, *Economic Backwardness in Historical Perspective*, 156.

‘Classical’ Narodism

Despite the watershed moment of government reform coming with the emancipation of the serfs in 1861, the following years were marked by a firm Tsarist crackdown on radical activity.[193] Nevertheless, by the end of the decade, the ideas from the previous chapter soon concretized into a distinct ideology and exploded into a mass revolutionary moment:

> Questions long since broached—for example, the place of the commune in Russian life, the nature of the Russian people and Russia’s historical path—now assumed greater prominence and a new importance. It is in this period that revolutionary [Narodism], in its classical form, may be said to have taken shape.[194]

Most historians agree that the ‘classical’ age of the Narodnik movement emerged at the end of the 1860s and flourished into the mid-1870s.[195] Drawing from the writings of the most influential thinkers and leaders of this movement, the following sections examine the continuity and change in thought within the inherited notion of Russian historical exceptionalism, specifically through the continued themes of 1) Reversing ‘Backwardness’ and 2) Anti-Liberal Politics.

Maintaining Russian Historical Exceptionalism

Between the late 1860s and the early 1870s—when the Narodnik movement emerged—the works of Karl Marx were beginning to gradually disseminate among the Russian intelligentsia. Marx had emphatically declared, in his magnum opus *Capital*, that “The country that is more developed industrially only shows, to the less developed, the image of its own future!”[196] With the increasing spread of Western Europe’s industrial-capitalist paradigm into surrounding lands, Marx began to confidently assume that the history of the West stood as the universal template according to which all other underdeveloped societies, like Russia, would soon follow. In fact, this conclusion followed from a passage in which Marx mocked Alexander Herzen’s theory that the Russian condition was unique and exceptional from the Western blueprint of historical progression. Marx claimed that Russia, too, would soon succumb to the Occidental tide of history.[197] Reacting against the specter of Western historical universalism, the works of the Narodnik writers Nikolai Mikhailovsky and Vasily Bervi-Flerovsky reveal a deep inheritance of ideas from three decades prior.

After publishing his magnum opus in 1869, Nikolai Mikhailovsky became “the most influential” Narodnik writer of this era.[198] His journal *Notes of the*

193 W.J. Leatherbarrow and D.C. Offord, *A Documentary History of Russian Thought: From the Enlightenment to Marxism* (Ann Arbor: Ardis, 1987), 247.

194 Ibid.

195 See Walicki, *The Controversy Over Capitalism*, 26; Ely, *Russian Populism,* 71; Leatherbarrow and Offord, *A Documentary History of Russian Thought*, 248.

196 Karl Marx, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*, vol. 1 (Chicago: Charles H. Kerr & Company, n.d.), 13.

197 See Shanin, *Late Marx and the Russian Road*, 57.

198 Ely, *Russian Populism,* 87.

Fatherland "became the center of an intellectual and cultural renaissance" of Russian socialist thought.[199] Interestingly, unlike the thinkers of the previous generation, Mikhailovsky's writings appeared to reflect the start of growing concerns over the viability of Russia's exceptional road, in light of modernizing conditions. Rather than immediately and completely dismissing Marx, Mikhailovsky indeed pondered that "one should thoroughly assess whether the sort of historical process that Marx described is truly avoidable or not."[200] Now the question of Western universalism vis-à-vis Russia's historical road had begun to acquire its first underlying doubts and uncertainty: "And so, where do we go? ...," Mikhailovsky wrote, in his journalistic notes of 1872, "Shall we follow in the footsteps of Western civilization?"[201] He began to acknowledge that the Western path of industrialization and capitalism was now a possibility in Russia: "just raise the tariff and dissolve the village commune ... Industry then would grow like a mushroom, as in England."[202] However, he ultimately reaffirmed, at-length, the historically-exceptional vision of Russian development first proposed by the Slavophiles and made socialist by Herzen. In fact, Mikhailovsky published an article critiquing Marx's assertions of Western historical universalism and the inevitability of Russian industrialization, instead insisting that his country possessed "a different path of development from that which Western Europe has followed."[203]

Vasily Bervi-Flerovsky (1829-1918) was a Russian sociologist and economist who "is now little remembered and receives less attention" than the other Narodnik thinkers.[204] Like Mikhailovsky, Bervi-Flerovsky wrestled with the same question regarding the road ahead for his nation's course of societal evolution. His major work, *The Condition of the Working Class in Russia*, published in 1869—the same year as Mikhailovsky's magnum opus—helped to initiate the Narodnik school of thought by providing a basis of economic grounding behind the ideas that were now concretizing into a movement.[205] Historian Andrzej Walicki describes him as "the most important economic publicist" of the Narodnik movement "of the [eighteen-]seventies."[206] W.J. Leatherbarrow and D.C. Offord claim that his work "seems to have affected [Narodnik] revolutionaries more deeply than any other work with the exception of Lavrov" (the latter of whom will be discussed later in this chapter).[207] Specifically, Bervi-Flerovksy's study detailed the growing concerns of the deprivation of the countryside that

199 Leatherbarrow and Offord, *A Documentary History of Russian Thought*, 247.

200 Nikolai Mikhailovsky, quoted in Shanin, *Late Marx and the Russian Road*, 57.

201 Nikolai Mikhailovsky, "Literary and Journalistic Notes of 1872," in *A Source Book For Russian History from Early Times to 1917*, ed. Ralph T. Fisher, Alan D. Ferguson, and Andrew Lossky, trans. George Vernadsky, vol. 3 (1872; repr., New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1972), 652.

202 Ibid., 653.

203 Nikolai Mikhailovsky, quoted in Karl Marx, "Letter From Marx to the Editor of the Otecestvenniye Zapiski," trans. Dona Torr, *International Publishers*, 1968. For the original text, see N.K. Mikhailovskii, *Polnoe Sobranie Sochinenii*, vol. 4 (St. Petersburg, 1909), 167-8, 171.

204 Leatherbarrow and Offord, *A Documentary History of Russian Thought*, 248.

205 Ibid.

206 Walicki, *The Controversy Over Capitalism*, 110.

207 Leatherbarrow and Offord, *A Documentary History of Russian Thought*, 248.

had been developing since the abolition of serfdom, a trend which hinted at a potential rise of a capitalist economy. In fact, even Karl Marx admitted that this book by Bervi-Flerovsky was "the first work to tell the truth about Russian economic conditions."[208] However, Bervi-Flerovsky's subjective interpretations and prescriptions, after his objective statistics, would amount to a fundamental rejection of Marx's prognosis for Russia's future: seeking to explain away this prospect of a Westernization of Russian conditions while stubbornly defending Russia's allegedly-unique historical trajectory into socialism, Bervi-Flerovsky set the tone for the Narodnik movement. Rather than accepting a capitalist future, he insisted that Russia should refuse Western precedents and go its own way:

> [We] may reason thus: Europe has passed down that same path along which we are traveling, it has lived through the same phases; if we go in its tracks we shall get ourselves out of trouble in the same [way] that it has done; why should we wring our hands and rack our brains over the laying down of a new road when there is an old, well-trodden path. *Thus we have reasoned up until now ... we were constantly afraid of taking ... a step too quickly.*[209]

Here, Bervi-Flerovsky critiqued the Westernizer mentality that had prevailed up until now: the way in which Russia had been blindly and cautiously following the West's footsteps as a safe historical model to emulate, afraid to embark on a more original and expedited course.

Overall, these Narodniks reaffirmed the notion that Russia possessed a non-Western trajectory of societal evolution. In a remarkably similar manner to Herzen and the Slavophiles, they appeared to explain this notion by reversing the implications of their nation's 'backwardness' and underdevelopment to instead signify superior historical outcomes. Further, in sharing such views, these thinkers additionally reached anti-liberal conclusions—as well as the accompanying political formula of seeking a return to the peasant communal model.

Reversing 'Backwardness'

Mikhailovsky

Mikhailovsky sought to clarify how Russia could feasibly evade Western modernity, bypassing the historical stage of capitalism, and directly transition to socialism: "there is another way" of arriving at a socialist society, he claimed, which "consists in the development of those relationships of labor and ownership that are *already* in existence, albeit in a very crude and primitive form."[210] Specifically, Mikhailovsky was referring to his nation's retention of the "primitive" peasant-communal structure of agrarian Russia. Instead of eradicating it in the name of Western modernization, he, like Herzen, saw it as providing the basis of directly constructing a socialist society. In other words, in the spirit of the Slavophiles, Russia's underdevelop-

208 K. Marx and F. Engels, Correspondence 1846-1895. A Selection with Commentary and Notes, trans. Donna Torr (London, 1936), 282-3.

209 Vasily Bervi-Flerovsky, "*The Condition of the Working Class in Russia*," in *Documentary History of Russian Thought: From the Enlightenment to Marxism*, trans. W.J. Leatherbarrow and D.C. Offord (1869; repr., Ann Arbor: Ardis, 1987), 256.

210 Mikhailovsky, "Literary and Journalistic Notes of 1872," 653.

ment ought not denote a symptom of trailing behind a single Western-centric universal historical roadmap, but should rather indicate a separate way forward—precisely through the retention of its underdeveloped features.

Mikhailovsky thus set out to rationalize and justify his defense of Russia's underdeveloped condition vis-à-vis the Western conception of linear historical progression. Like the earlier thinkers, he reversed the conventional implications of societal 'backwardness' apropos progress and advancement. In his magnum opus *What is Progress?*, Mikahilovsky noted that the Western-European view of progress consisted of society's ever-increasing complexity, specialization, and division of labor. Such a process, he argued, actually constituted the decay of "integral individuals," i.e., creating a more advanced society at the cost of the "wholeness" of the human being.[211] In this way, such perceived societal advancements instead functioned to destroy the fullness of a one's original and natural freedom. But what is true progress, then? Mikhailovsky answered: it is "the gradual approach to[ward] the integral individual, to the fullest possible and most diversified division of labor among *man's* organs, and the least possible division of labor among *men*."[212] Here, Mikhailovsky appears to have unconsciously borrowed Slavophile concepts: specifically, the idealization of the "wholeness" and "integrality" of "pre- individualized" society. In other words, this position echoed the Slavophile defense of primitive communalism against modern individualism. Moreover, the ideal of a pre-modern "wholeness," to Mikhailovsky, was specifically embodied and preserved by the Russian peasant commune, in which enclaves of "undivided labor" still remained.[213] Through this logic, Russia's societal underdevelopment was redeemed as virtuous and desirable.

In portraying Western progress and advancement as constituting a societal decline and human retrogression, Mikhailovsky, like the Slavophiles, thereby situated his image of utopia in the past:

> We see today ... a surprisingly rapid decline of ... doctrines which used to treat these principles as the foundation of the whole edifice of society ... This looking backward ... to the more remote past ... [where] outlived forms of social life are being discovered, and social forms which are outliving their time are recommended to be preserved.[214]

But to reconcile his idealization of the past with his goal of a socialist future—a backward-looking romanticism with a forward-looking objective—Mikhailovsky devised a seemingly-paradoxical argument, which held that 'backwardness' more closely approximated the most advanced ideal. To do this, he explained societal stages of development in a dichotomous assessment between "different *levels*" versus "different *types* of development."[215] Explaining his formula, Mikhailovsky stated: "A certain *type* of development may be superior

211 Nikolai Mikhailovsky, "What Is Progress?," in *Readings in Russian Philosophical Thought: Philosophy of History* (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1977), 112.

212 Ibid., 124.

213 Walicki, *The Controversy Over Capitalism*, 52.

214 Mikhailovsky, quoted in Walicki, *The Controversy Over Capitalism*, 57.

215 Mikhailovsky, "Literary and Journalistic Notes of 1872," 653.

to another, and yet may be on a lower *level*."[216] Decoding this abstract principle, Mikhailovsky explained that Russia, less societally developed than the industrialized and capitalist West, indeed belonged to a lower "level" of development; yet its preservation of old communal forms saw it embody a superior "type" of society, i.e., possessing the same "type" of social structure as the highest societal form: the communal world of socialism. In this manner, Mikhailovsky again redefined the notion of Russian 'backwardness' to instead denote superiority over the modern West, an assertion deeply reminiscent of the Slavophiles and Herzen:

> If one considers, for instance, the *level of economic development* in England and in Russia, preference must be given to the former, but this will not prevent me from regarding the English economic system as the lower *type*.[217]

Additionally, beyond such abstract formulations, Mikhailovsky also articulated this transvaluation of Russian underdevelopment in the material terms of an easier path toward a socialist transition:

> The labor problem in Europe bears a revolutionary character, since there it requires the *transfer* of the means of production into the hands of the workers, the expropriation of the present owners. In Russia the labor problem is a conservative one, inasmuch as what is needed here is merely the *retention* of the means of production in the hands of the workers, a guarantee of the [communal] property rights of the present owners.[218]

Here, Mikhailovsky illustrated how the road to a socialist society was far simpler in Russia, where the land was already collectivistically shared—as opposed to Western Europe, where the populace, expropriated by capitalism, would have to essentially reinvent the wheel of communalistic arrangements. Thus, Mikhailovsky concluded that the modern developmental phases of the West need not be repeated by Russia—for whom it would constitute an excessive and counterintuitive step—given the more expedited path to socialism that this nation exceptionally possessed in its still-'backward' condition.[219]

Beryi-Flerovsky

Though more renowned for his economic analyses, Bervi-Flerovsky nevertheless revealed nationalistic sentiments, reminiscent of the Slavophiles, in how he argued for a reversal of the prevailing image of a 'backward' Russia lagging behind a more advanced West. Rather than merely declaring an independent path of societal evolution, Bervi-Flerovsky revealed that he was deeply concenred about his nation's perpetually-trailing position relative to Western Europe: since Russia, until now, has only progressed by means of assimilating the Occident's innovations:

> If we continue to go down the path which we have been on up until now, then we are inevitably bound always to remain at the tail-end of

216 Ibid.

217 Ibid.

218 Ibid.

219 Ibid. 654.

> the civilized world; if I follow a person and go timidly step after step down the track he has left then I shall without any doubt always remain behind.[220]

Thus, the socialist Bervi-Flerovsky appears to have inherited the originally-Slavophile insistence for Russia to not only pursue a different timeline of development from the West, but to also seek to surpass it:

> As soon as we find enough courage to make up our minds to do this [and] accept our destiny with dignity and take our path without turning aside, with an open, fearless gaze, we shall see that we have not lost the prospect of not only putting our affairs in order but even playing a great historical role.[221]

Here, it is important to note that Bervi-Flerovsky had to avoid the unprintable word of 'socialism,' which he implied as Russia's "great historical role," i.e., contributing a new societal paradigm to world history.[222] To fulfill such an envisioned role, Russia, in other words, would have to take its own unique historical path and reach the socialist stage *first*, before the West.[223] Thus, like the Slavophiles and Herzen, Bervi-Flerovsky sought to flip the notion of Russia's developmental inferiority and temporal tardiness by instead insisting that Russia would assume a historically-leading position, rather than remain mere pupils of Western Europe. This originally-Slavophile mentality in which 'the last shall be first' was thus remarkably explicit in Bervi-Flerovsky's work that was otherwise known for its economic contributions.

Additionally, Bervi-Flerovsky, in seeking to reverse the image of Russian 'backwardness,' also appeared to reiterate the notion that the presently-leading nations in historical development were approaching a state of stasis and decline, soon to be overtaken by the underdeveloped countries:

> We see in modern civilization, at the head of which stand[s] Europe ..., a fundamental defect, one of those defects which have dug the graves of civilizations and have made it inevitable that new leaders with fresh forces have come to take the place of the old ones.[224]

Here, Bervi-Flerovsky seems to have revived Herzen's view of the 'wearing out' of 'old' nations versus the promise of Russia's purported national 'youthfulness.' As such, Bervi-Flerovsky, like Herzen, insisted on the fundamental inability of the West to evolve a socialist society: "The Western European rural proletarian will not manage to do this [achieve socialism] in the near future, indeed he may never manage it."[225] Further, like the Slavophiles, Bervi-Flerovsky diagnosed such "defects" of these advanced Western nations particularly in their individualistic and competitive norms—as opposed to the communalistic ways of mutual assistance exemplified by pre-capitalist Russia: a "healthy ... civi-

220 Bervi-Flerovsky, "*The Condition of the Working Class in Russia*" 256-7.

221 Ibid., 256.

222 See Walicki, *The Controversy Over Capitalism*, 113.

223 Bervi-Flerovsky, "*The Condition of the Working Class in Russia*" 256

224 Ibid., 257.

225 Bervi-Flerovsky, "*The Condition of the Working Class in Russia*" 257.

lization ... would enable [its people] to help one another ... not prevent one another from doing so."[226] Only such civilizations, like Russia, have maintained the potential to leap into the socialist framework, having already possessed a foundation of collectivistic living. Thus, Bervi-Flerovsky reasoned that Russia must not give up its beneficial underdevelopment—its retention of traditional communal institutions—for a Western modernity that was farther from the socialist age into which Russia, he believed, could directly enter.[227]

Anti-Liberal Politics

Believing that Russia's historically-exceptional road to socialism hinged upon its retention of its 'backwardness,' the Narodniks therefore believed that adopting the modern developments of Western European society would be counterintuitive to Russia's course of historical progression. As shown above, this framework sought a bypassing of a capitalist economic age; but additionally, this logic also mandated the preclusion of a liberal political phase. This rationale against political liberalism became a dogma and "obsession" of the Narodnik movement.[228] As such, historian Andrzej Walicki notes that the Narodnik movement was politically characterized as bearing a "negative attitude towards political freedom"[229] and a "deepest distrust of liberal constitutionalism," insisting that the socialist struggle was fundamentally "set in opposition" to the liberal cause.[230] Indeed, historian Christopher Ely confirms that the Narodniks saw liberal institutions as the political counterpart of the era of capitalist economics which the movement precisely sought to evade.[231] Under the guise of electoral politics and parliamentary representation, they felt that the liberal system would only benefit the new bourgeoisie that would arise under such a paradigm, thereby prolonging the oppression of the working classes.[232] Thus, Mikhailovsky, in a passage deeply reminiscent of Herzen, claimed that the liberal revolutions of the West "merely had the effect of replacing privileges based on birth by privileges based on wealth" as the working class "escape[d] the tight grip of feudalism ... [but] immediately fell into the clutches of bourgeois capitalism."[233] In an uncanny resemblance to the earlier Slavophile position, Mikhailovsky repudiated the liberal notion of "political freedom" and insisted that "we [Narodniks] reject these rights" offered by a constitutional model of governance.[234]

Instead, the foundations of the ideal form of

226 Ibid.

227 Ibid.

228 Walicki, *The Controversy Over Capitalism* 81.

229 Ibid., 85.

230 Ibid., 81-2.

231 Ely, *Russian Populism,* 90.

232 Ibid.

233 Mikhailovsky, "Literary and Journalistic Notes of 1872," 654.

234 "For a man who has tasted the fruit of the general-human tree of knowledge nothing is more attractive than political freedom ... But if the rights, which this freedom will give us, are to prolong for us the role of a colored, fragrant flower—in such case we reject these rights and this freedom! Curse upon them, if they only increase our debt to the people, instead of enabling us to discharge it! ... By recognizing the top priority of the social reform we renounce the increasing of our rights and freedom, since we see these rights as instruments of the exploitation of the people and the multiplying of our sins." Mikhailovsky, quoted in Ely, *Russian Populism,* 90.

societal organization that the Narodniks sought was believed to have been embodied by the nation's communal peasantry. Thus, in calling for Russia to spurn Western models, Bervi-Flerovsky, in a nearly-identical manner as the previous thinkers, preached the need to instead embrace and preserve the ancient communal ways of the peasants as the structural basis of the envisioned utopia. Beyond evading the allegedly-false freedoms of liberal governmental politics, Bervi-Flerovsky similarly believed that the old communal model was also more conducive to a socialistic freedom via collectivist landholding, as opposed to the liberal notion of private property:

> ... attention must of course be paid above all to the attitude towards the land. Here we see that our peasant has shown incomparably more tact and common sense than his Western European counterpart. He has understood a great truth which the Western European worker has never understood.[235]

Indeed, Bervi-Flerovsky mocked how "Western European political economy vainly preaches" about "the most productive land," but "it will never achieve its goals so long as the principle of ... private property exists."[236] Instead, he held that "Communal ownership leads ... to a rational distribution of the land among the workers."[237] This defense of collectively sharing land among the community, in contrast to Western legalities of exclusionary ownership, was thus another principle held in common by the Narodniks and their ideological predecessors.

Political Praxis

With these views, Mikhailovsky argued that "it would be a vain undertaking" to strive for a "liberal" paradigm.[238] Believing that the Russian peasantry already possessed the basis of the socialist society which they sought to evolve nationwide, Mikhailovsky asserted that, instead of progressing to liberalism as Western Europe had done, a more direct method of progression was already available in Russia: "Give them [the peasantry] a firm guarantee that this [the existing landowning relations] will remain theirs, and the Russian labor problem will be solved."[239] Similarly, this plan of action is also seen in Bervi-Flerovsky's insistence that—as Herzen and the Slavophiles instructed, three decades earlier— the intended societal transformation would be completed "if the principle of the communal ownership of the land was made universal in Russia."[240] In this vision, there would be a natural and immediate transition from peasant communalism to nationwide communism, and hence no need for any intermediary stage of incomplete and counterintuitive progress as would occur under an era of liberal politics and governance.

If the ideal social structure they strove toward was to be achieved through a preservation and expansion of the peasantry's existing model of communal

235 Bervi-Flerovsky, "*The Condition of the Working Class in Russia*," 257.

236 Ibid.

237 Ibid.

238 Mikhailovsky, quoted in Walicki, *The Controversy Over Capitalism*, 59.

239 Mikhailovksy, "Literary and Journalistic Notes of 1872," 653.

240 Bervi-Flerovsky, quoted in Walicki, *The Controversy Over Capitalism*, 111-12.

self-governance, the Narodniks thus preached the need to have the peasants, themselves, show the way forward for the intended political structure which the intelligentsia sought for the nation to evolve at-large. Here, the radical Narodniks, just as Herzen had done earlier, thereby revived what was originally a Slavophile call for the Westernized intelligentsia to bow to the un-Westernized peasantry as the antidote to their nation's historical- developmental issues. As historian Richard Wortman writes, "members of the intelligentsia of the 1870s [i.e., the Narodnik generation] ... envisioned the peasants as virtuous brethren in distress, whose life still preserved the elements of justice and humanity lacking in the urban educated milieu."[241] In this way, as the Slavophiles first suggested, the uneducated masses would lead the educated intelligentsia into the promised future.

In fact, Bervi-Flerovsky argued at length on how the educated demographics had to "turn to people of peasant origin and ask them ... to put their affairs in order;" moreover, he even held that the "learned ... had to give way to the illiterate peasant intelligentsia," thereby attaching the 'intelligentsia' epithet to the most uneducated members of society.[242] Similarly, Mikhailovsky emphasized that the intelligentsia should subordinate their own values, often "too abstract to serve as a guiding principle," to instead "have to find some social element" as their north star: "Such a social element exists. It is the people. The people not in the sense of the nation but as the sum total of the working population," i.e., the peasantry, since their ways most closely approximated the envisioned utopia: "[they] may bring us closest to our intended goal."[243] Reflecting on the peasants he had studied in the Siberian countryside as the subject of his magnum opus, Bervi-Flerovsky concluded, "I am convinced that there [among the peasantry] lies within that estate the hope of Russia, the guarantee of her future glory and greatness."[244] To summarize, the Narodniks thereby continued the political stances of the preceding thinkers, as all were united in opposition to the liberal paradigm as inapplicable and harmful to the Russian course of societal evolution. But more specifically, these different milieus all rejected liberalism particularly because they ultimately believed that the ideal political archetype of societal organization for which they were striving was embodied by the Russian peasantry's model of a communal polity. This in turn, once again, perpetuated the belief in the need for the intelligentsia to defer to the peasantry—counting on the latter to provide the basis of realizing this grand vision of a national transformation.

Through this political commonality, it thus also becomes clear how such ideas from the conservative Slavophiles were transmitted to radical socialist thinkers: they ideologically converged on a shared hostility toward a common political enemy of Western liberalism. However, this cross-political phenomenon appears to have gone unnoticed: historian Andrzej Walicki correctly observed this anti- liberal characteristic of the Narodnik movement, even pointing out that the socialist Narodnik aversion to the liberal paradigm,

241 Richard Wortman, *The Crisis of Russian Populism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967), 137.

242 Bervi-Flerovsky, "The Condition of the Working Class in Russia," 253.

243 Mikhailovsky, "Literary and Journalistic Notes of 1872," 654.

244 Bervi-Flerovsky, "The Condition of the Working Class in Russia," 253.

in fact, deemed the Tsarist autocracy as more tolerable than the "false" constitutional democracy of a "bourgeois" republic;[245] but nevertheless, he claims that such anti-liberal concepts were "peculiar and distinctive" to the Narodnik movement and arose "not earlier than at the beginning of the [eighteen-]seventies"[246]—thereby failing to notice how the same particular political stances can be traced back to the Slavophiles of the opposite end of the political spectrum.

Specifying A Revolutionary Praxis: Bakunin and Lavrov

Until now, within this heritage of ideas, the details of a political praxis for actualizing the envisioned transformation have been rather vaguely formulated. The anti-liberal politics of these thinkers have consistently precipitated a general formula in which an intellectual 'return' to the peasant masses was expected to somehow bring about the communistic utopia, i.e., a proliferation of the communal ideal into a nationwide social structure. Within this generation of Narodniks, the details behind such values would finally be fleshed out in the form of a revolutionary strategy—particularly by the Narodnik leaders Mikhail Bakunin (1814-1876) and Pyotr Lavrov (1823-1900). Bervi-Flerovsky and Mikhailosvky were primarily concerned with the cultivating the theoretical basis behind this ideology of Russian historical exceptionalism—rather than addressing the practical details of how the envisioned revolution would take place as well as the exact structure of the resulting post-revolutionary society. Indeed, Bervi-Flerovsky was an economist and Mikhailovsky was a layman sociologist; ultimately, neither were directly involved in revolutionary planning. However, this side of the question was especially concentrated on by Bakunin and Lavrov, the two figures most influential in brainstorming the logistics behind an actual revolution within the Narodnik movement in the 1870s, i.e., the peak of its 'classical' era. Much more than the previous thinkers, these figures were revolutionary leaders primarily involved in on-the-ground activism, seeking to bring about the revolution not only on paper. As such, these two theorists extensively detailed how the long-dreamed-of revolution ought to unfold, therefore developing the Narodnik revolutionary praxis.

Firstly, Bakunin and Lavrov perpetuated the notion of an intelligentsia return to and reliance upon the peasantry—now in explicitly-revolutionary principles: they deduced that the awaited social transformation would be conducted via a revolutionary uprising of the peasant masses themselves; further, the intelligentsia ought not play a domineering role over this mass grassroots movement. To arrive at these conclusions, both Bakunin and Lavrov maintained the premise that the desired political structure which they sought to evolve nationally was solely preserved by the communal peasantry. As historian Samuel H. Baron notes of these two figures, "Both ... saw the collectivistic peasant commune as the nucleus of the agrarian socialist order they proposed to erect."[247]

Bakunin, like the previous thinkers, deemed the "collective ownership of the soil" exhibited by the Russian peasant commune as representing the "embryo" of the "communal political organization" of the

245 Walicki, *The Controversy Over Capitalism*, 83.

246 Ibid., 82, 85.

247 Samuel H. Baron, *Plekhanov: The Father of Russian Marxism* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1963), 13.

desired future.[248] Having these agrarian masses as the basis of his socialist vision, Bakunin thus concluded that the keys to unlocking the new age lay outside of the intelligentsia and solely within the peasants: "[the movement] must go to the people, undoubtedly," Bakunin wrote, "because nowadays...especially in Russia, there is no longer life, or any cause of future outside the people."[249] From this position, Bakunin deduced that the upcoming revolution must, likewise, also come from the masses themselves. In other words, he was devising a grassroots model of mass revolution, declaring that "Freedom can be created only by ... a total rebellion of the people, and by a voluntary organization of the people *from the bottom up*."[250] Here, Bakunin expanded the old principle of humbling the intelligentsia before 'the people' to now denote a strict warning against the intellectual class from assuming too large a role in executing the revolution:

> But neither the writers, nor the philosophers, nor their books are enough to build a living, powerful, socialist movement. Such a movement can be made a reality only by the awakened revolutionary consciousness, the collective will, and the organization of the working masses themselves. Without this, the best books in the world are nothing but theories spun in empty space, impotent dreams.[251]

In other words, the success of the movement centrally depended on the activity and will of the masses, without whom the intellectuals, such as himself, were useless.

Similarly, Lavrov praised the peasant commune as "the single genuine element of political life existing in Russia."[252] Following a comparable logic to Bakunin, he, too, believed that the revolution ought to ultimately be led by the communal peasantry themselves—through a "popular uprising" in which the rural people led the charge rather than his own class of intelligentsia theorists.[253] Detailing the principles of his revolutionary strategy in his émigré journal *Vpered*, Lavrov declared: "Paramount for us is the premise that the reconstruction of Russian society must be carried out not only with the welfare of the people as its objective, not only for the benefit of the people, but also *by the people*."[254] In particular, Lavrov sought to prevent the prospect of the intelligentsia ever forcing

248 Mikhail Bakunin, quoted in Alan Kimball, "The First International and the Russian Obshchina," *Slavic Review* 32, no. 3 (September 1973): 498.

249 Mikhail Bakunin, "Statism and Anarchy," in *Documentary History of Russian Thought: From the Enlightenment to Marxism*, trans. W.J. Leatherbarrow and D.C. Offord (1873; repr., Ann Arbor: Ardis, 1987), 283.

250 Mikhail Bakunin, "Statism and Anarchy," trans. Sam Dolgoff (Marxists Internet Archive, 1971), https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/bakunin/works/1873/statism-anarchy.html.

251 Mikhail Bakunin, "Letters to a Frenchman on the Present Crisis," trans. Sam Dolgoff (Marxists Internet Archive, 1971), https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/bakunin/works/1870/letter-frenchman.html.

252 Pyotr Lavrov, *Narodniki-propagandisty, 1873-78 godov* (Saint Petersburg: Andersona i Loitsianskago, 1907), 112, quoted in Ely, *Russian Populism,* 84.

253 Pyotr Lavrov, quoted in Ely, *Russian Populism,* 73.

254 Pyotr Lavrov, "Program of the Journal 'Forward!,'" in *Documentary History of Russian Thought: From the Enlightenment to Marxism*, trans. W.J. Leatherbarrow and D.C. Offord (1873; repr., Ann Arbor: Ardis, 1987), 269.

its own principles onto the intended constituency of benefit, who were to remain the true vehicles of revolution. Rather, such values must ultimately arise out of the masses themselves: "The contemporary Russian activist must, in our opinion, abandon the obsolete view that revolutionary ideas formulated by a small section of the more highly developed minority may be imposed on the people."[255] Accordingly, in his essay "Knowledge and Revolution," he repeatedly emphasized,

> ... the movement which must make them masters of the Russian land you expect to come f*rom the people themselves*; the program for the new order ... *must come from the people themselves* and the regulations, statutes and declarations ... we expect will be written *at the people's bidding*.[256]

In the same vein, Bakunin, too, warned against the potential elitism of the intelligentsia in taking over the revolution: he explicitly condemned those who "arrive ... at the conclusion that because thought, theory, and science ... are in the possession of very few, these few ought to be the leaders of social life, not only the initiators, but also the leader of all popular movements."[257] The movement ought to remain a populist one.

Having agreed on a 'bottom-up' scheme of revolution led by the people themselves, Bakunin and Lavrov sought to prevent an intelligentsia-dominated movement for the additional reason that such a scenario may lead to the establishment of a new authority oppressing the populace. Maintaining grassroots principles, they underscored the need to prevent any intellectual leader from erecting a new overarching authority over the people. Lavrov clarified that "Nobody has the right to foist on the people his own program, to seize power and set up on the basis of his own lofty individual reason."[258] More specifically, he held that,

> Anyone who has the welfare of the people at heart should seek not to set himself up *in authority* with the help of a successful revolution and lead the people towards some goal clearly perceived only by the leaders ... rather he should seek to make the people consciously set themselves goals ... and he should seek to become no more than the instrument of these social strivings when the time comes.[259]

Indeed, Lavrov precisely feared that "that socialist revolutionaries, having successfully overthrown the central government, may take its place," thereby clarifying that "We do not want any new coercive authority to take the place of the old."[260] Bakunin, too, felt that if the intelligentsia allotted itself too much power and influence in the revolution, then the uprising would

255 Ibid.

256 Pyotr Lavrov, "Knowledge and Revolution," in *Documentary History of Russian Thought: From the Enlightenment to Marxism*, trans. W.J. Leatherbarrow and D.C. Offord (1873; repr., Ann Arbor: Ardis, 1987), 270.

257 Bakunin, "Statism and Anarchy," trans. Sam Dolgoff (Marxists Internet Archive, 1971), https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/bakunin/works/1873/statism-anarchy.html.

258 Lavrov, "Knowledge and Revolution" 270.

259 Lavrov, "Program of the Journal 'Forward!,'" 269.

260 Lavrov, "Knowledge and Revolution," 270.

result in the construction of another state, now ruled by the intelligentsia claiming to be representing the people: "This fiction of a pseudo-representative government serves to conceal the domination of the masses by a handful of privileged elite," he explained.[261] In such a scenario, Bakunin warned that the masses would be dominated and silenced by the intellectual stratum: "the inevitable result" of such a dynamic between the intelligentsia and the masses whom claimed to fight for would be "the slavish subordination of the unskilled and ignorant majority to the so-called educated, exploiting minority," i.e., a new state ruled by the leaders of the revolution.[262]

Markedly, here, Bakunin and Lavrov's fear of a revolution devolving into representative-state rule specifically referenced their contempt for political liberalism. In the scenarios which they were warning against, they were referring to the Western-European precedent of a revolution that fought for a representative democracy and constitutional reform, which they both viewed as a continuation of the lower classes' oppression. Bakunin believed that the idea of "popular representation" was inherently contradictory and a "lie" in that it would ultimately be "only a system for governing the masses from above, through an intelligent and therefore a privileged minority" who claims to "allegedly understand the genuine interests of the people better than the people themselves."[263] In fact, Bakunin felt that the only difference "between a monarchy and the most democratic republic" was that,

> a republic ... will oppress and plunder the people in exactly the same way, and for the sake of the same classes and purses, but in the name of the will of the people ... it will hardly be any easier on the people if the stick used to beat them is called the people's stick.[264]

Similarly, Lavrov condemned this liberal model of representative governance, seen in Western societies, as neglecting the true needs of the people: "In their eloquent debates about the subtleties of the constitutional system, they always forgot about existing economic needs of the majority and remained opaque to them."[265] As such, Lavrov claimed that such a system of perceived progress was in fact a "sickly illusion" which only goes half-way: "you cannot drain the sea by scooping it out with a spoon, or cure the people by giving microscopic local aid ... A *temporary* palliative to reduce acute pain at a particular moment."[266] Evidently, Bakunin and Lavrov's development of a more refined revolutionary praxis continued to remarkably maintain the original political hostilities against liberalism expounded by the Slavophiles and Herzen, three

261 Bakunin, "Statism and Anarchy," trans. Sam Dolgoff (Marxists Internet Archive, 1971), https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/bakunin/works/1873/statism-anarchy.html.

262 Mikhail Bakunin, "Our Program," in *A Source Book For Russian History from Early Times to 1917*, ed. Ralph T. Fisher, Alan D. Ferguson, and Andrew Lossky, trans. George Vernadsky, vol. 3 (1868; repr., New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1972), 644.

263 Mikhail Bakunin, "The State and Anarchy," in *A Source Book For Russian History from Early Times to 1917*, ed. Ralph T. Fisher, Alan D. Ferguson, and Andrew Lossky, trans. George Vernadsky, vol. 3 (1873; repr., New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1972), 646.

264 Ibid.

265 Lavrov, quoted in Ely, 90.

266 Lavrov, "Knowledge and Revolution," 270.

decades earlier.

Finally, Bakunin and Lavrov also perpetuated and intensified the principles against centralized authority and statism inherited from the Slavophiles and Herzen. Lavrov called for the disintegration of the standard state structure: "States in the form in which they exist are hostile to the working class movement, and they must all break up once and for all in order to give to a new social order in which the greatest freedom" would be realized at once.[267] In particular, like his ideological predecessors, Lavrov was protesting against "centralized governments," instead calling for power to be federated to "autonomous small groups of communes."[268] Bakunin was more explicit and extreme in voicing the anarchist ideal that Herzen, thirty years prior, seemed to approach. Bakunin argued that the best form of government, following the revolution, was no government at all: "No state, however democratic its forms may be ... is capable of giving the people what they need, that is, the free organization of their own interests from the bottom up, with no interreference, tutelage, or coercion from above."[269] As such, he declared that "the administrative and governmental machinery must be permanently smashed and not replaced by another;" instead, like Lavrov and the previous generation's thinkers, he held that the political solution was to guarantee the local autonomy of the communes: granting "complete freedom ... to all the communes ... is equivalent to dissolving the state, and initiating the social revolution."[270]

Thus, Bakunin and Lavrov, in devising the Narodnik revolutionary praxis behind this ideology of Russian historical exceptionalism, preserved the core political values of the preceding thinkers of this intellectual genealogy, while further detailing a particular political methodology behind the anti-liberal vision of actualizing the intended societal transformation. In doing so, they came full-circle, concluding that the image of a completed revolution as the standarization of the communal model nationwide until the Russian landscape resembled a vast federation of communes. Bakunin held that "the political organization of the future must be nothing other than a free federation of free workers ... in ... *artels*"— a term synonymous with 'commune."[271] Therefore, he envisioned the final revolutionary objective to be "the organization of society through a free federation, formed from the bottom up ... into communes, [and] then the federation of communes."[272] Similarly, Lavrov's ultimate vision for "a new and better order" was "a federation of free peasant centers."[273] Moreover, in the program of his journal, he summarized the political rationale of the Narodnik movement—and, in doing so, also unconsciously reiterated the mission of the preceding thinkers of the pre-

267 Pyotr Lavrov, "Our Program," in *A Source Book For Russian History from Early Times to 1917*, ed. Ralph T. Fisher, Alan D. Ferguson, and Andrew Lossky, trans. George Vernadsky, vol. 3 (1873; repr., New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1972), 651.

268 Lavrov, quoted in Ely, 89.

269 Bakunin, "The State and Anarchy," 646.

270 Mikhail Bakunin, "Letters to a Frenchman on the Present Crisis," trans. Sam Dolgoff (Marxists Internet Archive, 1971), https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/bakunin/works/1870/letter-frenchman.html.

271 Bakunin, "Our Program," 644.

272 Mikhail Bakunin, "An Epistle to My Italian Friends," in *A Source Book For Russian History from Early Times to 1917*, ed. Ralph T. Fisher, Alan D. Ferguson, and Andrew Lossky, trans. George Vernadsky, vol. 3 (1871; repr., New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1972), 645.

273 Lavrov, "Knowledge and Revolution" 270.

vious chapter: "For the Russians, the communal ownership of land by the peasantry provides the special basis on which the future ... of the Russian population can develop," and therefore, the political mission was "To make the communal assembly the basic political element of the Russian social system."[274] Interestingly, this objective of a radical socialist revolution's outcome was almost identical to the Slavophiles' descriptions of the nature of their intended conservative utopia.

A Divergent in Praxis

However, despite such a profound extent of agreement on such principles of revolutionary praxis, Bakunin and Lavrov noticeably diverged in their assessment regarding the 'readiness' of the peasantry to carry out the revolution at this moment in time. Though both theorists were explicit in demanding that the revolution ultimately be for the people and made by the people, this divergence led to differing views over the precise preparatory role of the intelligentsia as well as the timing of the revolution. This disagreement marked the start of an ideological splinter in the intellectual genealogy.

Bakunin swore by an unwavering confidence in the complete self-sufficiency of the peasantry to complete the envisioned revolution at any given moment in which he was writing. Here, his rationale was carried by his absolute idealization of the peasantry's present capabilities. Just as the Slavophiles mythologized the peasantry as a finished product who constituted the complete embodiment of their political ideals, so too did Bakunin idealize these subjects as already possessing all that was needed to launch the revolution he had dreamed of: "Among the Russian people there exist on the largest scale the ... prerequisites for social revolution."[275] However, displaying another point of similarity to the Slavophiles, Bakunin never provided concrete evidence for such presumptions, even rhetorically asking, "Does one need to demonstrate how legitimate their hatred [of the state] is![?]"[276] He claimed that "there is no need for a profound analysis of the historic conscience of our people in order to the define the fundamental traits which characterize the ideal of our people."[277] As such, Bakunin projected his own abstract political ideals onto this illiterate peasantry, claiming that they displayed "a quasi-absolute autonomy, communal self-government, and ... the thoroughly hostile attitude of the commune towards the state."[278] Approximating an almost-mystical or religious explanation of this premise, he insisted that "an invincible force lives [within them]."[279] Accordingly, he arrived at the conclusion that the peasant masses were completely ready to conjure the revolution and bring forth the utopia that intellectuals such as himself had theorized, insisting that such values were contained within the rural peasantry, intrinsically.

Given this view of the peasantry, Bakunin thereby completely rejected the notion of the intelli-

274 Lavrov, "Our Program" 652.

275 Bakunin, "Statism and Anarchy," 278.

276 Ibid., 282.

277 Bakunin, "Statism and Anarchy," trans. Sam Dolgoff (Marxists Internet Archive, 1971), https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/bakunin/works/1873/statism-anarchy.html.

278 Bakunin, "Statism and Anarchy," 279.

279 Mikhail Bakunin, Statism and Anarchy, trans. Marshall S. Schatz (Cambridge University Press, 1990), 216.

gentsia's role in educationally assisting the peasantry in any aspect. These rural villagers, the soul of an authentic Russian spirit, had absolutely nothing to learn from the Westernized intelligentsia: "What are you going to teach the people? Is it not what you yourselves do not know and cannot know, and must first learn from the people?"[280] Bakunin thus claimed that the intelligentsia could not provide or clarify any ideal to the people, who already possess it in themselves:

> ... if the people do not themselves fashion such an ideal then nobody will be in a position to give it to them ... no one, no individual, society or people, can be given something which does not already exist in them ... One would have to be an absolute idiot or an incurable doctrinaire to imagine that one might give the people anything, bestow on them any sort of material benefit or new intellectual or moral content, any new truth, and lend their life at will some new direction.[281]

On this topic, Bakunin critiqued the Westernizer Pyotr Chaadaev from the previous generation: "as the late Chaadaev said thirty-six years ago with precisely the Russian people in mind, write on them what one pleased, as on a blank sheet of paper."[282] In contrast, Bakunin believed that all values which the intelligentsia sought must arise out of native principles, allegedly safeguarded by the peasantry, alone: "because they are rooted in the people themselves and lending this ideal the best course which leads most directly and rapidly towards the goal."[283] In this way, the radical Bakunin appeared to reiterate what was originally an anti-Westernizer narrative of the earlier conservative generation, i.e., the Slavophiles, through this notion that the educated classes were in need of returning to the pre-modernized masses, who were the preserver of an ancient virtue and wisdom that the foreignized elites had supposedly lost. Altogether, Bakunin's beliefs amounted to the implication that the revolution was truly imminent: if 'the people' already possessed in their ancient values all that was needed for the reconstruction of Russian society, and the intelligentsia had nothing to contribute to them, then there was no point in waiting— the revolution should happen now. Thus, Bakunin concluded, "There is no village in Russia which is not deeply discontented ...one can say that there is no village in Russia which would not revolt" at this moment.[284]

On the other hand, Lavrov had a different perspective in understanding the role of the intelligentsia apropos the perceived 'readiness' of the masses for revolution—a view that was ultimately reflective of an era of increasing doubts. Although, as aforementioned, Lavrov continued to affirm that the revolution out to ultimately be carried out by the people themselves and that the intelligentsia must refrain from impos-

280 Ibid., 198.

281 Bakunin, "Statism and Anarchy," 278.

282 Ibid.

283 Ibid., 279.

284 Even Herzen, who published his works on this topic over twenty years prior, never went to this extreme in terms of the literal immediacy of his envisioned revolution. Herzen, though referring to a younger Bakunin, wrote that the latter often "mistook the second month of pregnancy for the ninth." Alexander Herzen, quoted in Ely, *Russian Populism,* 53.

ing its own values on the people, he nonetheless made the case for a more significant part to be contributed by the educated class. In fact, it was from his ascetic dedication to 'the people' that he deduced an expanded role for intellectuals like himself to be played in the preparatory stages of the planned uprising. On one hand, Bakunin held that "the common people are not doctrinaires [nor] philosophers. They have neither the leisure to concern themselves with many questions," in his argument for prioritizing the people's allegedly-innate abilities over the intelligentsia's philosophical abstractions and theories.[285] Yet Lavrov took this same premise to reach an opposite conclusion. In his magnum opus *Historical Letters* (1869), particularly in the fourth letter entitled "The Price of Progress," Lavrov concluded that the intelligentsia owed a debt to the uneducated commoners. He held that their own existence of being a privileged class with the luxury to ponder philosophical questions, seek justice, and dream of progress was all owed to the toil and suffering of the downtrodden masses: "Mankind has paid dearly in order that a few thinkers might sit in their studies and speak of *its progress*."[286] More specifically, he held that the enlightenment of the intelligentsia, "this progress achieved by a small minority," was ultimately "bought by the *enslavement* of the majority."[287] As such, he was disgusted that his fellow intellectuals did not do anything in return for the people who made such a sacrifice: "one should be horrified ... at the fact that it has cost so much and that so little has been done for the price."[288] Thus, Lavrov argued that the intelligentsia ought to pay it back to the people.

In this way, by giving this critique of the intelligentsia and charging them of a debt,[289] Lavrov thus also endowed them with a new responsibility—and hence a new significance and expanded role to be played in preparing for the liberation of the masses. Thus, in order for the intelligentsia to exonerate itself of its debt to the people, it had to acknowledge its intellectual capabilities granted to them at the cost of the masses' constant labor, and therefore utilize such skills toward assisting the people's liberation. As such, he declared the obligation of the intelligentsia to play a contributing role in such a manner:

> If I am a cultivated person, then I am *obliged* to do this and ... by seeking and spreading more truths, clarifying my ideas about the most just social order and striving to put it into effect ... doing everything I can for the suffering majority in the present and the future.[290]

More specifically, Lavrov concluded that for the revolution, the intelligentsia must play "the role of initiators, expounders, assistants to the people."[291] Unlike Bakunin, he believed there *was* something which the

285 Bakunin, "Statism and Anarchism," 280.

286 Pyotr Lavrov, "Historical Letters, 4th Letter: The Price of Progress," in *Documentary History of Russian Thought: From the Enlightenment to Marxism*, trans. W.J. Leatherbarrow and D.C. Offord (1868; repr., Ann Arbor: Ardis, 1987), 264.

287 Ibid., 263.

288 Ibid., 264.

289 Mikhailovsky described this mentality as the "conscience-stricken gentry." See Walicki, *The Controversy of Capitalism*, 28.

290 Lavrov, "Historical Letters, 4th Letter: The Price of Progress," 268.

291 Lavrov, "Knowledge and Revolution," 270.

intelligentsia could in fact teach the people; moreover, to Lavrov, they were obliged to do so. In particular, unlike Bakunin, who was so confident in claiming how the peasants were all consciously discontented and ready to revolt, Lavrov believed that the people did not fully understand the cause of their suffering until the intelligentsia clarified them—"making them realize the ... cause of their sufferings ... which they experience, which they sense *but do not understand*;" hence, he sought for the intellectual class to "point out to them ... the means at their disposal, tell them how to act to throw off, trample on and destroy this evil."[292] In other words, Lavrov believed that the intelligentsia could and must fully awaken the peasants to the cause of their condition and the need for revolution, while explaining to them how exactly to launch it. Here, he endowed the intelligentsia revolutionaries as playing "the role of prophet of the people's freedom."[293]

Thus, though Lavrov believed that it would still ultimately be the masses themselves who would be the primary vehicle of the revolution when the time does come—for he still believed that they possessed the potentialities and power to set their communal traditions as the basis of the new society— Lavrov now added that this process would require some degree of the intelligentsia intervening. The latter had to provide the understanding that would be the impetus to put the people into motion and unlock their presently-hidden abilities, essentially steering them in the right direction: "It is the responsibility of this section of the civilized Russian minority not to impose its own ideas on the people ... but to explain to the people their true needs ... and to point out to them t*he force which resides in them but of which they are not aware.*"[294] Therefore, Lavrov insisted that the act of providing educational preparation for the masses would only function to awaken the people to their own allegedly-pre-existing but latent ideals; in this way, Lavrov was thus able to reconcile his appeal for an increased role of the intelligentsia with the movement's principle of refraining from imposing the intelligentsia's thought onto the people—precisely by claiming that such ideals already existed within the people's subconsciousness but were just presently reticent and needed cultivating.

In fortifying this stance, Lavrov, unlike the previous thinkers discussed thus far, elaborated more on a more unromantic reality of the distance between the intelligentsia and the rural masses—the gap between their grand visions of progress apropos the idealized people's actual state of mind: "[we] ... are separated from the people by one and a half centuries of history, estranged from them by virtue of our way of thinking and way of life, and by the tradition of serfdom."[295] To address this issue, Lavrov thereby insisted that it would "require study ... time and labor devoted to serious intellectual preparation" in order to make the revolution by the people actually feasible.[296]

Consequently, Lavrov's prognosis of the situation thereby implied that the revolution, unlike Bakunin's vision, was not so immediate. Rather, it would

292 Ibid., 271-2.

293 Ibid., 273.

294 Lavrov, "Program of the Journal 'Forward!,'" 269.

295 Lavrov, "Knowledge and Revolution," 270.

296 Ibid., 273.

have to be delayed until the intelligentsia finished readying and awakening the masses for the anticipated uprising. Indeed, Lavrov noted that "given the unpreparedness of the majority and its low level of literacy, we cannot address ourselves directly to it [the revolution's initiation]," immediately.[297] As such, he deduced that the revolution would have to take place more so "in the distant future and is a social ideal that should continually be borne in mind without the self-deception of hoping that it can be realized either today or tomorrow."[298] If the revolution was still to be carried out by the peasantry, then it could only occur once that constituency had been fully 'prepared.' In this manner, he declared, "Only when the course of historical events itself shows that the time for the revolution has come and that the Russian people are prepared for it can one consider that one *has the right* to call upon the people to bring about this revolution."[299] Therefore, though still seeking a direct transition to socialism, Lavrov believed that this process could not be properly executed before a patient preparatory phase of educating the expected participants of the revolution.

Here, one can observe how a core assumption of the original vision behind Russian historical exceptionalism began to gradually erode. The idealistic image of 'the people'—the total faith in the agrarian masses as readily possessing the nearly-messianic capabilities of summoning the theorized utopia—started to chip away in this genealogy of thought. This was a reflection a new era in which doubts began to arise regarding the actual disposition of the illiterate peasantry upon whom the intelligentsia had, for so long, entirely rested their grandiose visions. Lavrov was perhaps the first thinker in this intellectual timeline to begin displaying more of a dispassionate edge against the quixotic presumptions that had persisted up until now. Hence, Lavrov warned against, and perhaps foreshadowed, the increasingly-salient realization of the lurking gap between the abstract theories of the intelligentsia and its removal from peasant realities and the masses' practical capabilities:

> ... and all those benefits which can be so deftly and smoothly drawn up on paper, when one is alone with one's brimming thoughts, in the absence of all real obstacles, all the real multiformity of the conditions in which the people dwell, all the real multiformity of the conditions in which the people dwell, all the real routine which weighs so heavily on our people as on any other society.[300]

Lavrov therefore asserted the need for revolutionaries to commit to a more sober assessment of the circumstances: "One must adopt an objective and critical attitude to the cause one passionately loves ... calmly weigh up the possibilities, bowing to necessity."[301] Specifically, he warned against what he saw to as sentiments clouding judgment, for "the more passionately [one] loves his social ideal, the more he jeopardizes

297 Lavrov, "Program of the Journal 'Forward!,'" 269.

298 Lavrov, "Our Program," 651-2.

299 Ibid., 652.

300 Lavrov, "Knowledge and Revolution," 270.

301 Ibid., 276-7.

calm discussion."[302] Instead, what was needed was "a critical study of the ways in which social ideas ... may be put into effect."[303]

In summary, within the planning of the revolutionary praxis of the Narodnik movement, the divergence between the doctrines of Bakunin and Lavrov illustrated one of the first instances in which the original principles of the ideological heritage came under pressure to adapt to the new doubts of the post-emancipation era. Specifically, Lavrov's cautious appeals—regarding the present 'unreadiness' of the masses and the need for the intelligentsia to assist them in preparation—captured the rise of new attitudes of uncertainty. As will soon be evidenced, this intellectual shift was directly associated with the appearance of signs foreboding a possible rise of capitalism in Russia, as well as fears of a potential decline of the peasant commune's stubborn bulwark against the modernity which these thinkers had hoped to bypass. Nonetheless, Lavrov still clung to the classical political praxis insisting on a bottom-up revolution ultimately led by the peasantry themselves, which would evolve a society in which authority was deferred to local communal self-governance. However, his added caveats for this vision entrusted the intelligentsia with an expanded role, albeit a temporary one, for the preparation of 'the people.' Though this adaptation may have seemed moderate in the moment, it would ultimately function to open up a slippery slope along which the ideology's political principles would soon undergo a reversal of the original grassroots values, coupled with the rise of intelligentsia elitism—as the doubts and concerns to which his adaptations were reacting would continue to grow in scale across the next few years within the changing landscape of an increasingly-modern Russia.

Era of Doubts

Voluntarism

Directly linked with Lavrov's belief that the intelligentsia possessed the ability and responsibility to intervene and actively bring about modifications and improvements in present conditions was the philosophical notion of *voluntarism*. This belief that the unfolding of history was not predetermined, predictable, or unchangeable became central to the Narodnik ideology in response to new doubts that heightened the contingency of revolutionary plans. It became a crucial philosophical lever to fall back upon and pull amid rising uncertainty. Eventually, it constituted a means through which the intelligentsia revolutionaries could forcefully attempt to prolong the continuity of old visions against increasingly-incompatible realities. This would become particularly useful when it became more apparent that the old ideals were beginning to outlive the conditions in which they were conceived.

Lavrov's polemic against his own class's debts to the people concluded that "one must *redeem* evil by one's deeds in life," specifically stating that one can only "absolve [one]self from responsibility for the bloody price of [one's] cultivation if [one] use[s] this cultivation to reduce evil in the present and the future."[304] In other words, Lavrov asserted that the intelligentsia ought to actively strive toward rectifying society's ills

302 Ibid.

303 Ibid.

304 Lavrov, "Historical Letters, 4th Letter: The Price of Progress," 267.

and correcting its wrongs. This stance had seismic implications, for it implied that if certain elements of reality were presently misaligned with the idealized theory and vision, one ought not to accept the dissonance but rather seek to actively enact changes which bring reality closer to the imagined ideal. This stance additionally signified the Narodnik movement's rejection of the universalist theories that portrayed a particular trajectory of historical evolution as "inevitable" and "natural" and necessarily conforming to "objective" laws—a characteristic view of Western-European philosophies of the time, such as Marxism.[305] In fact, the Narodniks viewed such beliefs as apologist tools of capitalism that justified the suffering of the masses in the name of the "iron laws of political economy," fostering a sort of complacency or powerlessness of people against the direction of historical development.[306] In response, Narodnik thinkers asserted the possibility of, and obligation for, one to resist developments that one deemed to be unfitting—to correct the path of history according to their rationalized principles of justice. As W.J. Leatherbarrow and D.C. Offord note, the Narodniks protested against

> [the determinists'] attempt to explain man's behavior in the light of rigid, supposedly scientific laws as a product of environment or physiological factors over which man had no control, these materialists had tended ... to deprive man of the free will to change his society .... It was important to the theoreticians of the ... [Narodnik] period ... to free ethical and sociological speculation from the jurisdiction of an inflexible scientific method ... They wished to assert that man had freedom to make moral choices and to change his society, indeed they demanded that he do so.[307]

The intensification of this philosophical principle reflected a reaction to the newfound doubts of the times in which the presumed inevitability of Russia's historical exceptionalism began to come under question. Centrally, the prospect of an emergent capitalist epoch, which they had so confidently believed that Russia would evade amid a direct transition to socialism, grew increasingly plausible. Thus, something may need to be *voluntarily* done to ensure that the old intended historical blueprint was not jeopardized. In this way, the Narodniks thus adhered to voluntarism as a means of stubbornly clinging onto the feasibility of their old dream in the face of dissonant realities: if the realities did not align with the theories, then could *make* them align. Crucially, this would soon bear further implications in endowing the intelligentsia with a greater role in the revolutionary process.

Among the primary leaders of the Narodnik movement, Lavrov and Mikhailovsky were the most outspoken preachers of this voluntarist philosophy. Mikhailovsky, in his essay "What is Progress?," argued against the determinist philosophy of history, insisting that one cannot "know accurately and clearly that there is a certain order in the appearance on the histor-

305 Walicki, *The Controversy Over Capitalism*, 30.

306 Ibid.

307 Leatherbarrow and Offord, *A Documentary History of Russian Thought*, 249.

ical scene."[308] Here, Mikhailovsky classified determinism as "the objective method in sociology," which he critiqued as too far removed from the human individual's "*subjective*" disposition and capability, i.e., one's values, objectives, and desires which could indeed be willed into existence: "Nature, which neither laughs nor cries, has no aims, no aspirations, no interests ... But man does have aims."[309] Consequently, he argued for,

> eras[ing] from our mental make-up the belief that there is good sense in the ordering of the universe ... the way in which natural phenomena successively supplant one another, or else we must make no distinction between development and decomposition.[310]

Mikhailovsky, refusing to accept the potential advent of capitalist exploitation in Russian society, thus defended a philosophical method that allowed him to reject the natural spontaneous developments of the times and instead believe that his contrary ideals could still be realized. Like Lavrov, whom he cited in sharing this view, Mikhailovsky pronounced the implication that follows from this stance: the intelligentsia, most intellectually equipped to judge what is conducive or harmful for historical progress, ought to make an intervention in the course of history: "critically thinking individuals," he claimed, ultimately possessed superior and necessary tools to contribute to the people's revolution, i.e., an impetus to be "introduced from outside into the communal archaic world of the Russian peasantry."[311]

Similarly, Lavrov in an essay directly referring to Mikhailovsky's "Formula for Progress," argued that history itself has no meaning, but rather all meanings are imparted to it by the thinking individual, who is indeed capable of manifesting their abstract principles: "In the historical perspective set by our moral ideal, we stand at the end of the historical process."[312] As such, the unfolding of history is subjectively defined and *made* by capable thinkers who can actively change reality in accordance with their ideals:

> Progress consists in the development of consciousness and ... incorporation of truth and justice .... It is a process which is being accomplished by means of the critical thought of individuals who aim at the transformation of their culture.[313]

Thus, unlike their ideological ancestors who were so confident that this historically-exceptional route of Russia would naturally unfold, the Narodniks

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308 Nikolai Mikhailovsky, "*What Is Progress?*," in *Readings in Russian Philosophical Thought: Philosophy of History* (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1977), 115.

309 Nikolai Mikhailovsky, "*What Is Progress?*," in *Documentary History of Russian Thought: From the Enlightenment to Marxism*, trans. W.J. Leatherbarrow and D.C. Offord (1869; repr., Ann Arbor: Ardis, 1987), 259–60.

310 Ibid., 259.

311 Walicki, *The Controversy Over Capitalism*, 69.

312 Pyotr Lavrov, "Historical Letters," in *Russian Philosophy,* ed. James Edie and Mary-Barbara Zelding, trans. James P. Scanlan, vol. 2 (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1965), 131.

313 Ibid.

of this era began to prepare for alternatives. In doing so, they justified and bestowed upon the intelligentsia further responsibility and a greater contributing and intervening role within the movement—to bend reality to the vision should the two begin to misalign. By the end of this chapter, this philosophical lever will be pulled to the extreme, amid the intensification of doubts, to justify even stronger measures of an intelligentsia intervention, for the sake of salvaging the fading dream at all costs.

'To The People,' 1874

Thus far, this ideology of Russian historical exceptionalism had only existed in the imaginations and theories of the intelligentsia. In other words, the grand ideas that this thesis has tracked were limited to a small circle of intellectuals and their philosophical texts, none of which was actually read by the illiterate masses for whom the story was written. But in the summer of 1874, the long-theorized ideal would finally be put to the test. Almost three decades since the Slavophiles first touted the communal peasantry as the basis of an aspired utopia, followed by Herzen's call for revolutionaries to realize their dreams by going 'to the people,' the Narodniks, who made this old vision into a mass movement, finally went *to the people*.

In fact, the "overwhelming majority" of participants in what was precisely titled as the "to the people" event had "accepted the revolutionary strategy of either Lavrov or Bakunin."[314] Indeed, though the two thinkers diverged over the revolution's timing and the intelligentsia's exact role, they nevertheless both insisted that the impending societal transformation was still to be ultimately realized by a peasant uprising. Historians widely portray this event as the climax of the Russian Narodnik movement.[315] Overall, the movement was composed of optimistic intellectuals venturing into the agrarian countryside to greet the subjects of their utopian narratives, announcing the revolutionary advent of the new age that they had philosophized for so long. In greater detail, historian Avrahm Yarmolinksy records,

> ...more than two thousand students ... and aristocrats were swept away by a spirit of self- renunciation. In almost every province in European Russia, young intellectuals dressed as peasants and set out from the cities to live among them, join in their daily life, and bring them the good news that a new age was dawning. Rich landowners gave away their possessions ... agnostic Jews had themselves baptized as Orthodox in order to be more at one with the peasantry; women joined in the exodus in order to share equally in the hopes and suffering.[316]

Thus, "fired with messianic zeal," historian D.C. Offord notes, these visionaries went into the rural villages "attempting to immerse themselves in the peasants' world so as to better inculcate them with socialist and

314 Leatherbarrow and Offord, *Documentary History of Russian Thought*, 251.

315 Jonathan Bromley, *Russia 1848-1917* (Oxford: Heinemann, 2002), 202; Ely, *Russian Populism,* 106-7; Anne Pedler "Going to the People: The Russian Narodniki in 1874-5" *The Slavonic Review* 6, no. 16 (June 1927): 130-131.

316 Avrahm Yarmolinsky, *Road to Revolution* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), 114-6.

revolutionary ideas."[317] This narrative of the event appears to be confirmed by a government memorandum written by the minister of justice, Count Konstantin Ivanovich Palen, who recorded that,

> The investigation has established that many young people, in some cases abandoning their studies, donned peasant garb, provided themselves with false identification papers, and went under the guise of common laborers 'to the people,' as they put it, with the purpose of implanting revolutionary ideas in them by means of printed pamphlets and word of mouth propaganda.[318]

In particular, Minister Palen was shocked to find that these revolutionaries all hailed from privileged and upper class backgrounds, i.e., people "who enjoy material security and a more or less honored social position," including "daughters of actual privy councilors" and "the daughter of a major general;" yet all were seemingly possessed by a "blind fanaticism" of this vision of returning to the humble masses, and thereby going "to live among the people, working as day laborers in the fields, sleeping together with the peasants."[319] Moreover, Palen traced this movement back to "publications, mainly the works of Russian emigres," writing in exile, as "books and publications printed abroad [were] smuggled into Russia" behind Tsarist censors.[320] Further, he noted the predominant influence of "the theories of Bakunin" as well as the role of "the journal *Vpered*, published abroad by Lavrov."[321] This observation thus further confirmed the central role of these two thinkers in fomenting this event—in addition to underscoring their physical distance from Russian reality, writing outside of the nation.

Altogether, the long-philosophized vision was put to the test—and failed. The idealistic intelligentsia went to the people, but they did not find the communal peasantry of their theories. As historian Anne Pedler notes, the various memoirs and accounts of these revolutionaries reflect the same story: they "found that the peasants were neither such promising revolutionaries nor such good socialists [as they] had hoped."[322] In fact, they "found the peasantry as suspicious" of these intellectuals and "as apathetic" to such theoretical visions "as ever."[323] Ultimately, "there was hardly one peasant revolt as a result of their efforts."[324] Furthermore, by the autumn of that year, Offord records, about 1,600 of the 2,000 activists had been arrested and jailed, while "failing to make the slightest headway in fomenting agrarian revolution."[325] The

317 Derek Offord, *The Russian Revolutionary Movement in the 1880s* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 17.

318 Konstantin Ivanovich Palen, "Palen's Description of the Movement 'To the People,'" in *A Source Book for Russian History from Early Times to 1917*, ed. Ralph T. Fisher, trans. George Vernadsky, vol. 3 (1875; New Haven and London: Yale University Press, n.d.), 654.

319 Ibid., 655.

320 Ibid., 654-5.

321 Ibid.

322 Pedler, "Going to the People," 130-141.

323 Ibid., 135.

324 Ibid., 131.

325 Offord, *The Russian Revolutionary Movement in the 1880s*, 17.

other activists returned to their cities, "having accomplished nothing."[326] As such, Pedler, notes, "There is very little for the historian to write about" beyond what could simply be described as a complete failure and disappointment.[327]

Looking back, a general feeling of disillusionment and "depression" prevailed following the failure of the movement, as revolutionaries began to concede their "false ideas about peasant life."[328] One former revolutionary, Sergei Kravchinsky (1851-1895), described the painful sensation of disillusionment that engulfed the Narodniks: "this movement did not and could not bear contact with the stern and horrible reality."[329] Another revolutionary, looking back, admitted that "We took the whole thing so easily and so superficially."[330] The Narodnik activist Yakov Sefanovich (1854-1915), firmly disenchanted, revealed at his trial his sober realization that "a peasant revolution would not shake Russia even if the whole intelligentsia were allowed to move freely among the people and spread their propaganda without hindrance."[331]

The revolutionaries had been thoroughly let down and forced to come to terms with the vast disparity that separated their visions from the reality of the people whom they had glamorized from afar. Looking back 30 years later, Lavrov admitted that the Narodniks had suffered from a "pathological disorder" which fostered an excessive optimism and naive assumptions that were bound to crumble into "sinking spirits and hopelessness."[332] Acknowledging the degree to which the intelligentsia had projected their own hopes onto the people, the revolutionary Vladimir Korolenko similarly reflected:

> It seemed that all of Russian society looked to the *narod ['the people']* for some kind of formula for a new life ... this naivety was shared ... it offered our generation what the previous generation of thinking realists had lacked: it brought faith not in mere formulas and abstractions. It gave our aspirations a kind of wide, vital foundation.[333]

Noting the delusional fervor behind such aspirations and presumptions, Sergei Kravchinsky further articulated the irrational romanticization of rural masses as a projection of the intelligentsia's own passions onto a people whom they had hoped would redeem all the wrongs of Russian society:

> Nothing similar had been seen before, or since. It was a revelation, rather than a propaganda ... and summoned the ardent to the great work of the redemption of the country and of humanity. And the ardent, hearing this cry, arose, overflow-

326 Pedler, "Going to the People," 138.

327 Ibid., 131.

328 Ibid., 139.

329 Sergei Kravchinsky, in ibid., 139.

330 Ibid., 140.

331 Ibid.

332 Pyotr Lavrov, *Narodniki-propagandisty, 1873-78 godov* (Saint Petersburg: Andersona i Lotsianskago, 1907), 290-3, quoted in Ely, *Russian Populism,* 162.

333 Vladimir Korolenko, *The History of My Contemporary*, trans. Neil Parsons (London: Oxford University Press, 1972), 178.

> ing with sorrow and indignation for their past life, and abandoning home, wealth, honours, family, threw themselves into the movement with a joy, an enthusiasm, a faith, such as one experienced only once in a life, and when lost one never found again ... *It was not a political movement. It rather resembled a religious movement,* and had all the contagious and absorbing characters of one.[334]

In short, the Narodnik intellectuals had "placed unfulfillable expectations on the peasantry, exaggerating their everyday survival strategies as a sign of future universal importance," and thus emerged inevitably disappointed when the reality of the masses' indifferent disposition fell short of their grandiose presumptions.[335] As such, historian Christopher Ely concluded that "never again would the [Narodnik] impulse to merge with the peasants find such a pure form as it did during the summer of 1874."[336]

Alexandr Engelgardt's *Letters from the Country,* 1872-1887

Amid this era of disillusionment, Alexandr Engelgardt, a former rector of the St. Petersburg Agricultural Institute, was, like many other members of the intelligentsia, deeply interested in the peasantry and studied the village commune as the basis of genuinely cooperative institutions for the rest of Russian society to emulate.[337] After being arrested for suspicions of such studies becoming political, he was sentenced to a life of permanent internal exile, barred forever from the cities in which the radical discussions took place.[338] Returning to his wealthy family estate outside Smolensk, Engelgardt soon received a request from Mikhailovsky's journal 'Notes of the Fatherland' to write about his firsthand experiences with the peasantry in the countryside. Prior to the 1874 'to the people' mission, the intelligentsia desperately lacked such a close assessment of the masses.

Though enthusiastically undertaking this study with the intention to prove and confirm the long-standing theories of the peasant commune as the cornerstone of communal values through which Russia could realize its vision of a direct transition to socialism, his studies instead revealed a disappointing portrait of the peasants. Through his *Letters from the Country* amassed across 15 years, Engelgardt concluded that the traditional peasant way of life was not as the intelligentsia had imagined. Specifically, he found that the commune actually did little to redistribute wealth, failed to embrace egalitarianism, and was "strictly patriarchal, even despotic;" additionally, he did not find the values of socioeconomic equality that the Narodnik intellectuals had presumed were central to the communes: "[some] households thrive while the weak are subject to further deprivation."[339] But moreover, much of this disappointing reality, he found, was part of a growing national trend: any hints of the communal virtues of the peasantry—the sup-

334 Kravchinsky, *Underground Russia: Revolutionary Profiles and Sketches from Life*, 25–26.

335 Ely, *Russian Populism,* 91.

336 Ibid., 106-7.

337 Ibid., 164.

338 Ibid.

339 Alexander Engelgardt, *Letters from the Country, 1872-1887*, trans. Cathy A. Frierson (New York: Oxford University Press, n.d.), 85.

posed bulwark against Western modernity—that did indeed still exist were steadily declining and vanishing as a result of what appeared to be the intrusion of capitalist economic forces into the countryside. In particular, he noted that, increasingly, the peasants became "deep down as self-interested as their educated, urban counterparts;" as such, each peasant would "gladly become a wealthy *kulak* if he could."[340] Further, the peasant commune's existence became underpinned, now, for reasons that were "purely economic" and based on profit incentives.[341]

In sum, Engelgardt concluded that the emancipation of these former serfs had brought out the self-interested sentiments of the peasant farmer, who was now free to explore the free-market prospects of gain and profit. Such a finding was a far cry from the communistic image of the peasantry, so central to the ideas of Russian historical exceptionalism. Indeed, the theories were premised, necessarily, upon the image of an uncorrupted people of egalitarian ways and collective freedom representing a total resistance to Western individualistic practices as well as the norms of economic and political modernity; such presumptions had underpinned the prospect of Russia's highway to socialism. Thus, the old vision—formed in pre-emancipatory conditions and without having actually visited the peasants, i.e., the Slavophile mythology, made socialist by Herzen—now appeared to be outdated. The mythical image of 'the people,' and their promised historical role, was thus further shattered.

Revisions and Concessions

In the wake of the failure of the 'to the people' movement, as well as the disenchanting findings of studies such as that of Engelhardt, many disillusioned Narodniks began to give up on the dream of a direct progression into the socialist paradigm. With the communal peasantry totally falling short of their idealized expectations, many revolutionaries had turned away from the core tenets of the ideological heritage constituting Russian historical exceptionalism. During the second half of the 1870s, numerous Narodniks began to concede that the 'backward' peasant commune could no longer be relied upon as the vehicle of progress. Rather, they started to accept the changing socioeconomic conditions of the times which they had feared for so long: they came to terms with the fact that this ancient agrarian institution was "doomed to natural dissolution" and had to make way for new modern modes of social organization as precedented by the industrialist West.[342] In fact, Lavrov's followers, at this time, now increasingly believed that the socialist revolution in Russia must be postponed until capitalism and a new industrial proletariat, rather than the old agrarian peasantry, had reached a "sufficient level of development."[343] In this manner, many also began to concede the need for liberal political institutions, which they had, for so long, repudiated as an excessive and counterintuitive development for Russia's exceptional historical trajectory. As Vera Figner recalled in her memoirs, "We saw that our case in the countryside

340 Ibid.

341 Ibid.

342 Walicki, *The Controversy Over Capitalism*, 93-4.

343 Ibid.

was lost ... What was lacking was political freedom."[344]

Altogether, these activists came to terms with the fact that something was fundamentally incorrect in their theoretical doctrine and strategy. There was, it seemed, no longer any historical advantage in their nation's underdevelopment. Now, it appeared that Russia ought to economically industrialize while adopting the corresponding political systems of Western modernity; if so, then Russia did not possess an exceptional road of history after all, but rather had to conform to the Western universalist model. In this way, it seemed, there would be no direct transition to socialism. Instead, Russia, like the history of Western-European societies, appeared to require the undergoing of an intermediary stage of historical development that all theorists of this intellectual genealogy until now had precisely sought to bypass. Thus, the antimonies of the ideology—a radical formula for socialist progression founded upon originally-conservative premises of retaining societal underdevelopment— appeared hopeless as Russia seemed to approach the dawn of a capitalist age.

'Revisionist' Narodism

However, in the wake of this mass disillusionment, one particular thinker was not ready to give up on these seemingly-outdated theories. Pyotr Tkachev (1844-1886) was a Narodnik revolutionary theorist and writer whose peculiar views often found him relegated to the sidelines of 'Classical Narodnik' discourse and principles.[345] Primarily writing in the wake of the disenchantment that precipitated the decline of the Narodnik movement, Tkachev sought to salvage the seemingly- implausible visions of old. To defend the notion of Russian historical exceptionalism, Tkachev attempted to exonerate the validity of the Narodnik socialist model against the Western universalist premises of the Marxist doctrine, which was becoming increasingly popular in Russia. However, to do so amid these increasingly-anachronistic material conditions, Tkachev resorted to positing deep revisions for particular aspects of the original doctrine. Ultimately, he preserved a remarkable continuity of the ideological heritage—but at the cost of adapting a new political praxis beneath a redefined interpretation of anti-liberalism.

Salvaging Russian Historical Exceptionalism

Tkachev staunchly rejected the increasingly-popular notion of Western historical universalism, touted by the rising Marxist movement. Continuing in the spirit of his intellectual predecessors, Tkachev insisted that Russia still possessed a separate path of

344 Vera Figner, quoted in ibid., 100.

345 See Leatherbarrow and Offord, *Documentary History of Russian Thought*, 248.

historical development that more directly and quickly reached the socialist age than the road traversed by the more 'advanced' nations of the West. Just as Mikhailovsky had feuded with Marx earlier in this chapter, here Tkachev was feuding with Marx's co- ideologist, Friedrich Engels, on the viability of Russia's allegedly separate telos. Engels, explicitly critiquing the beliefs of the Russian Narodniks, insisted that the peasant commune "does not prove by any means that this drive makes possible a jump directly from the *artel* [commune] to the socialist society."[346] Rather, the German philosopher asserted the need for such 'backward' and outdated communal forms to make way for the capitalist era of economic development; this was to be a necessary step on a much longer road to socialism, which the histories of Western Europe were purportedly exemplifying:

> it is necessary above all that the *artel* itself becomes capable of development and divests itself of its original form, in which it serves the capitalists rather than laborers ... and at least rises to the level of the Western European co-operative associations ... The *artel* [Russian commune] in its present form is not only incapable of this, it is necessarily destroyed by large-scale industry unless it is further developed.[347]

Against this, Tkachev, in his "Open Letter" of 1874 to Engels, argued that this Western-centric formula did not apply to Russia's peculiar conditions: the Western universalist timeline was "totally unsuitable for our country," he claimed.[348] In a proclamation that could be seamlessly inserted into an old Slavophile treatise, Tkachev declared that "the character of our country is absolutely exceptional" and "has nothing in common with the character of any other nation of Western Europe."[349] Specifically, he held that the Western path to socialism—which required capitalism as a necessary precondition—was "completely inappropriate to our struggle;" instead, Russia possessed its own particular timeline of societal evolution that "require[d] an absolutely unique revolutionary program," which accordingly reflected the different "social-political conditions" between his nation and the West.[350]

Reversing 'Backwardness'

Specifically, Tkachev defended the idea that Russia, unlike Western Europe, could indeed proceed directly into socialism, precluding the capitalist phase of historical development. In his essay "On Historical Leaps," Tkachev provided a philosophical breakdown of this logic: in abstractly describing the stages of a society's evolution, he ultimately affirmed his nation's ability to "proceed from the first premise to the last, passing over the middle one ... to leap directly from a lower rung to a higher one over all the ones in between."[351] In this way, Tkachev, like the previous the-

346 Friedrich Engels, quoted in Shanin, *Late Marx and the Russian Road* (New York: *Monthly Review* Press, 1983), 52.

347 Ibid.

348 Pyotr Tkachev, "Offener Brief an Herrn Friederich Engels [Open Letter to Mr. Friedrich Engels]," in *Soziales Aus Russland: The Polemic between Friedrich Engels and Petr Tkachev*, 1874-1875, trans. Alan Kimball (1874; repr., Eugene: University of Oregon, 2010).

349 Ibid.

350 Ibid.

351 Pyotr Tkachev, "On Historical Leaps," in *A Documentary History of Russian Thought: From the Enlightenment to Marxism*, ed. W.J. Leather-

orists, continued to seek the direct attainment of the final intended form of development rather than processing through any intermediary or transitional historical phase. Moreover, like Herzen, he insisted that Russia, within "the near future," would attain this socialist paradigm before the most industrially developed nations of the West[352]—thereby reviving the 'last-shall-be-first' mentality first introduced into this ideological genealogy by the Slavophiles.

But how would such an exceptional path of development be realized? Tkachev, like the preceding thinkers, once more pointed to the underdeveloped state of his country as providing the basis of this superior avenue of historical progression. In other words, he reinstated the theme of reversing the implications of 'backwardness.' Engels had argued that the West must show "the retarded countries ... by its example how it is done," referring to the notion that Russia was lagging behind in development and had to catch up to Occidental standards.[353] Indeed, Engels held that Russia's preservation of the remnants of agricultural "communal property" only represented that its conditions were "here at a still very undeveloped stage" and in fact "a fetter and a brake ... at a certain stage of social development" that needed to be "abolished" for sake of progress.[354]

Yet Tkachev, in response, argued that it was precisely this underdeveloped nature of Russia that allowed for a more direct path of progressing into the socialist age. He therefore explained, at length, how the various elements of Russian societal difference from the developed Western countries—that were commonly perceived as inferior and 'backward'—instead allowed for a more conducive road to socialism. Specifically, while Marxists argued that developing an industrial labor force was an essential step toward fomenting a socialist revolution, Tkachev pointed to Russia's lack of industrialized elements as a beneficial characteristic:

> The urban proletariat does not exist among us, this is of course true. But for that reason we do not have a bourgeoise either. Between the suffering people and the state which suppresses them, there is no middle class among us.[355]

In this way, Tkachev argued that the path to revolution was thereby simplified for Russia, containing less obstacles and enemies to overcome during the class struggle. Further, he cited how "Our upper classes ... have developed no strength, neither economic (they are too poor for that) nor political (they are too undeveloped)" as another feature creating an expedited trajectory for Russia.[356] In other words, this exceptionally-direct road to socialism was made possible by how the nation *lacked* the very features of development that Western socialist thinkers had deemed as necessary preconditions. More broadly, Tkachev reasoned that "capitalist power is found in Russia up to now

barrow and D.C. Offord (1868; repr., Ann Arbor: Ardis, 1987).

352 Pyotr Tkachev, "Offener Brief an Herrn Friederich Engels [Open Letter to Mr. Friedrich Engels]," in *Soziales Aus Russland: The Polemic between Friedrich Engels and Petr Tkachev*, 1874-1875, trans. Alan Kimball (1874; repr., Eugene: University of Oregon, 2010).

353 Friedrich Engels, Marx & Engels: Selected Works in Three Volumes (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1977), vol. 2, pp. 403- 4.

354 Engels, quoted in Shanin, *Late Marx and the Russian Road*, 52.

355 Tkachev, "Open Letter to Friedrich Engels."

356 Ibid. Tkachev's parentheses.

only in embryo," and hence there is no need to struggle against this entire stage of history; without it, one could proceed onto the final socialist phase through a "considerably easier" temporal itinerary.[357] In this way, "very little is needed" for a socialist revolution to be successful in underdeveloped Russia.[358]

Furthermore, he cited Russia's most populous demographic, the peasantry—whom the Marxists scorned as drags on the historical timeline of advancement toward socialism—as another point of historical advantage. Here, Tkachev conceded that "Our people are ignorant (undeveloped), and that's a fact. *But for that reason* the folk ... have instilled in them the principle of communal rule."[359] Like Herzen and Bakunin, he claimed that such communistic values were innately built into the people's dispositions and instincts: "The folk are, so to speak, communist by instinct, by tradition. The idea of collective property is so firmly infused in the world view of the Russian people," he asserted.[360] With the mass populace traditionally adjusted to the collectivistic model of communal life, the collectivistic structure of a socialist society was thus within close reach.[361] In this way, Tkachev deployed the same logic as that of all preceding theorists of Russian historical exceptionalism, i.e., that these primitive characteristics of Russia approximated the final state of socialism much more than the advanced societies of the West: "it is clear that our people, despite their ignorance (lack of development), stand significantly closer to socialism than the peoples of Western Europe, although the latter are more educated (developed)."[362] Here, Tkachev, again embracing the underdeveloped conditions of his nation as constituting the very key to a superior and expedited path to the highest and final social form, thereby reiterated the rhetoric of transvaluating the image of Russia's 'backwardness' to instead denote a beneficial feature on the timeline of progress.

Anti-Liberal Politics, Redefined

Continuing the intellectual tradition of his predecessors, Tkachev believed that a liberal political paradigm would be both excessive and counterintuitive to Russia's exceptional path of an uninterrupted progression into the socialist epoch. Indeed, Tkachev sought to "leap directly" over any intermediary stages of development, such as the era of "constitutional" governance of the Western model.[363] However, unlike the preceding Narodniks—as well as Herzen and the Slavophiles—Tkachev redefined this doctrine of anti-liberalism to denote new political measures required to realize the old vision. As we recall, his intellectual forefathers had consistently spited liberal frameworks in favor of a return to the communal form of local self-governance preserved by the peasantry, a stance which prompted the anticipation of a movement centrally dependent on the masses leading from below. However, writing in the era of intelligentsia disillusionment, especially in the wake of the failure of the

357 Ibid.

358 Ibid.

359 Ibid.

360 Ibid.

361 Ibid.

362 Ibid. Tkachev's parentheses.

363 Tkachev, "On Historical Leaps" 288.

'to the people' movement, Tkachev bent the original political praxis to meet the new demands of the times.

More than any of the previous thinkers, Tkachev had to deal with the alarming rate at which Western modernity appeared to be arriving at Russia's doorsteps. Refusing to concede the prospect of bypassing this now-seemingly-unavoidable era, Tkachev stressed the need for an immediate execution of the socialist revolution—before it was too late. In the program of his journal *The Tocsin*, Tkachev accordingly centered the ethos of his publication around the urgency of having to curb such modernizing developments in Russia. He sought to salvage the nation's fading features of underdevelopment, which underpinned the exceptional historical pathway. In the program, he warned that,

> the fire of 'economic progress' has already touched the foundations of the life of our people. Under its influence the old forms of our communal way of life are crumbling, the very 'principle of the *obschina* [peasant commune],' a principle which is supposed to be a cornerstone of the future social structure we all dream of, is being destroyed.[364]

In other words, like previous thinkers, Tkachev acknowledged the peasant commune as the basis on which the entire vision rested, but he now warned of its impending doom to the new historical forces. Continuing, he mourned how "on the ruins of those forms which are being burnt down, new forms, the forms of bourgeois life, are coming into being ... the principle of individualism, of economic anarchy ... is setting in," giving way to "the interests of private property, the interests of trade and industry, the interests of the bourgeois world which is coming into being."[365] Thus, Tkachev warned that if there is any further delay in revolutionary action, Russia will indeed succumb to the Western rhythm and enter the capitalist and liberal paradigm: "Tomorrow [our country] will become *constitutional and modern* ... So hurry!"[366] Tkachev thereby concluded that the window of opportunity for a direct transition was closing quickly: "Such moments are not frequent in history. To let them slip by means ... to put back the possibility of social revolution for a long time ... So do not delay!"[367] In other words, the old vision could still be realized while the forces of Western modernity were still "weak right now and yet to mature," but the opportunity to bypass them was now fading by the second.[368]

A Revolutionary Praxis Without 'The People'

However, while the dire need for an immediate revolution was growing by the second, the traditionally-expected base of such a revolution—the peasant masses—had proven in recent years to be utterly unprepared for such a feat. Refusing to wait for them to come into 'readiness,' Tkachev believed that the 'ready'

364 Pyotr Tkachev, "Program of the Journal '*The Tocsin*,'" in *A Documentary History of Russian Thought: From the Enlightenment to Marxism*, ed. W.J. Leatherbarrow and D.C. Offord (1875; repr., Ann Arbor: Ardis, 1987), 288.

365 Ibid.

366 Ibid.

367 Ibid., 289.

368 Ibid., 289.

segment of society, i.e., the intelligentsia, ought to take the reins, now.[369] In doing so, it appears that Tkachev combined aspects of both Bakunin and Lavrov to form a strategy that ultimately rejected both: sharing Bakunin's belief in an immediate revolution but rejecting his faith in the readiness of the masses, while sharing Lavrov's doubts over the peasants' readiness but rejecting his prognosis for patiently cultivating their revolutionary consciousness—Tkachev then reached a conclusion that precisely violated the very principle held in common by both Bakunin and Lavrov: the intelligentsia would have to completely take matters into their own hands and proceed without 'the people.'[370] Tkachev insisted that there were no viable means to actually enlighten and prepare the illiterate peasant masses in time for the revolution which ought to occur now. Disillusioned by the recent failure of having gone 'to the people,' he asserted that the peasant masses suffer from "the absence of a clear understanding among them of their interests."[371] Ridiculing "every attempt of the educated to grow close to the ... peasants," Tkachev revealed his complete distrust of the people to know what is best for themselves:

> we have ... nothing that would grant us the right even to hope someday to unite the frightened, crippled, ignorant masses of the laboring people ... in a well-structured and disciplined union of all workers who understand fully what their situation is and furthermore what the means for its improvement are.[372]

As such, he also held that "a workers' literature is unthinkable in Russia, but even if it were a possibility it would be absolutely useless because the immense majority of our people are unable to read."[373]

Thus, in contradiction to the previous generations' insistence on ultimately deferring to the masses as the primary agents of realizing the new society, Tkachev now concluded that the revolutionary process could only be entrusted to the intelligentsia, in its *entirety*. In this way, Tkachev shunned the grassroots precedents of a mass involvement of the people, deeply criticizing what he deemed to be the ideals of "utopian revolutionaries," who sought "an organization which repudiates all subordination and centralization and accepts only a federative link ..."[374] Instead, Tkachev completely subverted the old principles of a bottom-up mass revolution, expressed so clearly by both Bakunin and Lavrov, despite their differences, and embraced by all preceding thinkers of this ideological heritage. The revolution would now have to be launched without 'the people,' altogether. What was needed instead, Tkachev asserted, was "a closely knit organization ... disciplined, hierarchical, subordinating,"[375] i.e., "an organization based on *the centralization of power*."[376] In other words, Tkachev was calling for the doors of participation to be closed and strictly limited to a small

369 Tkacehv, "Open Letter to Friedrich Engels."

370 Pyotr Tkachev, "Excerpts from *'Nabat,'*" in *A Source Book For Russian History from Early Times to 1917*, ed. Ralph T. Fisher, Alan D. Ferguson, and Andrew Lossky, trans. George Vernadsky, vol. 3 (1875; repr., New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1972), 656.

371 Tkachev, "Open Letter to Friedrich Engels."

372 Ibid.

373 Ibid.

374 Tkachev, "Program of the Journal '*The Tocsin*,'" 292.

375 Tkacehv, "Excerpts from *'Nabat,'*"656.

376 Tkachev, "Program of the Journal '*The Tocsin*,'" 292.

elite group of intellectuals who allegedly knew how to best lead the way on behalf of the masses. He thus flipped the praxis into a top-down model. As such, Tkachev held that,

> This great task can be accomplished ... only by the people who understand it ... people who are highly developed intellectually and morally, that is to say the minority. This minority, by virtue of its higher intellectual and moral level of development, always had and is bound to have intellectual and moral power over the majority.[377]

Such a blatant proposal for complete intellectual elitism over the uneducated masses was precisely what the earlier thinkers had condemned.

Authoritarian Conclusions

Through this new approach, Tkachev additionally flipped another old principle of this intellectual genealogy: the adherence to avoiding a revolution that resulted in the acquisition of governmental power by the intelligentsia, a notion which the preceding thinkers held would only perpetuate the oppression of the masses. Against this tenet, Tkachev explicitly declared that "a true revolution ... can be brought about only on one condition: the seizure of governmental power by the revolutionists."[378] In other words, the revolutionary leaders ought to "seize state power into their own hands," a coup d'état.[379] Moreover, he justified such a principle on the intellectual superiority of the "minority," who "embodying as they do the best intellectual and moral forces of society, they necessarily possess and ... cannot help but possess, *power*."[380]

Thus, while the previous thinkers of this intellectual tradition had rejected political liberalism as oppressive for its perceived governmental infringement upon the local autonomy of the masses, Tkachev also sought to evade the liberal model—but not for opposing centralized governance like the previous generations, *but rather for an anti-liberal political form of the opposite extreme*: authoritarianism. In fact, Tkachev declared that "The revolution is not just the seizure of power. There is also the second step," which was "the creation of a revolutionary state."[381] This state, Tkachev explained, would dictatorially seek to ensure the success of the revolutionary process by decree.[382]

The reason behind such a seemingly-heretical strategy stemmed from the combination of Tkachev's two major premises: 1) the revolution had to occur now, or it would be too late, and 2) the populace were still 'unprepared' in lacking a developed socialist consciousness. This assessment of the situation implied the following issue that needed to be resolved: in the immediate wake of a successful seizure of power by the intelligentsia, the populace would still be 'unready' and thus would not be able to create the intended, resulting socialist society, themselves. Hence, the intelligentsia would have to enact the desired societal changes by systematic enforcement—through the new "revolutionary state['s]" decrees that would "bring about the social revolution through a series of reforms in the sphere

377 Tkachev, Ibid., 290-1.

378 Tkacehv, "Excerpts from *'Nabat,'*" 656.

379 Tkachev, "'Program of the Journal '*The Tocsin*'" 291.

380 Ibid.

381 Ibid., 291.

382 Tkachev, "Excerpts from *Nabat*," 656.

of economic, political, and legal relationships within the social body."[383] In fact, Tkachev believed that the actual process of manifesting the new social paradigm would be carried out by the new overarching state: "the revolution itself ... is brought about by a revolutionary state which ... fights and destroys the conservative and reactionary elements in society and abolishes all the institutions that obstruct the establishment of equality ... and ... brings into being the institutions that favor them."[384] In this way, Tkachev held that the actual revolution, in establishing the correct social values of the new society, was one that was to be brought by force, even artificially, from above. Thus, instead of first preparing the people to realize their socialistic values before going forward with the revolution, as Lavrov would argue, Tkachev believed that the intelligentsia ought to go ahead now and complete the revolution first—and then, post-facto, educate the people on the new values of the revolutionary society in the image of the intelligentsia. Having to unnaturally and retroactively bridge that gap, he imagined the revolutionary state as functioning to "change the given conditions of a society's way of life" and "introduce into it the opposite principles ... to change man's nature itself ... to re-educate him."[385] In this way, Tkachev seems to have creatively solved the predicament of an 'unready' constituency that needed slow educating—by instead placing this preparatory phase after a premature revolution, thereby still preserving the logistics of a direct transition, *de jure*, but with the addition of an authoritarian state.

Voluntarism

Evidently, Tkachev's revolutionary strategy was underpinned by the philosophical principle of voluntarism. Explicated earlier by Mikhailovsky and Lavrov as a justification for a slightly expanded role of the intelligentsia in consciously aiding the initiation of the revolution, this principle was deduced in correlation to their rising doubts in the people's present self-sufficiency as well as the increasing concern that capitalist historical forces were beginning to grow roots in Russia. As shown above, these two concerns reached the extreme for Tkachev, who completely lost faith in the people themselves to lead the revolution while also firmly explicating that Western modernity had indeed begun to penetrate into his nation's exceptional conditions. Consequently, Tkachev deployed the voluntarist principle to the maximum and put forth a vision which emphasized the immediacy of the revolution so much so that it had to be willed into reality against unharmonious circumstances.

> You've talked for long enough about 'preparation' and 'preparation ... The revolutionary does not prepare the revolution; he 'makes' it. So make it! Make it soon! All vacillation, all procrastination is criminal!"[386]

Thus, the revolutionaries had to seize the opportunity before it was too late, thereby launching the revolution by themselves, forsaking any 'unready' conditions at the time, including the mass constituency. Consequently, all loose ends and existing discrepancies between the ideal and reality were to then be forced into alignment by means of dictatorial intelligentsia rule. Socialism was to be dictated into existence.

383 Ibid.

384 Ibid.

385 Tkachev, "'Program of the Journal '*The Tocsin*,'" 290.

386 Ibid., 289-90.

Conclusion

From the late 1860s through the 1870s, the ideas of Russian historical exceptionalism, posited by the Slavophiles and made socialist by Alexander Herzen, evolved into the core ethos of a revolutionary movement: Narodism. Believing in a unique road of societal progression for their nation, the Narodniks rejected the universality of Western historical models and their applicability to the Russia paradigm. In particular, they believed that Russia ought not pass through the capitalist experience as the more advanced nations of the Occident had done. Rather, they insisted on bypassing Western modernity via a direct transition from their underdeveloped state into a socialist society.

Though historians typically document the emergence of Narodnik ideology as arising in response to the post-emancipation peasant crisis,[387] this chapter has shown that the core ideas of the Narodnik milieu can be traced to an earlier generation of pre-emancipation thinkers. Indeed, across the writings of Mikhailovsky, Bervi-Flerovsky, Bakunin, Lavrov, and Tkachev, the idea of an exceptional Russian historical timeline remarkably followed the same core tenets as those of the theorists from the previous chapter. Specifically, the concept was, again, justified by reversing the implications of Russia's societal 'backwardness' to denote a historical advantage, i.e., a shortcut to socialism, while additionally yielding a continued hostility against political liberalism. Moreover, by tracing the origins of the Narodnik philosophy to the earlier, pre-emancipation context, this chapter has displayed an emerging issue and conceptual paradox which explains the ideological modifications that did occur, in this era, beneath the greater continuity in thought. During this time, the effects of the abolition of serfdom were beginning to affect Russian society in ways that the originators of this intellectual tradition could not have foreseen or experienced. Indeed, the 'backwardness' of Russian society, on which the theories of historical exceptionalism were founded upon, was now beginning to fade as capitalist forces increasingly threatened to penetrate the nation. Thus, such revolutionary and progressive hopes of socialism paradoxically depended on retaining societal underdevelopment against such modernizing trends. Consequently, a precautionary 'voluntarist' philosophy evolved, justifying potentially-needed interventions against unwanted historical trends; however, this philosophical caveat would soon prove to open a slippery slope in implications—when the material conditions grew even more unfavorable for the ideal of a direct transition to be feasibly realized, by the chapter's end.

The original vision was fundamentally based upon an idealistic image of 'the people,' as the intelligentsia believed that the rural masses already possessed the foundational values and structures of the utopia which they imagined; as such, the agrarian folk, rather than the intelligentsia, would have to be the constructors of the new era. Continuing and evolving this notion in this period, Bakunin and Lavrov developed a revolutionary strategy for a socialist revolution based on a mass peasant uprising. However, as the intelligentsia gradually grew more doubtful of the people's actual possession of such qualities, or lack thereof, they began to reckon with the increasingly-apparent paradox that was the narrative of an illiterate peasantry leading the educated intellectuals into the promised land. Such

387 Ely, *Russian Populism,* 71; Leatherbarrow and Offord, *Documentary History of Russian Thought*, 248; Walicki, *The Controversy of Capitalism*, 82-5.

a framework, originally created by the Slavophile ethos of a conservative return to a pre-modern world, proved increasingly impractical for the revolutionary-socialist inheritors of those premises. To adapt, leaders like Lavrov added the corollary of an expanded intelligentsia role of now seeking to train and educate the masses for revolutionary preparation.

However, as the disillusionment intensified following the failure of the 'to the people' movement, in which the intellectual class finally made contact with the subjects of their theories, coupled with piercing evidence of a steady decline in communal practices among the people, the intellectual heritage would have to adjust—bending a component of the original praxis to accommodate these new circumstances and realizations. This was accomplished in the Revisionist Narodnik branch of thought, whose ideas were founded by Tkachev. The latter derived a way to preserve the vision of an exceptional Russian path, i.e., a direct transition into a socialist epoch, when the necessary conditions now proved to be missing. In particular, he resorted to revising the political praxis of the ideology—redefining the tradition's anti-liberal politics to now denote authoritarian means. This saw the introduction of a technocratic model in which the intelligentsia would execute the revolution on behalf of an incapable people, resulting in a dictatorial state that would then decree the nonexistent conditions into reality. In other words, if the values of the envisioned utopian society could no longer count on naturally sprouting from the masses below, as the earlier thinkers had assumed, then they would have to be forced into actuality from above.

Though these views initially seemed to mark an extreme turn from the movement's original ethos, they soon became the dominant strategy among the remaining Narodniks of the late 1870s, as it became clearer that the only way to practically realize the old vision amid new realities was through such a ruthless model of praxis.[388] Soon, Tkachev's views deeply inspired the founding principles of a Narodnik faction named *The People's Will,* to which the "majority" of remaining Russian Narodniks had flocked to by the end of the decade.[389] Indeed, the group's philosophy represented that of a disillusioned intelligentsia who was now willing to preclude a reliance on the masses to instead aim to seize power by themselves and launch the revolution on behalf of the people.[390] Historian Richard Pipes notes that the Narodnik movement "reached its zenith with the terror of *The People's Will*, after which it quickly lost ground to Marxism."[391] In other words, Revisionist Narodism would constitute the last major development in this intellectual heritage until the rise of the Marxist era, the milieu of the following chapter.

388 Walicki, *The Controversy of Capitalism*, 101-103, 107.

389 Robert Mayer, "The Dictatorship of the Proletariat from Plekhanov to Lenin," *Studies in East European Thought* 45, no. 4 (December 1993): 260.

390 Samuel H. Baron, "Plekhanov and the Origins of Russian Marxism," *The Russian Review* 13, no. 1 (January 1954): 48. Moreover, the group became renowned for their use of terrorism against the state. See Astrid Von Borcke, "Violence and Terror in Russian Revolutionary Populism: The *Narodnaya Volya*, 1879-83," in Gerhard Hirschfeld and Wolfgang J. Mommsen, *Social Protest, Violence and Terror in Nineteenth-and Twentieth-century Europe* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1982), 48-62.

391 Pipes, "Narodnichestvo," 441.

Chapter Three
Russian Marxism: An Exceptional Revolution

"The fact that the proletariat reached power for the first time in such a backward country as the former Tsarist Russia seems mysterious only at a first glance ... It could have been predicted, and it was predicted ... Russia is a backward country ... Lenin solved the enigma of the Russian Revolution with the lapidary formula, 'The chain broke at its weakest link.' ... That is precisely why the backward countries assumed the first places in the succession of collapse."[392]

- Leon Trotsky

TWENTY YEARS AFTER signing the 1861 Emancipation Edict that freed the serfs of Russia, Tsar Alexander II laid in a pool of his own blood. His legs were shattered, his stomach was torn open, and his face was disfigured. The royal carriage had been bombed by conspirators on behalf of *The People's Will*.[393] Before this March afternoon, the Tsar had survived six previous attempts on his life. However, he would not escape death a seventh time. Here, the Narodnik revolutionaries finally succeeded in their long- anticipated objective of regicide, which they believed would ignite the long-anticipated revolution. But the latter did not manifest. Instead, the following years represented a period of fatal decline for these socialist activists. Alarmed by the slaughter of their emperor, the state committed to extinguishing all revolutionary activity. Over the next few years, numerous arrests amounted to the demise of *The People's Will* organization, thereby liquidating the last surviving branch of the original Narodnik movement.[394] As a jailed revolutionary writer would later recall, "After the murder of Alexander II, a period of rigid hopelessness overcame the whole of Russia," an era which marked "the apparent failure of all revolutionary movements."[395]

After almost a decade of radical dormancy in the 1880s, new movements would arise to fill the vacuum. Following a period of revolutionary revival in the 1890s, a new party named the Socialist Revolutionaries was eventually established in 1902. Popularly referred to as the "neo-Narodniks," this faction revived much of the original movement's vision for Russia to pursue a direct transition into socialism.[396] Logically, then,

392 Leon Trotsky, "In Defence of October: A Speech Delivered in Copenhagen, Denmark in November 1932" (Copenhagen, November 1932).

393 Avrahm Yarmolinsky, *Road to Revolution*: A Century of Russian Radicalism (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016), 279.

394 See Robert Mayer, "The Dictatorship of the Proletariat from Plekhanov to Lenin," *Studies in East European Thought* 45, no. 4 (December 1993): 260.

395 Vladimir Korolenko, *The History of My Contemporary*, trans. Neil Parsons (London: Oxford University Press, 1972), 47-8.

396 See Elizabeth White, The Socialist Alternative to Bolshevik Russia: The Socialist Revolutionary Party, 1917-39 (Abingdon: Routeldge, 2011).

historians trace the continuation and aftermath of the Narodnik ideology into the Socialist Revolutionary party.[397] However, this chapter circumvents this conventional view on the genealogy of ideas by, instead, tracking the continuity of Narodnik beliefs into the primary rivals of their creed: the Marxist movement, which was ultimately responsible for directing the Russian socialist revolution in the following century. This is an unconventional argument of continuity, for the relationship between the Narodniks and Marxists constitutes the greatest ideological rivalry and hostility within Russian radical thought of this period—not only according to historiography but as expressed by the Narodniks and Marxists themselves.[398] At the heart of their disagreement was the Narodnik insistence on Russia possessing an exceptional path of societal development that deviated from Western models of historical progression, a dualistic dispute carried over from the Slavophile-Westernizer feud described in chapter 1. I will trace a continuation of this debate through analyzing the theoretical works of the Russian revolutionary movement's two most influential Marxists: 1) Georgi Plekhanov, who introduced Marxism to Russia, and 2) Vladimir Lenin, the man who ultimately directed the Russian socialist revolution. Plekhanov, as the face of 'Orthodox' Marxism, will exemplify Russian Marxism's initial character as a westernizing ideology that sought to eradicate any belief in Russia's historical uniqueness. Specifically, this brand of thought preached the necessity of Russia's 'backward' features to make way for Occidental modernity. Capitulating to a complete emulation of Western developmental precedents, he argued that Russia had to fully pass through the capitalist stage of development before the nation could begin a socialist revolution. Then, I will present Lenin's ideology in comparison, arguing that he, though remaining a 'Marxist' in formality, surprisingly demonstrated significant reversions to the Narodnik and Slavophile vision of Russian historical exceptionalism. By viewing Russia's 'backward' features as providing a non-western and expedited course of development, Lenin sought to adapt the revolutionary blueprint to the persistency of a peasant demographic and the lack of a developed bourgeoise. Through these lens, I will examine Lenin's modifications of the traditional Marxist framework of revolutionary stages, which I argue were altered into a formula which remarkably approximated the Narodnik idea of an immediate transition into socialism.

Additionally, this chapter tracks the continuities of the anti-liberalism component of this intellectual heritage. First, it will analyze how Plekhanov's strict adherence to the Western historical model mandated the necessity of Russia to undergo the liberal political stage. He deemed such a phase to be essential for the working class to develop the political consciousness necessary to build a self-led revolution establishing self-rule—a stance which adhered to Marx's original

397 See Christopher Ely, *Russian Populism: A History* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2022), 187-204; Oliver H. Radkey, *The Agrarian Foes of Bolshevism: Promise and Default of the Russian Socialist Revolutionaries, February to October 1917* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1958); Maureen Perrie, *The Agrarian Policy of the Russian Socialist-Revolutionary Party from its Origins through the Revolution of 1905-07* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976).

398 See Christopher Ely, *Russian Populism: A History* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2022), 176; Richard Pipes, "Narodnichestvo: A Semantic Inquiry," *Slavic Review* 23, no. 3 (September 1964): 458; Andrzej Walicki, *The Controversy Over Capitalism* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969), 26. Also see Samuel H. Baron, *Plekhanov: The Father of Russian Marxism* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1963).

vision but also interestingly represented a continuation of classic Narodnik political praxis. This will then be contrasted with how Lenin's expedited historical model saw a deliberate preclusion of the liberal stage, a principle which fostered an anti-democratic political strategy reminiscent of the Revisionist Narodnik model of intelligentsia domination, i.e., a revolution via an elitist coup from above followed by an authoritarian state.

Finally, by showing how these ideas then figured in the revolutionary planning and execution of October 1917, this chapter shows how the Slavophile-Narodnik intellectual heritage survived into the thought and events of the nation's socialist revolution and crucially influenced and shaped its infamous characteristics of premature timing and antidemocratic politics. More broadly, this chapter constitutes the final piece of a genealogy that traces an originally anti-western ideology formulated by conservative philosophers in the early and mid-1800s—to the doctrines behind the Russian Revolution and the founding of the Soviet Union.

Part I: The Triumph of the Western Historical Universalism

Context: New Creeds, New Conditions

Marxism in Russia

For a long time, the Tsarist authorities of Russia were unconcerned about Marxism. In fact, during the 1870s and 80s, the first two volumes of Marx's *Capital* passed through official tsarist censors. In his 1872 report on the first volume of *Capital*, the censor D. Skuratov remarked, "One can with certainty say that in Russia only a few will read the book and still fewer understand it."[399] When the second volume of Marx's magnum opus was similarly approved "without hesitation," the authorities described it as "a serious economic study comprehensible only to the specialist,"[400] accurately testifying to the continued esoteric nature of the Russian intelligentsia's distance from the majority of Russian people. Interestingly, Russian authorities reasoned that a buildup of Marxist forces in the nation could even benefit the Tsarist establishment in combatting its Narodnik rivals, who, at that time, were still "the major oppositional ideology."[401] In the middle of the 1890s, the Russian government acted on this logic by permitting a form of Marxism that sought to work through anti-revolutionary reforms, which was fittingly called 'Legal Marxism.'[402]

Perhaps ironically, it was actually the Narodnik movement which provided Marxism's initiation in Russia, before the two schools of thought became ideological arch-nemeses. The first translation of the first volume of *Capital* into Russian was provided by the Narodnik G.A. Lopatin, and volume two was translated by the Narodnik N.F. Danielson.[403] Further, the Narodnik leader Pyotr Lavrov, described in the preceding chapter, even called Marx "the great teacher."[404] By the 1870s, Marxism became "more popular in Russia than in any other country."[405] However, Marx was only popular when he was deliberately cited out of context to support Narodnik views. Particularly, the Narodniks extracted from Marxism its arguments that condemned capitalism and showed its eventual doom. Likewise, they viewed Marx's description of political liberalism—the "illusory character of bourgeois democracy" that constituted the governmental apparatus of the capitalist age—as a confirmation of their traditional rejection of Western constitutionalism and "political freedom."[406] Historian Andrzej Walicki notes that "such an interpretation of Marxism was

399 Albert Resis, "Das Kapital Comes to Russia," *Slavic Review* 29, no. 2 (June 1970): 221.

400 D. Geyer, Lenin in der russischen sozialdemokratie (Cologne-Graz, 1962), 7-8, quoted in Tony Cliff, *Building the Party: Lenin 1893-1914* (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2002), 29.

401 Baron*, Plekhanov,* 144.

402 Walicki, *The Controversy Over Capitalism*, 165.

403 Richard Pipes, "Russian Marxism and Its Populist Background: The Late Nineteenth Century," *The Russian Review* 19, no. 4 (October 1960): 320.

404 Ibid.

405 Ibid.

406 Walicki, *The Controversy Over Capitalism*, 136.

very widespread, even prevalent among the Russian [Narodniks]."[407]

However, the Narodniks could not accept the full context of Marx's historical framework, from which they cherry-picked its anti-capitalist and anti-liberal implications. Indeed, while they were impressed by Marx's scathing report on the atrocities of the capitalist period of history and the injustice of its accompanying liberal politics, they could not swallow Marx's diagnosis of such a historical stage as, nevertheless, a necessary era to process through and a net gain in linear progress, i.e., the *necessity* of this historical stage on a long, multi-stepped road to socialism. As such, one of the main ideological points of disagreement between the Narodniks and the Marxists was the former's refusal to accept the latter's stubborn view of successive historical stages of intermediary phases preceding the socialist age. When applied to Russia, this framework—derived from the historical patterns experienced by Western European societies—implied that the process of capitalist development could not be avoided. In *Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, Marx mandated that "economic formations cannot perish until they have achieved the full development of their productive forces."[408] In other words, socialist revolution in Russia *must* be preceded by a complete development of Russian capitalism. Similarly, Engels, in a polemical exchange with the Narodnik N.F. Danielson, insisted that Russia "was obliged to take over all the consequences which accompany capitalistic *grande industrie* [as had occurred] in all other countries ..."[409]

Such were the 'iron laws of history' preached by the Western historical universalism of the Marxist creed which fundamentally contradicted the central tenet of Narodnik ideology: that Russia's developmental trajectory was historically exceptional, i.e., that its present conditions of 'backwardness' would not give way to Western modernity but would rather provide a shortcut to the socialist millennium. Additionally, in repudiating the Marxist notion of historical *determinism*, the Narodniks instead believed in the ability of individuals to interfere in the historical process and direct the course of their society's evolution along their intended projections, i.e., *voluntarism*. Through this philosophy, they believed that they could capitalize on the underdeveloped, pre-capitalist conditions of Russian society that they believed constituted Russia's exceptionalism from the Western laws of historical development, i.e., skipping over or accelerating past the capitalist paradigm and its dreaded phase of liberal governance—thereby leapfrogging into the final goal of socialism. However, the classical Marxist view offered no special position for Russia: like all other societies, it held, Russia would have to follow in the footsteps of the West. This meant that Russia's present 'backwardness' would, under the pressures of allegedly, historically-inevitable forces, gradually evaporate and align with the Occidental blueprint of historical progression. The agrarian peasantry would thus have to make way for an industrial proletariat of urban workers, and a new social class of bourgeois capitalists would have

407 Ibid.

408 Karl Marx, *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy,* trans. S.W. Ryazanskaya (Moscow, Progress Publishers: 1977), 21.

409 Friedrich Engels, *The Selected Correspondence of Karl Marx and Frederick Engels 1846-1895*, trans. Dona Torr (*International Publishers*, 1942), 499–500.

to launch the so-called 'liberal' revolution against the feudal monarchy (establishing constitutionalism, political rights, etc.)— all before the working class would finally be afforded its historical moment of preparing a socialist revolution. During the 1880s, the Narodnik movement still held "almost universal sway in Russian socialist circles." However, its steady decline over the following years was correlated with a perpetual rise in the new Marxist following.

Novel Material Realities

At the heart of the decline of Russian Narodism and the rise of Russian Marxism stood the changing material conditions in which these revolutionary thinkers posited and revised their historical theories. The early 1890s in Russia were marred by a severe famine that forced millions of peasants to move into the urban cities. This significant demographic shift saw the rapid growth of an urban proletariat—an entity that was, for so long, seemingly unique to the industrial West—which doubled in size (from 1.4 million to 2.4 million) within a single decade (1890-1899).[410] Further, in 1892, Russia appointed a new minister of finance, Sergei Witte (1849-1915), who would oversee a colossal project, across the next decade, of rapidly industrializing the still-predominantly-agrarian society that was the Russian empire. In his first Budget Report, Witte declared his ambition to modernize the Russian economy. Considering his chief task to be "the development of the productive forces of the country," he sought to create national industries that could rival those of the advanced, capitalistic West.[411] Believing that "modern" industries represented "the chief civilizing factor in society," Witte was prepared to "remove the unfavorable conditions which cramp[ed] the economic development of the country" through wholesale reforms.[412] In particular, he sought to industrialize Russia through government- sponsored constructions of modern infrastructure, perhaps most notably through "a huge public works program" that included the building of the trans-Siberian railway, in addition to several other key lines that promoted the growth of commerce.[413] Moreover, he focused on expanding the heavy industries of southern Russia with its coal and iron deposits, aiming to build up the industrial potential and expand the industrial employment of the population.[414] Above all, Witte wanted his 'backward' nation to finally embrace the capitalist paradigm. Indeed, on top of "close cooperation" with the budding Russian capitalist class, Witte promoted the "kindling" of a "healthy spirit of enterprise," i.e., a capitalist mentality, which he viewed as an "enlightened operation" that "freed" the Russian people "from all hampering traditions."[415] Heaping praise on "the capitalist virtues of initiative," Witte wrote in his Budget Report for 1896:

> That kind of speculation arouses and sustains the keen intellectual forces which guides and leads labor, *capital,* credit, exchange, which invents better techniques of production, which develops demand, finds and opens new sources of profit, broadens the field for national enter-

410 Pipes, "Russian Marxism," 329

411 Sergei Witte, quoted in Theodore H. Von Laue, "The High Cost and the Gamble of the Witte System: A Chapter in the Industrialization of Russia," in *Readings in Russian History*, ed. Sidney Harcave, vol. II (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1962), 63.

412 Ibid, 64-65.

413 Ibid, 65.

414 Ibid.

415 Ibid, 66.

> prise, shows ever new possibilities to entrepreneurs, introduces into production unexplored techniques, provides capital for existing enterprises—in a word that kind of speculation appears as the most energetic promoter of industrial progress, taking upon itself all those tasks which are connected with every forward step in the field of economics.[416]

Altogether, this new atmosphere provided a fertile breeding ground for new followers of Marxism in Russia. In response to these rising industrial trends, many socialist revolutionary thinkers thus began to shift away from the agrarian peasantry and to the budding urban proletariat as the new protagonists of their revolutionary Weltanschauung. Now, Narodnik frameworks began to appear increasingly outdated, while the Marxist view of history became a plausible, if not more fitting, explanatory methodology. During this era of change, historian Richard Pipes remarks, Marxism "seemed to answer more closely the needs of a rapidly industrializing Russia."[417] Indeed, this German ideology appeared to offer a "more up-to-date revolutionary doctrine" that attracted the frustrated Narodniks of this generation.[418] Consequently, historian Andrzej Walicki declared that in the 1890s, Marxism "became in Russia an influential current of thought and part and parcel of the Russian workers' movement."[419]

Plekhanov

Conversion

To effectively follow the rise of Marxism in Russia, one need not look further than Georgi Plekhanov (1856-1918), widely recognized as 'the father of Russian Marxism.' Though formerly a Narodnik activist, he then almost single-handedly introduced this Western ideology to Russia and then remained one of its most prominent leaders and the very face of Russian-Marxist 'Orthodoxy' well into the next century.[420] As such, Plekhanov's intellectual transition to Marxism constituted a representative microcosm of the broader shift from Narodism to Marxism of the nation's revolutionary landscape.[421] To trace the origins of Plekhanov's conversion to Marxism, one must return to the origins of *The People's Will* organization, the subject of the opening anecdote to this chapter. *The People's Will* was born out of an internal Narodnik feud in 1878-79 between members of its mother organization: *Land and Liberty (Zemlya i Volya)*. Standing at the forefront of the opposition to this Tkachev-inspired sect was Plekhanov, who admonished this faction for betraying the traditional principles of viewing the peasant masses as the ultimate agent of revolution. Thus, when the split occurred, Plekhanov led a new group by the name of *Black Repartition (Chernyi Peredel)*, a title that connotated a commitment to grassroots work

416 Sergei Witte, quoted in ibid.

417 Pipes, "Russian Marxism," 330.

418 Ibid., 331.

419 Walicki, *The Controversy Over Capitalism*, 165.

420 Samuel H. Baron, "Plekhanov and the Origins of Russian Marxism," in *Readings in Russian History*, ed. Sidney Harcave, vol. 2 (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1962), 81.

421 Ibid.

among the peasantry.

However, as one of its founders, Lev Deutsch, admitted in his memoris, *Black Repartition* "had no luck from the first day of its creation;" another leading member, Osip Aptekman, recalled, "Not in fortunate times was the organization *Chernyi Peredel* born. God did not give it life, and three months later, it expired."[422] Indeed, Plekhanov's group was massively outcompeted in attracting recruits; meanwhile, *The People's Will* became the dominant faction of the Narodnik movement. Furthermore, due to an act of betrayal within *Black Repartition*, Plekhanov and his comrades were forced to flee from Russia. Following a series of police raids—which saw the group's printing press seized and the arrest of almost all of its members who had not yet left the country—the group essentially ceased to exist.[423] Yet its few members who made it out of Russia at this time would become the founders of Russian Marxism. Before his emigration, Plekhanov "was by then the leading theoretician of Narodnik orthodoxy."[424] Through an 1879 article written for *Land and Liberty*, it is evident that Plekhanov abided by the standard Narodnik views described in the previous chapter: Indeed, Plekhanov formerly believed in Russia's historical exceptionalism from Western paradigms. As his biographer Baron notes, Plekhanov believed that "Russia differed from the West," specifically in that the underdeveloped features of the country meant that "Russia could attain socialism in a unique way," i.e., "Russia would attain socialism ... without passing through a capitalist stage of development."[425] Further, by retaining the classical model of Narodnik revolutionary praxis, Plekhanov abided by the old vision that the revolution would be led by "the great mass of discontented peasants" who would then erect a "free federation of free communes" and destroy the "coercive, centralized state" through a "replacement, from the bottom up" of "an anarcho-collectivist order."[426]

However, after fleeing to Switzerland in late 1879*, Plekhanov,* still disturbed by the failure of his classical Narodnik positions, began doubting his theoretical underpinnings. Perhaps most significantly, Plekhanov encountered Count Orlov's book, *Communal Property in the Moscow District*. The author presented persuasive statistics on the decline of the peasant commune, putting Plekhanov's ideological system in deep doubt. Indeed, Plekhanov later reported that this book "strongly shook" his convictions, for the data reported in it "undermined the very foundation of the Populist [Narodnik] outlook."[427] Looking at alternative socialist frameworks, Plekhanov began to learn German in order to read more of Marx's works.[428] Looking back on this period of his intellectual development, Plekhanov recalled that "the more we became acquainted with the theories of scientific socialism [a popular term for Marxism], the more doubtful became our [Narodnik beliefs] to us, from the side

422 Baron*, Plekhanov,* 44.

423 Ibid.

424 Walicki, *The Controversy Over Capitalism*, 147.

425 Baron, "Plekhanov and the Origins," *Readings in Russian History*, 83.

426 Ibid.

427 Plekhanov, quoted in Baron, "Plekhanov and the Origins," *The Russian Review,* 44.

428 Baron, "Plekhanov and the Origins," *Readings in Russian History*, 85.

of both theory and practice."[429] In September of 1883, Plekhanov founded the *Emancipation of Labor Group*. Beginning with just five members and quickly reduced to three, this group, at that time, "was practically the whole of the [Russian] Marxist movement," historian Tony Cliff claims.[430] Though the group began in exile for a whole decade, historians widely view this organization as the foundation of Russian Marxism.[431]

Repudiating Russian Historical Exceptionalism

In 1883, Plekhanov wrote the first major Russian Marxist work, titled *Socialism and Political Struggle*. A year later, he published an expanded version of this pamphlet in the form a book titled *Our Differences*, i.e., distinguishing the ideological differences between Marxism and its primary rivals in Russia: the Narodniks. Plekhanov's earlier Narodnik convictions were founded upon the belief that Russia would exceptionally proceed onto socialism without a prior stage of capitalist development. Now, however, he asserted: "If ... we ask ourselves once again, 'Will Russia have to pass through the school of capitalism?' we shall reply unhesitatingly with another question: 'Why should she not finish the school she has already entered?"[432] Here, Plekhanov unequivocally asserted that Russia had entered "the capitalist phase of development" and that "all other routes are closed to her."[433] Consequently, a series of implications refuting the old belief in Russia's advantages of underdevelopment necessarily followed. Russian 'backwardness' did not provide a shortcut to socialism; rather, its distinctive features of pre-capitalistic society, once believed by the Slavophiles and Narodniks to convey a unique historical trajectory would instead be homogenized along the Western image of modernity.

Dispelling the Advantages of 'Backwardness'

Central to Plekhanov's argument, against Narodnik ideology, that the capitalist age had dawned in Russia, was that the peasant commune had begun to disintegrate. Plekhanov, insulting his old faction, asserted, "If one listens to our [Narodniks] then one really might think that the Russian commune was an organization quite exceptional in its durability."[434] However, after putting the commune through a deep statistical analysis, Plekhanov concluded that the future did not belong to these alleged harbingers of Russians socialism. Citing extensive data, Plekhanov observed that the Russian peasantry were gradually abandoning their communal habits and instead showing trends of "increasing inequality and individualism;" particularly, they began selling, purchasing, and renting land under profit incentives and even began employing hired

429 Plekhanov, quoted in Baron, "Plekhanov and the Origins," *Russian Review,* 45-6.

430 Cliff, *Building the Party,* 25.

431 Baron, "Plekhanov and the Origins," *The Russian Review,* 51.

432 Plekhanov, "Our Differences," 1972, 706.

433 Plekhanov, quoted in Baron, "Plekhanov and the Origins," *Russian Review,* 46.

434 Georgi Plekhanov, "Our Differences," in *Documentary History of Russian Thought: From the Enlightenment to Marxism*, trans. W.J. Leatherbarrow and D.C. Offord (1873; repr., Ann Arbor: Ardis, 1987), 294.

labor.[435] Accordingly, Plekhanov deduced that the new capitalistic forces beginning to emerge in Russia were thus creating an economic environment "that cannot be sustained via the old system" of agrarian communalism, for "the development of a monetary economy and commodity production gradually undermines communal landholding."[436] Eventually, the peasant commune would undergo "drastic metamorphoses which [would] finally bring about its complete decay."[437]

At the same time, while "the previous 'ancestral' foundations of [the peasant commune's] economy are crumbling," Plekhanov insisted that "new forms of labor and life are in the process of formation"—specifically "in the industrial centers."[438] In other words, while the agrarian peasantry—so long believed to be the agent of Russia's socialist revolution—was fading away, a new socioeconomic class was coming into existence in the industrial regions under these new historical forces, i.e., the formation of a proletariat. Moreover, Plekhanov noted that the agrarian peasantry was transforming into this new class of urban laborers: "Our [Narodniks] are shedding bitter tears over the transformation of the Russian peasant into a proletarian."[439] Moreover, Plekhanov declared that "if capitalism was to dominate the economic life of Russia, the proletariat," which he described as "that inevitable by-product of capitalist development," would now, "rather than the peasantry," serve as the "mass basis for the socialist revolution" in this new age of struggle.[440] Consequently, Plekhanov concluded that these newly-formed proletarians would be the sole carriers of the revolutionary mission: "Only the working class in our industrial centers is able to assume the initiative for a communist movement."[441] In other words, the shift from Narodism to Marxism replaced the rural worker with the urban toiler as the new agent of revolutionary change.

Taken altogether, Plekhanov proclaimed the triumph of Western historical universalism over the idea of Russian historical exceptionalism. He believed that these new developments would bring about the erasure of Russia's 'backwardness': "a complete negation of the Asiatic stagnation that was once Russia's distinctive feature."[442] He argued that these trends confirmed that Russia would not proceed along some unique path of historical development touted by the

435 Georgi Plekhanov, *Selected Philosophical Works in Five Volumes*, trans. Julius Katzer (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1976), vol. 1, 451.

436 Plekhanov, "Our Differences," *Documentary History,* 294-5.

437 Ibid., 295. Interestingly, Plekhanov also noted that it was the abolition of serfdom in 1861 which first put into motion these new forces that were finally coming into visibility: "Until the elimination of serfdom almost all Russia's social economy and ... state economy too was a natural economy favorable in the highest degree to the preservation of the commune ... The reform of the 19th February [abolition of serfdom] was a necessary concession to the new economic current ... The commune did not know how and indeed was unable to adapt to the new conditions. Its organism broke down and only the blind now fail to notice the signs of its decay." See Plekhanov, ibid., 296.

438 Plekhanov*, Selected Philosophical Works,* vol. 1, 120.

439 Georgi Plekhanov, "On the Tasks of the Socialists in the Campaign Against Famine in Russia," in *A Source Book For Russian History from Early Times to 1917*, ed. Ralph T. Fisher, Alan D. Ferguson, and Andrew Lossky, trans. George Vernadsky, vol. 3 (1892; repr., New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1972), 709.

440 Plekhanov, quoted in Baron, "Plekhanov and the Origins," *Russian Review,* 49.

441 Plekhanov, "Our Differences," *Source Book,* 707.

442 Plekhanov, "On the Tasks of the Socialists in the Campaign Against Famine in Russia," 709.

Narodniks, and the Slavophiles before them; rather, the nation would follow the Western path of societal evolution. In conclusion, Plekhanov declared, in "Russian history, there is no essential difference from the history of Western Europe."[443] Should these recent developments continue at this pace, then "our socialism will cease to be 'Russian,' and will merge with world socialism, as expressed in the works of Marx, Engels."[444] Touting the universal validity of the Western example, Plekhanov, at the Congress of the newly-formed Russian Social Democratic Workers Party (the Marxist Party), insisted that the Russian Marxist revolutionary program would operate along the same principles as Marxists "of all other countries."[445] In sum, he believed that Russia was now being drawn into "a universal historical moment."[446] In this way, Plekhanov thus resumed the tradition of the Russian 'Westernizers.' In fact, Plekhanov was quite conscious of his position within the traditional dichotomy of Russian intellectual history. According to Walicki, Plekhanov viewed Russian Marxism as "the final stage in the development of Russian Westernism;" specifically, he saw the ideological clashing between the Narodniks and his Marxists as a "continuation of the famous controversy between Slavophiles and Westernizers" of the 1830s-40s—from over 40 years prior.[447] Given these new socioeconomic trends that were seemingly aligning Russian historical development with the path traversed by the West, Plekhanov thus believed: "The time has come to dispel the Slavophile fog," by instead embracing the universal applicability of the Western historical model in Russia.[448]

Furthermore, underpinning Plekhanov's immense confidence in his claims that Russia would truly take the Western path was his unwavering subscription to Marx's philosophy of historical *determinism*. Indeed, the "central category" of Plekhanov's interpretation of Marxism was this stubborn belief in the "inevitability" and "necessity" of the historical stages laid out by Marx.[449] Thus, against Narodnik assertions of *voluntarism*, Plekhanov asserted the Marxist view of predetermined stages commanded by the "irresistible march of history."[450] Through this philosophical stance, Plekhanov thus insisted that his demand for the Western capitalist development of Russia was not based on the fact it was the best course of action, but rather because there was simply no other possible choice: obedience to such laws of history were "necessary and inevitable," he declared.[451] Indeed, Marx propounded this principle in the preface of the first

443 Plekhanov, quoted in Baron, "Plekhanov and the Origins," *Russian Review,* 50.

444 Plekhanov, "Our Differences," *Source Book,* 706.

445 Georgi Plekhanov, "The Program of the Second Congress of the Russian Social Democratic Workers Party," in *A Source Book For Russian History from Early Times to 1917*, trans. George Vernadsky, vol. 3 (1903; repr., New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1972), 711–12.

446 Plekhanov, "Our Differences," *Source Book,* 707.

447 Plekhanov, quoted in Walicki, *The Controversy Over Capitalism*, 163.

448 Plekhanov, "On the Tasks of the Socialists in the Campaign Against Famine in Russia," 709.

449 Walicki, *The Controversy Over Capitalism*, 158.

450 Plekhanov, quoted in ibid., 159.

451 Georgi Plekhanov, "Program for the *Emancipation of Labor Group*," in *A Source Book For Russian History from Early Times to 1917*, ed. Ralph T. Fisher, Alan D. Ferguson, and Andrew Lossky, trans. George Vernadsky, vol. 3 (1884; repr., New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1972), 707.

edition of *Capital*,

> The evolution of every economic formation is a process of natural history, objective and independent of human will: a society 'can neither clear by bold leaps, nor remove by legal enactments, the obstacles offered by the successive phases of its normal development.[452]

Plekhanov soon announced that he was ready to make of Marx's *Capital* "a Procrustean bed" for Russia's course of historical development.[453] In other words, Marx's prescriptions had to be executed "with mathematical exactness" in all circumstances.[454] Russian capitalism was now deemed "historically *inevitable*" and a "necessary stage on the road to socialism;" consequently, "unless it goes through the school of capitalism, Russia cannot become capable of putting the socialist system into practice."[455]

However, despite these promising trends and signs of capitalist development, Russia was still far from truly completing such prerequisites deemed so essential for an eventual socialist revolution. Indeed, historian Simon Clarke notes, "The dilemma faced by Russian Marxists was that their revolutionary ideas ran far ahead of the degree of development of the workers movement" and its material conditions.[456] As such, Plekhanov sighed that "Present-day Russia ... suffers ... from the insufficiency of capitalist development."[457] Here, he remained true to Marx's insistence that all stages of history must be processed through in its entirety before a society could move onto the next:

> No social order is ever destroyed before all the productive forces for which it is sufficient have been developed, and new superior relations of production never replace older ones before the material conditions for their existence have matured within the framework of the old society.[458]

Thus, Plekhanov concluded that Russia ought to wait for all features of Western capitalist society to fully take root—to properly progress through time in strict accordance with the Western historical itinerary and all of its intermediary stages of development.

Pro-Liberal Politics

Necessitating Liberalism

Since Plekhanov insisted on the necessity of Russia to emulate, in full, Western historical development, this meant that Russia not only had to complete the capitalist economic stage, but it also had to undergo such a phase's accompanying political stage of liberalism. In Western European history, this was the political component of the transition from feudalism to capitalism, typically exemplified by the French Revolution of

452 Karl Marx, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*, trans. Ben Fowkes, vol. 1 (Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1982), 92.

453 Plekhanov quoted in Baron, "Plekhanov and the Origins," *Russian Review,* 50.

454 Plekhanov, Izbrannye filosofskie proizvedeniya, vol. ii (Moscow, 1956), 621, quoted in Walicki, *The Controversy Over Capitalism*, 158.

455 Georgi Plekhanov, *Selected Philosophical Works in Five Volumes*, trans. V. Yeryomin, vol. 1 (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1974), 181.

456 Simon Clarke, "Was Lenin a Marxist? The Populist Roots of Marxism-Leninism," *Historical Materialism* 3, no. 1 (January 1998): 18.

457 Plekhanov, "Program for the *Emancipation of Labor Group*," 708.

458 Karl Marx, *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy,* trans. S.W. Ryazanskaya (Moscow, Progress Publishers: 1977), 21.

1789, in which the absolute monarchy gave way to an ascendant bourgeois- capitalist class which established constitutional and democratic institutions.[459] Specifically, this historical category was expected to bring in a "bourgeois-constitutional regime;" this was the 'liberal' political superstructure of, and counterpart to, the economic stage of capitalism—a Western political paradigm that had for so long appeared impossible to establish against the perpetual autocratic Tsardom of Russia.[460] Since the bourgeoise was expected to usher in this pre-socialist legal and governing structure, Engels thus declared, "the bourgeoise is just as necessary a precondition of the socialist revolution as the proletariat itself."[461] This was to represent a new socio-political age, at the end of which would then finally arise the socialist phase.[462] Thus, according to Marx's blueprint for the road to socialism, the completion of this essential, intermediary historical stage concluded with the working class rising up to overthrow the "liberal bourgeoise."[463]

However, Russian society was conspicuously missing the ingredients needed to create this liberal stage as there was not yet a bourgeoise to initiate it and then be overthrown. Indeed, Plekhanov noted that "one of the most harmful consequences of this backwardness of production [in Russia] has been and still is the underdevelopment of our middle class [i.e., the bourgeoise]."[464] The implication, then, was that Russian socialists had to ironically await the maturation of their class enemy, who were meant to exploit them, in order to manifest this political stage—all for the sake of strictly replaying the Western course of history. Plekhanov was so insistent on emulating the Western model that he held that socialists even had to help the bourgeoise come into being and support them in establishing their liberal politics. Under this framework, the socialists had to cooperate with and aid a rising bourgeois demographic in their (expected) historical struggle against the feudal monarchy—for the sake of winning political and constitutional liberties. As historian Simon Clarke notes, Plekhanov's strict Marxist observance meant that the socialists "had to forge a tactical alliance with the liberal bourgeoise," specifically with the aim of "democratic reform against ... the autocracy;" further, "the peasantry could not provide such an ally," for peasants were deemed by Marxist dogma to be a "doomed class which sought to resist the development of capitalism" which this stage of struggle had sought to bring forth.[465] Similarly, Pavel Axelrod—Plekhanov's comrade and the second most influential Marxist in Russia at the time—in an appeal to Marxist historical laws, mandated that "we cannot ... avoid by any devices ... the objective historical demand of 'political cooperation' between the proletariat and the bourgeoise in absolutist Russia."[466] In other words, Marxism demanded "precisely a rapprochement and

459 For reference, see James Livesey, *Making Democracy in the French Revolution* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001).

460 Plekhanov, "Stat'i iz 'Chernogo Peredela,'" *Sochinennia*, I, 124-5, quoted in Baron, "Plekhanov and the Origins," *Russian Review,* 46.

461 Engels, quoted in Walicki, *The Controversy Over Capitalism*, 145.

462 Ibid.

463 Ibid. 178-9.

464 Plekhanov, "Program for the *Emancipation of Labor Group*," 708.

465 Simon Clarke, "Was Lenin a Marxist? The Populist Roots of Marxism-Leninism," *Historical Materialism* 3, no. 1 (January 1998): 19.

466 Pavel Akselrod, "Speech at the Fourth Congress of the Russian Social Democratic Workers Party (Stockholm, April 1906; 13th Session: On the

an alliance with the liberals in the common struggle for political freedom."[467]

This thus amounted to a model that refuted the very political liberalism opposed by the Narodnik and Slavophile political traditions. As we recall from the previous chapter, the Narodniks were fundamentally "opposed" to the liberal struggle, for their objective was "not to win political rights within the state system" nor even to "reform" it; they felt that "political freedom ... had little or no relevance, they thought, to the needs of peasant Russia."[468] Moreover, "political liberty was intimately associated with, and beneficial mainly to, to the bourgeoise," i.e., supporting such a cause would simply empower another ruling class continue the oppression of the very laborers they sought to liberate.[469] Thus, whereas the Narodniks sought to bypass this stage of capitalist politics and proceed directly to the socialist one, Plekhanov instead preached its necessity—in line with the Western formula of historical progression. Thus, against Narodism and Slavophilism's long-held resentment of liberalism, Plekhanov declared that the upcoming stage of revolution ought to be fought in "the interests of the liberals."[470]

Touting his Marxist formula of Western historical progression, such a stage was seen as necessary on the long road to socialism. Along this rigid framework, Plekhanov "by no means believe[d] in the early possibility of a socialist government in Russia," for such an era ought to be preceded first by a parliamentary democracy.[471] Thus, Plekhanov argued that only after this stage had been completed— which should then transform Russia into a "Western-style democracy," could the working class then finally receive the green light for overthrowing what would then be the new ruling bourgeoise: to enter the socialist stage, at last.[472] Indeed, Plekhanov crucially synthesized the liberal political struggle with the socialist objective, a heretical modification in the eyes of the Narodniks. He argued that only by way of liberalism could socialism ultimately be attained.

Thus, instead of the single-staged revolution touted by the Narodniks, Plekhanov put forth the necessity of a two-staged path to socialism. Moreover, Plekhanov repeatedly stressed the need to cleanly separate the two stages of the expected revolutions, i.e., to not rush or neglect the crucial intermediary period of development. In *Socialism and Political Struggle*, Plekhanov insisted that one should limit the aims of the first revolution to strictly liberal-bourgeois objectives, i.e., the "demand for a democratic constitution," and to not overstep into the socialist demands of the next phase.[473] Thus, against Narodnik urgency and immediacy, Plekhanov preached what he called "the long and difficult capitalist way"— arguing that the ul-

Situation and Class Tasks of the Proletariat," in *A Source Book for Russian History from Early Times to 1917*, ed. George Vernadsky et al., vol. 3 (1906; repr., New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1972), 716.

467 Walicki, *The Controversy Over Capitalism*, 154.

468 Baron, "Plekhanov and the Origins," *Russian Review,* 47.

469 Ibid.

470 Plekhanov, *Selected Philosophical Works,* 116-17.

471 Robert Mayer, "The Dictatorship of the Proletariat from Plekhanov to Lenin," Studies in Eastern European Thought 45, no. 4 (December 1993): 262.

472 Plekhanov, *Selected Philosophical Works,* 117.

473 Ibid.

timate socialist revolution must be separated from the initial "political revolution" (the overthrow of the absolute monarchy) "by a period of time sufficiently long [enough] to enable the fullest capitalist development of the country," which would develop the necessary liberal political structure.[474]

Accordingly, in the Manifesto of the First Congress of the Russian Social Democratic Workers Party in 1898, Plekhanov emphasized a complete commitment to "making the attainment of political freedom the chief immediate task" of the revolutionary program: "The Russian working class must [now] bear ... the cause of achieving political freedom."[475] In the program of his own *Emancipation of Labor Group*, too, he declared that "the immediate task" of the party was "to create free political institutions in our fatherland," struggling for "a democratic constitution."[476] This demand for socialist participation and commitment to the struggle for political liberties in Russia represented "the first and foremost point of departure of Marxism from classical [Narodism],"[477] the latter of which had viewed such a struggle as only benefitting a class enemy, and hence continuative to their direct objectives.

Working Class Consciousness and Self-Liberation

But what was important about establishing political frameworks seemingly only beneficial to the class enemy, which has thus far been stringently admonished by the Slavophiles and Narodniks? Plekhanov argued that the historical purpose of having this liberal phase prior to the eventual socialist revolution was for the sake of the working class gaining "political maturity," awakening their political consciousness.[478] Thus, he emphasized "the value of political liberty" not just for the rising bourgeoise but also for the working class,[479] specifically for the sake of politically educating the Russian proletariat in the "political school" of legal activity in a "law-observing parliamentary state."[480] Plekhanov explained that this "indispensable" step was "the first step toward accomplishing the great historical mission of the proletariat"—in their long, gradual journey toward achieving a properly-managed socialism.[481] In particular, this political process was meant to raise up "an advanced working class with political experience and education," ensuring that "the proletariat is conscious of its own strength."[482] In other words, Plekhanov demanded that the working class be prepared, under the institutions of political liberalism, "for conscious participation in the sociopolitical

474 Plekhanov, *Sochinennia*, III, 325, quoted in Walicki, *The Controversy Over Capitalism*, 156.

475 Georgi Plekhanov, "The Manifesto of the First Congress of the Russian Social Democratic Workers Party (March 1898)," in *A Source Book For Russian History from Early Times to 1917*, ed. Ralph T. Fisher, Alan D. Ferguson, and Andrew Lossky, trans. George Vernadsky, vol. 3 (1903; repr., New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1972), 710.

476 Plekhanov, "Program for the *Emancipation of Labor Group*," 708.

477 Pipes, "Russian Marxism," 328.

478 Plekhanov, *Selected Philosophical Works,* 117

479 Plekhanov, "Stat'i iz 'Chernogo Peredela,'" *Sochinennia*, I, 125, quoted in Baron, "Plekhanov and the Origins," *The Russian Review,* 47.

480 Plekhanov. *Sochinennia*, III, 325, quoted in Walicki, *The Controversy Over Capitalism*, 156.

481 Plekhanov, "The Manifesto of the First Congress," 710.

482 Plekhanov, *Sochineniia*, II, 76-77, in Mayer, "The Dictatorship of the Proletariat," 261.

movement."[483]

In this way, Plekhanov saw the liberal-bourgeois phase as necessarily awakening the working class to their own capabilities of political activity and struggle—becoming class-conscious—so that they would be ready to later lead their own socialist revolution by themselves. Indeed, Plekhanov repeatedly insisted that "this class can achieve liberation only by its own conscious efforts."[484] Such a stance was in line with Marx's vision of an ultimate socialist revolution launched by the workers themselves: Marx held that "the emancipation of the working class must be the work of the working class itself."[485] Engels summed up Marx's stance in the preface of the 1890 German edition of *the Communist Manifesto*: "Marx rested solely upon the intellectual development of the working class" as the basis of a self-liberation.[486] Thus, Plekhanov believed that "only when this class begins *consciously* to address itself to the root causes of its servitude and to the essential conditions of its emancipation" can one "expect" a proper socialist revolution.[487]

Opposing Intelligentsia Elitism

By necessitating workers' consciousness, this stance was fundamentally against an intelligentsia takeover of the revolution. Plekhanov warned that no other group or leadership—not even his own socialist intellectual class—should take the reins of a revolution which ought to "remain a class movement of the working masses."[488] Indeed, he insisted that "No executive, administrative or any other committee is entitled to represent the working class in history ... the emancipation of that class must be its own work."[489] Therefore, Plekhanov was against any form of a revolutionary coup or 'seizure of power' that could be launched to interrupt the gradual process of the working masses developing political consciousness and building up the revolution through their own merits.

These views directly collided against the strategy put forth by Revisionist Narodnik strategies, exemplified by Petr Tkachev and *The People's Will*, of an intelligentsia co-opting of the revolutionary process on behalf of a people who were yet politically conscious. In fact, Plekhanov, in *Our Differences*, explicitly attacked "the adherents of the *Nabat [Toscin]* group" (Tkachev's faction) for believing that "revolutionaries had only to 'seize power,' and the people would immediately adopt the socialist forms of communal life."[490] In *Socialism and Political Struggle*, Plekhanov thus put forth a resolute rejection of this strategy, instead demanding that the revolutionary strategy be focused on having the working masses themselves be the ones to carry out their own liberation: "The social democrat [Marxist] wants the worker to *make his own*

483 Plekhanov, "Program for the *Emancipation of Labor Group*," 708.

484 Plekhanov, "Our Differences," *Source Book,* 707.

485 Karl Marx, quoted in Raju Das, "Politics of Marx as Non-sectarian Revolutionary Class Politics: An Interpretation in the Context of the 20th and 21st Centuries," *Class, Race and Corporate Power* 7, no. 1 (2019): 2.

486 Friedrich Engels, "Preface to the German Edition of 1890," *The Communist Manifesto*, ed. Jeffrey C. Isaac (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012), 110-111.

487 Plekhanov, *Our Differences,* DH 295.

488 Plekhanov, The Manifesto of the First Congress of the RSDWP, March 1898, SB 710.

489 Plekhanov, *Sochineniia*, 2: 166, 288, in Walicki 155.

490 Plekhanov, *Our Differences,* SB 706.

revolution," as opposed to the revisionist-Narodnik strategy which "demands that the worker *support* a revolution that others have instigated and directed on his behalf."[491] Thus, Plekhanov accused this form of praxis as "[wanting] to replace the initiative of the class by that of a committee and to change the cause of the whole working population ... into the cause of a secret organization" rather than that of a mass movement.[492]

This stance was again grounded in the deterministic framework of Marxism. Marx had firmly rejected the idea of a sudden seizure of power by a minority group of revolutionaries executed without the masses, condemning such an act as hinging on "the will, rather than the actual conditions ... as the chief factor in the revolution."[493] Instead, Marx believed that without such a voluntaristic intervention, the development of the masses' political consciousness would naturally evolve, deterministically, under the bourgeois-liberal stage of domination. Oppressed by the bourgeoise but habituated to the new avenues of political struggle which these oppressors brought with them, the masses of oppressed workers would, on their own accord, develop the necessary political consciousness to eventually perform the fated revolution.[494] In this vein, Plekhanov insisted that "social revolution hinges ... not on the 'possible' success of conspirators but on the sure and irresistible course of social evolution."[495] In fact, Marx held that a paradigmatic shift such as a socialist revolution ought not be a momentary event but rather an epochal process.[496] Plekhanov, too, clarified that "This process ... takes place only gradually ... over a very long period, but once it has reached a certain degree ... it can no longer be halted by any 'seizures of power' on the part of this or that secret society."[497] As such, Plekhanov believed that a "seizure of power by a minority" would thus be "premature," consequently "perpetuat[ing] the [political] immaturity of the class" that was supposed to develop gradually on its own: in such a scenario, "the people, far from being educated for socialism, would even lose all capacity for further progress."[498] Therefore, Plekhanov argued that "the function" of a Marxist revolutionary was not to *make* the revolution on behalf of the struggling masses, but rather to patiently wait for the people to gain consciousness so as to generate their own organic movement.[499]

Interestingly, despite this justification via Marxist determinism, Plekhanov, here, essentially retained his pre-Marxist, classical Narodnik position. Indeed, as we recall from the beginning of this chapter, Plekhanov, while still a Narodnik, dramatically refused to join *The People's Will* for their abandonment of the mass struggle in favor of a conspiratorial seizure of power by a revolutionary minority. In an early essay

491 Plekhanov, *Our Differences,* SB 706.

492 Plekhanov, *Sochineniia*, 2: 279, in Walicki 155.

493 Marx, *The Revolutions of 1848*, 341.

494 Ibid.

495 Plekhanov, "Our Differences," Documentary History, 295.

496 Karl Marx, *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy,* trans. S.W. Ryazanskaya (Moscow, Progress Publishers: 1977), 21.

497 Plekhanov, "Our Differences," Documentary History, 295.

498 Plekhanov, *Sochineniia*, III, 81, quoted in Walicki, *The Controversy Over Capitalism*, 156.

499 Plekhanov, *Sochineniia*, II, 279, quoted in Mayer, "The Dictatorship of the Proletariat,"

from his Narodnik days, Plekhanov remarked that "If ... the socialists ... would lose contact with the ... masses," then the movement "would gain little or nothing from the overthrow of absolutism."[500] So, when "the majority" of Narodniks began to turn away from the old ideal of mass struggle and toward Tkachev's revisionist model of a top-down revolution via the seizure of power performed by the intelligentsia minority, Plekhanov refused to join them on principle of staying true to the old principle of a bottom-up struggle of classical Narodism.[501] In this way, when Plekhanov converted from Narodnism to Marxism in the early 1880s, he did not have to deeply modify this aspect of his commitment to popular self-activity. Evidently, he wrote in the preface to his Marxist work *Socialism and Political Struggle*:

> The desire to work among the people and for the people, the certitude that 'the emancipation of the working classes must be conquered by the working classes themselves'—*this practical tendency of our Narodism is just as dear to me as it used to be*.[502]

Though no longer a Narodnik, Plekhanov continued to reject that particular brand of a top-down socialist revolution—but now justified from a Marxist perspective of the deterministic stages of history.

Opposing Authoritarianism

Furthermore, Plekhanov's stance against the strategy of an intelligentsia hegemony over the masses fundamentally warned against the revolution descending into authoritarianism. Believing that "a high level of economic development" and thus "a high level of proletarian class consciousness are conditions *sine qua non* of true socialism," Plekhanov argued that trying to organize socialism from above, in a still-underdeveloped society, would see the authorities in charge "resort to the ideals of patriarchal and authoritative communism"—because the new regime would have to unnaturally force socialist conditions into existence; such would be the consequences of launching a premature, voluntarist seizure of power against the determinstic, stage-by-stage, script of history that would have naturally evolved the desired conditions.[503] Outlining his fears, Plekhanov expressed his concern that "*Narodnaia Volia's [The People's Will's]* idea of a provisional government will not hand over the power it has seized to the representatives of the people, but will become a permanent government."[504] In an article critiquing the Revisionist Narodnik strategy, Plekhanov underscored his conviction that an authoritarian regime would be the by-product of a "working class [that] has not been prepared for the socialist revolution."[505] In an 1890 essay on the French Revolution, Plekhanov explained that a "revolutionary dictatorship" formed, then, precisely because the historical conditions, and thus the people's consciousness, were not yet ready for that

500 Plekhanov, "Stat'i iz 'Chernogo Peredela,'" *Sochinennia*, I, 125-7, quoted in Baron, "Plekhanov and the Origins," *Russian Review,* 48.

501 Mayer, "The Dictatorship of the Proletariat," 260.

502 Plekhanov, *Selected Philosophical Works,* vol. I, 49.

503 Plekhanov, *Sochinennia*, vol. III, 81, quoted in Walicki, *The Controversy Over Capitalism*, 155-156.

504 Plekhanov, *Sochineniia*, II, 81-82, quoted in Mayer, "The Dictatorship of the Proletariat," 262.

505 Plekhanov, *Sochineniia*, II, 294-5, quoted in ibid., 263.

stage of revolution:

> only terror could preserve the dominance of the proletariat given its position at the time and the completely insoluble economic contradictions ... If the proletariat had been more developed, if the economic conditions necessary for securing its well-being had existed, then there would not have been any need to resort to terrorist measures.[506]

Therefore, one had to wait until socialist conditions became an "objective necessity of economic development," in accordance with the deterministic laws of history, which would then render any coercive or dictatorial measures unnecessary.[507] In the proper scenario of constructing the socialist society in accordance with the natural tempo of Marxist stagism, Plekhanov believed, the revolution would be "democratically" achieved, in a manner that featured "popular sovereignty," "universal, equal, amid direct suffrage," "broad local self-government," and "unlimited freedom of conscience, speech, the press, assembly, strikes, and unions."[508]

Historiographical Misinterpretations of Marx

The term "Dictatorship of the Proletariat" is frequently misunderstood for its presumed connotations of authoritarianism. Historian Hal Draper has successfully shown that this phrase, coined by Marx and Engels, *did not* possess the anti-democratic connotations it acquired in the 20th century, i.e., under the Soviet Union. Indeed, this slogan "did not refer to ... a type of government," but rather "merely indicated the class content of the future socialist state."[509] The term 'dictatorship' when used by Marx and Engels, professor Robert Mayer clarifies, simply denoted which social class was dominant in a given era, i.e., a concept of the class-wide rule of the proletariat through democratic institutions.[510] In his 1874 article "Program of the Blanquist Commune Refugees," Engels contrasted the dictatorship of "the small number of those who made the coup" against "a dictatorship ... of the entire revolutionary *class*, the proletariat," the latter of which stood for the antithesis of dictatorship of a party or government.[511] Similarly, Plekhanov clarified that this "dictatorship of the proletariat" only denoted a social class gaining control of a state and "not a state of siege or coercive measures," instead being "completely consistent with democratic practices and civil peace;" in fact, "parliamentary and other legal political activities ... do not contradict the dictatorship of the proletariat; *they prepare for it*."[512] Thus, one of Plekhanov's most emphatic points in *Socialism and Political Struggle* criticized the tradition promulgated by Revisionist Narodniks such as Tkachev and those in *The People's Will* on his belief that "there is no more difference between heaven and earth than between the dictatorship

506 Plekhanov, *Sochineniia*, IV, 62-63, quoted in ibid., 264.

507 Plekhanov, *Sochineniia*, IV, 64, quoted in ibid.

508 Plekhanov, "Program of the Second Congress," 712.

509 Hal Draper, *Karl Marx's Theory of Revolution*, vol. 3 (New York: *Monthly Review* Press, 1986), 213.

510 Mayer, "The Dictatorship of the Proletariat," 257-8.

511 Friedrich Engels, Werke (Berlin: Dietz, 1970-1989), XVIII: 529, quoted in ibid., 258.

512 Plekhanov, *Sochineniia*, XI, 317-318, quoted in ibid., 266.

of a *class* and that of a *group* of revolutionar[ies]."[513]

Yet, nevertheless, the term became popularly associated with its use under the Soviet Union's authoritarian regime. Hal Draper, in *'The Dictatorship of the Proletariat' from Marx to Lenin* argues that Lenin, the primary leader of the revolution and founder of the Soviet state, inherited this distorted dictatorial interpretation of Marx's terminology from his former mentor Plekhanov.[514] In fact, many other works have sought to argue this narrative that identified the origins of Soviet authoritarianism via Plekhanov.[515] However, as this chapter has shown, Plekhanov firmly and consistently opposed such authoritarian measures as antithetical to the bottom-up model of praxis that he had maintained consistently in his Orthodox-Marxist framework of deferring to the development of the masses' consciousness to lead their own revolution of democratic objectives.

So, where then does the eventual authoritarian nature of the 'Marxist' Russian revolution and Soviet rule come from, then? The following section argues that it came from Plekhanov's successor, Vladimir Lenin, who acquired such ideas from the Revisionist Narodnik branch of thought rejected by Plekhanov.

513 Plekhanov, *Sochineniia*, II, 77, quoted in ibid., 261.

514 See Hal Draper, *The "Dictatorship of the Proletariat" from Marx to Lenin* (New York: *Monthly Review* Press, 1987), 81- 83.

515 See Jonathan Frankel, "Voluntarism, Maximalism; and the Group for the Emancipation of Labor (1883-1892)," *Revolution and Politics in Russia*, ed. A. & J. Rabinowitch (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1972) and Neil Harding, *Lenin's Political Thought* (New York: St. Martin's Press).

Part II: Historical Exceptionalism Reincarnated

Context: Russia's Persistent Underdevelopment

In stark contrast to the initial socioeconomic trends of the 1880s and 90s that had inspired Plekhanov to believe that Russia had finally embarked on the Western course of development, the turn of the century presented a vastly-different picture. Despite the initial blimp of rapid industrial progress that had suggested a firm entry into the capitalist paradigm of the Marxist standard, Russia remained a predominantly-agrarian society. In Russia, unlike Western European models on which the Marxist framework was based, proletarians laboring in urban factories were a far rarer sight than the continued norm of peasants toiling in the rural fields. In fact, over 90 percent of the national work force was still legally classified under the peasant demographic.[516] By the start of the 1900s, the numbers showed that agriculture was still leading over industry and also remained the primary source of income for the Russian people.[517] In short, the pace of Russian industrialization had slowed down.

Moreover, it was also revealed that the economic progress thought to have been made was not as significant as had been presented by the government. Specifically, the economic policies of Witte that had originally led to an impression of a rapidly industrializing Russia turned out to be vastly inflated and misleading. Indeed, statistical investigations on Witte's administration exposed the fact that the minister's reports of a revenue increase of 73 per cent between 1890 and 1900 was in actuality a mere 22 per cent, a rise that was explained by a simple increase in taxation during that era.[518] Additionally, the total revenue in the government budget of 1900 was overreported by 52 percent of the actual amount.[519] Ultimately, by the end of the decade, Russian conditions remained "far behind those of Western Europe."[520] Witte himself admitted in 1899 that "In Russia this [industrial] growth is yet too slow, because there is yet too little industry, *capital,* and spirit of enterprise."[521] Thus, after a decade of Witte's policies, "Russia had not escaped from the old impasse."[522]

Why did Russia fail to sustain enough economic growth to manifest the Marxist vision of a full capitalist transition? The answer lies in the unnatural character of Russian industrialization—a phenomenon which nearly entirely hinged upon the state's artificial attempts to develop the society against its natural rate of growth. In a private letter to the Tsar, now enti-

516 Theodore Von Laue, "Russian Peasants in the Factory, 1892-1904," *The Journal of Economic History* 21, no. 1 (March 1961): 63.

517 Theodore Von Laue, "The High Cost and the Gamble of the Witte System: A Chapter in the Industrialization of Russia" in *Readings in Russian History*, ed. Sidney Harcave, vol. II (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1962): 74.

518 Ibid., 71.

519 Ibid.

520 Ibid., 73.

521 Sergei Witte, "Secret Memorandum on the Industrialization of Russia," in *A Source Book for Russian History from Early Times to 1917*, ed. Ralph T. Fisher, trans. George Vernadsky, vol. 3 (1899; New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1972), 758.

522 Von Laue, "The High Cost and Gamble," 72.

tled 'The Secret Memorandum of 1899,' Witte admitted that the growth of the nation's new commercial economy was almost completely dependent upon constant government intervention: "Every measure of the government ... now affects the entire economic organism and influences its further development."[523] The primary issue with this methodology was that such government policies had sought to force Russian industries to produce at a high level before a mass market emerged within the nation. Unable to rely on domestic revenues but still insistent on catching up to Western modernity, the state relied on foreign loans: "The influx of foreign capital is, in the considered opinion of the minister of finance, the sole means by which our industry can speedily [develop]," Witte wrote.[524] But in doing so, Russia accumulated the largest foreign debt of any government in the world.[525] In this way, these new Russian industries came into being without any relationship to the Russian consumer. As such, State Comptroller General Lobko stated in his 1900 report to the Tsar that "there is no more doubt that the crisis is caused by the artificial and excessive growth of industry in recent years;" specifically, "industry, based on ... extensive government orders" and "foreign capital" that ultimately "grew out of proportion to the development of the consumers' market, which consists chiefly of the mass of the agricultural population, to which 80% of our population belongs."[526]

Besides accumulating foreign debts, the price of the state's ambitions to artificially catch up to the Western timeline of development largely fell on the backs of the stubborn demographic which such industrial policies sought to erase: the peasantry. Such acute discrepancies between forced industrial production and a lagging domestic market translated to the peasant masses shouldering most of the increased taxes. Indeed, Witte admitted in his secret report to the Tsar, "these excessive costs have a destructive influence over the welfare of the population, particularly in agriculture. They cannot be sustained much longer."[527] General Lobko, in his report, noted that "the chief burden of that system lies undoubtedly upon the agricultural mass," who were forced "to bear almost the entire burden of direct and indirect taxes."[528] Indeed, Witte later admitted, the rural population paid for Russian industrialization.[529] Following a decade of an agricultural crisis, it became clear that the state's developmental aims could no longer be maintained once such burdens broke the peasant's back, to which Witte admitted: "the paying powers of the population" were exhausted.[530] The prevailing opinion by the end of the century was that industrialization devastated the Russian peasantry, i.e., the bulk of the nation's population.[531]

Thus, as the government became dismayed by

523 Witte, quoted in ibid., 65-6.

524 Witte, "Secret Memorandum," 757.

525 P.L. Lobko, quoted in Von Laue, "The High Cost and Gamble," 75.

526 Ibid., 74.

527 Witte, "Secret Memorandum," 759.

528 P.L. Lobko, quoted in Von Laue, "The High Cost and Gamble," 75.

529 Ibid.

530 Witte, quoted in ibid., 72

531 Ibid., 74.

this failure to sustain lasting economic growth— and with the working masses in financial ruin—Russian society at-large began to turn on Witte's policies. By 1899, the Tsar, too, lost faith in his appointee. In August 1904, Witte was forced to step down from the Ministry of Finance. The disgraced minister ultimately concluded that "Russian society and government ... were incompatible with the economic order which he envisaged."[532] With Russia's industrialization project floundering while devastating the welfare of the populace, Plekhanov's vision of the Westernization of Russia's historical development no longer appeared convincing nor desirable. As such, for radical theorists, the fork in the road opened up once more: should Russia wait out these growing pains as part of a long, multi-staged journey that, as Marx promised, would ultimately end in socialist liberation? Or should the nation seek to cut out these intermediary troubles via a more direct route to the promised land? As this dilemma returned to the forefront of Russian historical philosophy and revolutionary thought, one of Plekhanov's pupils would seek a new answer to this age-old question: Vladimir Lenin, the architect of the Russian socialist revolution.

Lenin

Historiography

Vladimir Ilyich Ulyanov "Lenin"[533] (1870-1924) was "the principal leader and organizer" of the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917—the event which established the world's first self-declared socialist state: the Soviet Union.[534] In the context of *Russian intellectual history,* Lenin is widely viewed as the culmination of nearly a century of revolutionary thought: he is remembered as the figure who finally brought the intelligentsia's long-theorized revolution from esoteric abstractions into the annals of actual history. Given the conventional narrative of Russian radical thought, described at the start of this thesis, which concentrates on its roots from the Westernizer philosophy, Lenin is thus widely viewed as the culminative product of the Westernizer school that had sought to reshape Russia along the ideals of progress and liberation learned from the Occident. Writing in 1953, British historian E.H. Carr noted that "Lenin and the other Bolshevik leaders were ... steeped, like Marx himself, in the tradition of western humanism, western rationalism and western radicalism."[535] Eight years later, German-American legal scholar Rudolf Schlesinger stated, "Lenin was the supreme Westernizer who completed the work of Peter the Great."[536] Fast forward to the mid 1990s, in the wake of the fall of the Soviet Union, the

532 Ibid., 78.

533 The surname "Lenin" was one of over 150 pseudonyms which Vladimir Ulyanov used; however, he has since been remembered almost solely by this particular moniker and will hence be referred to as "Lenin."

534 V. Myatokin, "Lenin (1870-1924)," *The Slavonic Review* 2, no. 6 (March 1924): 465; John Schwarzmantle, "Nationalism and Socialist Internationalism," *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Nationalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 646.

535 E.H. Carr, "Stalin," *Soviet Studies* 5, no. 1 (July 1953): 6.

536 Rudolf Schlesinger, "British Studies of the History of the Soviet Union," *Science & Society* 25, no. 1 (Winter 1961): 17.

historiography continued to abide by this Westernizer perspective: Professor of Government Peter Rutland noted that "from Peter the Great to Lenin ... Russian leaders have tried to inject ... Western modernity into Russian political culture;"[537] in the same decade, Mark Medish wrote of Lenin in the same sentence as Peter the Great and Gorbachev as "the great 'westernizers' of Russian history."[538] Reflecting on the series of revolutions which followed the Russian socialist revolution, Theordore Von Laue wrote a book titled *The World Revolution of Westernization: The Twentieth Century in Global Perspective*, tracing a century of this Westernizing ethos, in which Lenin was his first example.[539]

Thus, when explaining Lenin's execution of the revolution in ways that did not fit Western normativity, historians have largely conceptualized such divergences as aberrations, irregularities, or exceptions to the broader storyline of Westernization.[540] Of the scholars who have tried to provide a reasoning for Lenin's failure to fully conform to the Westernizer weltanschauung of which he was supposedly a pupil, most have portrayed such incongruences as personal quirks unique to his time and thought. Indeed, historian Michael Karpovich's study holds that Lenin's ideological peculiarities were "*sui generis*,"[541] while political scientist Robert Mayer portrays Lenin as a "genuine (if unwitting) innovator," whose deviations were "novel," and ultimately "went his own way."[542]

However, this thesis explains such peculiarities of Lenin's ideology and praxis not as anomalous 'deviations' from one monolithic Westernizer script, but instead as constituting evident symptoms of influence by another tradition: the *anti*-Westernizer heritage of thought that asserted Russian historical exceptionalism and anti-liberalism. To do so, this section explains Lenin's Marxist modifications not as sudden adaptations to his time, but rather as outgrowths of the earlier ideas of the Narodniks and Slavophiles. Hence, this section seeks to trace the idiosyncrasies of Lenin's theories and practice to lesser- known thinkers from movements which have either not been considered in relation to his Marxist milieu or have been simply categorized as hostile and antithetical to his creed.

As shown at the start of this chapter, the Narodnik ideology was formally at odds with Marxism, exemplified by Plekhanov's crusade against Narodnik doctrine. However, this section will argue that Lenin, Plekhanov's pupil,[543] was deeply influenced by much

537 Peter Rutland, "Whither Russia," *The Brown Journal of World Affairs* 2, no. 2 (Summer 1995): 84.

538 Mark Medish, "Russia: Lost and Found," *After Communism: What?* 123, no. 3 (Summer 1994): 74.

539 See Theodore H. Von Laue, *The World Revolution of Westernization: The Twentieth Century in Global Perspective* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987).

540 Meghnad Desai, *Marx's Revenge: The Resurgence of Capitalism and the Death of Static Socialism* (London: Verso, 2004), 110; E.H. Carr, *The Bolshevik Revolution, 1917-23*, 1 (Penguin, London, 1973), 110-11; Frederick Busi, "The Failure of Revolution," *The Massachussetts Review* 12, no. 3 (Summer 1971): 397-408; David Cunningham, "A Marxist Heresy? Accelerationism and its Discontents," *Radical Philosophy* 1 (2015): 29-38.

541 Michael Karpovich, "A Forerunner of Lenin: P.N. Tkachev," *The Review of Politics* 6, no. 3 (July 1944): 346.

542 Robert Mayer, "The Dictatorship of the Proletariat from Plekhanov to Lenin," *Studies in East European Thought* 45, no. 4 (December 1993): 256-7, 277.

543 Lenin first read Plekhanov's works, "without which one could not have arrived at Social Democratic [Marxist] positions." Further, Lenin described Plekhanov's *Socialism and Political Struggle* as being the Russian equivalent of *The Communist Manifesto* in terms of generational significance and influence. See Leon Trotsky, *The Young Lenin*, trans. Max Eastman (New York: Doubleday): 131, 189-90.

of the ideas of Russian historical exceptionalism promulgated by the Narodniks—and the Slavophiles before them—which his Marxist teacher so emphatically rejected. Such an argument of intellectual continuity not only fights against the secondary historiography, but also against Lenin's own public denouncements of Narodism. Additionally, this proposition contradicts the official Soviet view on the relationship between Lenin, Marxism, and Narodism, which insists that Lenin was an orthodox Marxist who, like Plekhanov, opposed Narodism by principle: as Clarke notes, "According to Marxist-Leninist orthodoxy, Populism [Narodism] and Marxism-Leninism constitute two radically opposed political and theoretical traditions."[544]

Nevertheless, it is important to note that some studies have noticed a similarity between Lenin's revolutionary tactics and those of one particular thinker: Pyotr Tkachev, the Revisionist Narodnik presented at the end of the previous chapter.[545] However, such studies have only compared the two figures through rather narrow parameters. Focusing on a resemblance in their approach to seizing power via coup-like tactics, the scholars have otherwise missed a much bigger story, surrounding this link, which this thesis has been presenting. Taking a more temporally expansive approach—that has not only incorporated the other Narodnik thinkers as well as earlier figures (such as Herzen) and other preceding political movements (such as the Slavophiles)—this thesis shows the motion of a broader intellectual heritage, which preceded and then evolved through Tkachev on the way to culminating in Lenin's peculiar thought. Thus, Lenin's similarities with Tkachev's revolutionary strategy are, moreover, symptomatic of a larger inheritance of ideas lurking behind such tactics (i.e., the ideology of Russian historical exceptionalism) from which both figures reached similar conclusions in political praxis to accommodate such shared views on the nature of their nation's historical trajectory.

Conversely, more recent studies have tried to discredit the utility of the aforementioned studies comparing Tkachev and Lenin. In particular, such works have argued that the studies comparing the two have relied on erroneously categorizing them within the revolutionary philosophy of 'Jacobinism,' which was akin to the thinkers' tactical policies.[546] This counter-argument correctly observes that the term 'Jacobin,' in the Russian context, was invented by political opponents as a way to discredit the school's alleged followers; hence, those labeled under that tradition did not use that title to reference such a political model.[547] However, this chapter will show that, in spite of this 'Jacobin' title being debunked, the connection between Lenin and Tkachev still existed; but unlike the earlier scholars, this study will not rely on a 'Jacobin' link, but rather on a different and deeper tradition of thought: the continuity of Russian historical exceptionalism.

544 Clarke, "Was Lenin a Marxist?," 1.

545 Rolf Theen, "The Idea of the Revolutionary State: Tkachev, Trotsky, and Lenin," *The Russian Review* 31, no. 4 (1972): 383-397; Albert Weeks, *The First Bolshevik: A Political Biography of Peter Tkachev* (New York: New York University Press, 1968); Michael Karpovich, "A Forerunner of Lenin: P.N. Tkachev," *The Review of Politics* 6, no. 3 (July 1944): 336-350.

546 For instance, see Robert Mayer, "Lenin and the Jacobin Identity in Russia" *Studies in East European Thought* 51, no. 2 (June 1999): 128, 136.

547 Ibid., 142-144.

Life and Influences

Before arguing for ideological continuity into Lenin's thought via an analysis of his theoretical works, this section will first reveal non-abstract connections and personal influences to provide a foreground, which will then help to concretize an affirmative inheritance of ideas. In the same vein as the preceding thinkers discussed in this thesis, Lenin came from a typical intelligentsia background: that of an educated noble. His father, Ilya Nikolaevich Ulyanov, was decorated with the Order of Stanislav, given "first class" distinction, and referred to as "His Excellence."[548] This rendered him "a high-ranking nobleman," specifically placed fourth in a table of fourteen ranks.[549] According to Lenin's recollections, when Tsar Alexander II was assassinated in 1881, his father mourned in the Simbirsk cathedral. Indeed, Ilya Ulyanov demonstrated "an unquestioning support of the tsarist autocracy" until the end of his life.[550] The Ulyanov family was part of the establishment in Russian society. Yet this was also the same privileged stratum which ironically produced nearly all of the revolutionaries who sought to overthrow the very system from which they hailed and benefited—as exemplified by the children of the Ulyanov household.

Less than six years following the murder of Tsar Alexander II, the eldest Ulyanov son, also named Alexander, was already plotting to kill the succeeding monarch: Alexander III. Lenin's older brother was a revolutionary activist with deep ties to the Narodnik movement and ideology. In particular, Alexander Ulyanov led a faction of *The People's Will* party during its final years of influence.[551] In 1887, his group had planned to bomb the emperor's carriage on the very day in which the new monarch was honoring the anniversary of his father's assassination.[552] However, the plot was uncovered by the police, and the conspirators were arrested. While being tried in court, Ulyanov made a political speech before being sentenced to death; he was hung in the coming months.[553] Lenin was only 17 at the time, and his brother's execution by the state left a deep impression on him. Indeed, Lenin's wife testified that "the fate of his brother undoubtedly, profoundly influenced Vladimir Illich [Lenin]."[554] Years after this formative event, when Lenin was sitting in prison, for the first time, due to the new revolutionary career he had embarked on, he was asked what he had planned on doing after his release, to which he replied: "What is there for me to think about? ... My road has been paved by my elder brother."[555]

Before his execution, Lenin's brother was the main ideologist of his faction, having written the program of the political platform of the group. Interestingly, when discussing the merits of the increasingly-popular Marxist model of historical progression, the program noted the existence of "the possibility of another, more direct transition to socialism" given

548 Cliff, *Building the Party,* 1.

549 Ibid.

550 Ibid., 2.

551 Mark A. Aldanov, *Lenin* (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1922), 4.

552 Philip Pomper, *Lenin's Brother: The Origins of the October Revolution* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2010), 123.

553 Ibid., 159.

554 N.K. Krupskaya, *Memories of Lenin*, vol. 1 (New York: *International Publishers*, 1930), p. 5.

555 E. Foss, *The First Prison of V.I. Lenin* (Ogonek, 1926), 5, quoted in Cliff, *Building the Party,* 4.

that in Russia there existed "special, favorable conditions in the habits of the people and in the character of the intelligentsia and of the government."[556] Furthermore, the document conceded the probability of the capitalist development of Russia—but *only* when left untouched: it emphasized that such a stage of history would stand between the present and "the process of transition to socialism" only "if there is no conscious intervention on the part of a social group."[557] Such Narodnik ideas of Russia possessing a unique situation in which the capitalist stage of history could be *voluntaristically* evaded on the road to socialism thus centrally figured in the thought of Lenin's brother, and as we shall see, would later influence Lenin's peculiar application of Marxism. Further, this party document also displayed a hostility toward the political liberalism which classical Marxists such as Plekhanov had stressed for sake of developing the political consciousness of the working masses to self-lead their revolution; rather, the document seemed to particularly echo the Revisionist Narodnik strategy, popularized by Tkachev: the program held that the task of "organizing and educating the working class" had to be deferred as the mission of upheaval was to instead be executed by the intelligentsia.[558] As we will see, these non-Marxist positions would reappear in Lenin's modified Marxism.

Lenin moved to Marxism during the early 1890s. During that time, according to his close ally Leon Trotsky (1879-1940), Lenin became acquainted with the works of Plekhanov, "without which one could not have arrived at Social Democratic [Marxist] positions" in Russia.[559] Lenin testified that Plekhanov's first Marxist treatise, *Socialism and the Political Struggle*, had a significance for Russia comparable to the magnitude of that of *The Communist Manifesto* for the West; more broadly, Lenin recalled, the works of Plekhanov "reared a whole generation of Russian Marxists," including himself.[560] Thus, Trotsky concluded that "The Marxist generation of the 1890s [in Russia] stood on the foundations laid down by Plekhanov," for "Next to Marx and Engels, Vladimir [Lenin] owed the most to Plekhanov."[561] Lenin completed his rite of passage into Marxist circles by writing polemics against the Narodniks. Recalling this formative era of his career, Lenin stated, "One cannot develop new views other than through polemics."[562] During this time, he published multiple articles attacking Narodnik positions, with the first work printed in 1894.[563]

Yet, despite these explicit recantations of Narodnik ideology, one of Lenin's earliest Russian Marxist organizations was remarkably close to a Narodnik political sect. Lenin was a leader of *Souiz borby*, a Marxist group which maintained deep connections with *Gruppa narodovoltsev* (an offshoot of *The People's*

556 N.K. Karataev, *Narodnicheskaia ekonomicheskaia literature* (Moscow, 1958), 631, quoted in Cliff, *Building the Party,* 16.

557 N.K. Karataev, *Narodnicheskaia ekonomicheskaia literature* (Moscow, 1958), 631, quoted in ibid., 17.

558 V. Ivanov-Razumnik, *Istoriia russkoi obshchestvennoi mysl*, vol. 2 (St. Petersburg, 1908), 335, in ibid.

559 Trotsky, *The Young Lenin*, 131. Also note that the term "Social Democrat" was essentially synonymous with "Marxist" at the time.

560 Ibid., 189.

561 Ibid., 189-90.

562 Vladimir Lenin, *Collected Works,* trans. Stepan Apresyan, vol. 18, 297.

563 Lenin, *New Economic Developments in Peasant Life* (when he was 23), *On the So-Called Market Question* (1893), *What the 'Friends of the People' Are and How they Fight the Social-Democrats* (1894). Also see Lenin, *A Characterization of Economic Romanticism* (1897), and *The Development of Capitalism in Russia* (1899).

Will group) during the 1890s. In fact, this Narodnik organization published two of Lenin's earliest pamphlets, exchanged speakers with *Souiz Borby* at public events, and even cooperated together in revolutionary planning.[564] The relations between these two factions were so intimate that there were talks of a potential merger, a plan that was ultimately uncovered by police arrests and interrogation. Markedly, according to the police investigation, the officers were so confused by the similarity of theory and practice between Lenin's 'Marxist' group and that of the Narodnik faction that the police deemed Lenin's *Souiz Borby* to have been a direct descendent of Narodnik organizations, displaying what they believed were "identical convictions."[565]

Furthermore, even within Lenin's polemics against the Narodniks to establish his Marxist credentials, there can be a found a conspicuous hesitance to dismiss Narodnik values in full. In fact, in *The Economic Content of Narodism* (1894-5), there is a section in which Lenin argued that certain Narodnik ideas are worth preserving. In particular, Lenin critiqued the attack on Narodism put forward by the Marxist Peter Struve (1870-1944) as over-emphasizing the differences between Marxists and their Narodnik foes.[566] "It is clear," Lenin argued, "that it would be absolutely wrong to reject the whole of the Narodnik program indiscriminately and in its entirety," claiming that, contrary to Struve's beliefs, many "general ... measures" of Narodism "are progressive."[567] Specifically, Lenin pointed at how "The Narodniks" seem to understand the harms of capitalist progression "far more correctly" than his fellow Marxists, who welcomed such a development too incautiously.[568]

Later, Lenin would reveal his opinion that certain aspects of Narodism have even served as inspiration for Russian Marxists such as himself: "The Russian Social Democrats [Marxists]" have always recognized the necessity to extract and absorb the revolutionary side of the Narodnik doctrine and trend."[569] In his political pamphlet *What is To Be Done?*,[570] written between 1901 and 1902, Lenin reflected on his belief that many Russian Marxists, reared in the backdrop of

564 Pipes, "Russian Marxism," 334.

565 See the police reports in ibid.

566 Lenin, *Collected Works,* trans. Joe Fineberg and George Hanna, vol. 1, 500.

567 Ibid., 503.

568 Ibid., 504.

569 Lenin, *Collected Works,* trans. Joe Fineberg and George Hanna, vol. 4, 246.

570 Furthermore, it is evident that Lenin titled his revolutionary pamphlet *What Is To Be Done?* precisely after the book of the same name by an earlier Narodnik writer named Nikolai Chernyshevsky (1828-1889). According to Lenin's comrade Nikolai Valentinov, when Sergei Gusev, a fellow revolutionary, asked Lenin if "it was no accident that in 1902 you called your pamphlet *What Is To Be Done?*"—as an allusion to Chernyshevsky's original work—Lenin replied, "is this so difficult to guess?" Moreover, when many of his Marxist comrades critiqued the original Narodnik rendition as an outdated and irrelevant piece of literature, Lenin defended its merits: "I declare that it is inadmissible to call *What Is To Be Done?* primitive and untalented. Under its influence hundreds of people [in Russia] became revolutionaries. It also captivated me. It ploughed me over again completely. It is a work which gives one a charge for a whole life. Untalented works cannot have such influence." Additionally, Valentinov recalled that Lenin once revealed that "Chernyshevsky was my favorite author," explaining how he owed to this Narodnik thinker the philosophical basis on which he would later learn Marxism: "Chernyshevsky introduced me to philosophical materialism ... I got the concept of [the] dialectical method from him; this made it much easier for me to master the dialectic of Marx later on," before seemingly categorizing Marx and Chernyshevsky within the same tier of revolutionary acclaim: "It is said that there are musicians with perfect pitch: one could say that there are also people with perfect revolutionary flair. Marx and Chernyshevsky were such men." See Nikolay Valentinov, *Encounters with Lenin* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1968), 63-64, 66-7.

the revisionist era of the Narodnik movement, must have grown up admiring *The People's Will*:

> Many of them [Russian Marxists] had begun their revolutionary thinking as adherents of *Narodnaya Volya [The People's Will]*. Nearly all had in their early youth enthusiastically worshipped the terrorist heroes. It required a struggle to abandon the captivating impressions of those heroic traditions, and the struggle was accompanied by the breaking off of personal relations with people who were determined to remain loyal to the *Narodnaya Volya* and for whom the young Social Democrats had profound respect.[571]

In fact, there is evidence that the young Lenin had intensively studied Narodnik writings at one point. According to Trotsky's recollections, Lenin's records from the Samara Library for the year 1893 were recovered, which revealed that "Vladimir [Lenin] did not miss any relevant publications, whether official statistical compilations or economic studies by the Narodniks."[572] In particular, there is evidence which suggests that Lenin was quite interested in Pyotr Tkachev, who, as aforementioned, led the revisionist era of Narodnik thought, which fostered the last popular Narodnik groups (such as *The People's Will*) before Russian Marxism began dominating Lenin's generation. Contrary to the American journalist Louis Fischer's biography *The Life of Lenin*, in which he claims "there was no evidence that Lenin was a follower of Tkachev, whom he mentions once—unfavorably,"[573] a vivid testimony from one of his closest contemporaries implies the contrary. At the turn of the century, Lenin's personal secretary, Vladimir Bonch-Bruyevich, was helping to collect revolutionary literature for Lenin and recalled that within "Mr. Ulyanov's [Lenin] table," there were "Tkachev's works, bound in wine-colored buckram" as part of his collection.[574] Bonch-Bruyevich's memoirs further reveal that Lenin attentively read the works of Tkachev and even recommended them to new recruits:

> Vladimir Ilich read through and examined most carefully all of this old revolutionary literature, paying particular attention to Tkachev and remarking that this writer was closer to our viewpoint than any of the others ... We collected articles that Tkachev had written and handed them over to Vladimir Ilich. Not only did V.I. read these works by Tkachev, he also recommended that all of us familiarize ourselves with the valuable writings of this original thinker. More than once, he asked newly-arrived comrades if they wished to study the illegal literature. "Begin," V.I. would advise, "by reading and familiarizing yourself with Tkachev's *Nabat* .... This is basic and will give you tremendous knowledge.[575]

Thus, having established these concrete links of influence from, and admitted reverence for, such aspects of the Narodnik milieu, the following analysis of Lenin's theoretical works regarding ideological similarities will therefore reveal not merely an analogism of ideas but rather an inheritance of continuity.

571 Lenin, *Collected Works,* trans. Joe Fineberg and George Hanna, vol. 5, 517-18.

572 Trotsky, *The Young Lenin*, 192.

573 Louis Fischer, *The Life of Lenin* (New York: Harper & Row, 1964), 45.

574 Vladimir Bonch-Bruyevich, in Albert Weeks, *The First Bolshevik*, 102.

575 Ibid., 5.

Reviving Russian Historical Exceptionalism

As the chief theoretician behind the 'Marxist' Russian revolution and executive leader of the resulting Soviet state, Lenin unwaveringly claimed a strict allegiance to orthodox philosophical principles until his death. Thus, any attempt to investigate his deviations from the official dogma would necessitate reading past the frame and filter which he maintained for plausible deniability of any ideological heresies. Accordingly, Andrzej Walicki, in a message to fellow intellectual historians, claimed that "the essence of Leninism has to be uncovered in its hideaway," recognizing "the necessity 'to read between the lines.'"[576] Always working within the formal frameworks of the dogma, Lenin "tried to camouflage his revision at any cost."[577] This section, in investigating the continuity of the earlier ideological tropes in Lenin's thought, seeks to uncover the extent to which Lenin's revisions of classical Marxist code reflected a revival of or return to such ideas that his catechism had formally rejected, i.e., the intellectual heritage that has been the subject of this thesis. In particular, it will focus on how Lenin creatively bent and reinterpreted Marxist doctrines toward the logic of the earlier ideas without always making flagrant or even conscious proclamations of doing so.

Ideological Flexibility

Long before he precipitated a schism within the Russian Marxist party in 1903—which created the Menshevik-Bolshevik factional divide—Lenin already expressed hints of his unwillingness to confine the scope of his revolutionary vision to the rigidity and literalism of Plekhanov's 'orthodoxy.' In his draft for the Russian Social Democratic Workers Party (the Marxist Party) program written at the end of 1899, Lenin admitted that he "do[es] not regard Marx's theory as something completed and inviolable;" rather, "on the contrary," he viewed the ideology as "only ... the foundation stone of the science which socialists *must* develop in all directions if they wish to keep pace with life."[578] In a statement that deeply echoed a belief in Russia's particularism against any universal frameworks that could be standardized in application, Lenin asserted that "an *independent* elaboration of Marx's theory is especially essential for Russian socialists," ... for this theory provides only general *guiding* principles, which, *in particular,* are applied in England differently than in France, in France differently than in Germany, and in Germany differently than in Russia.[579]

Specifically, the area in which Lenin seemed most inclined to customize to Russia's peculiarities was that of the timing and manner of the nation's progression through history vis-à-vis the Western model of development: crucially, this topic was the central point of disagreement between the Narodniks and the Marxists—and the root of the divide between the broader philosophies of Russian historical exceptionalism versus Western historical universalism. Surprisingly, at one point in an 1894 article that obstinately critiqued the Narodniks, Lenin claimed that Marxism had "nothing whatever to do with ... faith in the *necessity* of each country to pass through the phase of capitalism and

576 Andrzej Walicki, quoted in Ondrej Marchevsky, "V.I. Lenin and the Case of P.N. Tkachev's thought Impact," *International Center for the Study of Russian Philosophy* 1, no. 7 (2020): 106.

577 Ibid.

578 Lenin, *Collected Works,* vol. 4, trans. Joe Fineberg and George Hanna, 211-12.

579 Ibid., 211-12.

much other ... nonsense."[580] Specifically, Lenin derided what he called a "narrow objectivism," a term which denoted the stringent adherence to Marx's doctrine of historical *determinism* as exemplified by the teachings of Plekhanov and the original Russian Marxist following.[581] Lenin felt that maintaining such exactness to the classic formula had overly "confined" the revolutionary framework from more flexible applications.[582] Here, Lenin was thus opposing the 'orthodox' Marxist stance of an uncompromising obedience to "the inevitability and necessity" of the original Western-centric historical schedule, which demanded a patient awaiting of each intermediary temporal stage of societal evolution not yet present in Russia to fully manifest—before the distant era of socialism could be reached.[583] Throughout his career, Lenin attacked what he called the "gradualist" approach which Marxists like Plekhanov represented, i.e., an almost passive reliance on the laws of history to play out by themselves, an approach dependent on the faith that such forces were pre-determined.[584]

Against this slower framework of a fixed course of history, Lenin displayed a conspicuous hastiness in his vision of a socialist revolution—one that was deeply reminiscent of the Narodnik thinkers. Indeed, historian Adam Ulam noticed that Lenin's view of the revolutionary timeline seemed to suggest "this terrible impatience, the utter inability to conceive of a breathing spell."[585] Like the Narodnik philosophy, such a rushed demeanor was coupled with an inclination to intervene in the clockwork of history. Here, Lenin appeared to reinstate much of the Narodnik philosophy of *voluntarism*, i.e., the belief that individuals could 'will' Russia into its aspired social order. This Narodnik belief of a historically-interventionist approach to revolution is perhaps best captured by Andrei Zhelyabov (1851-1881)—a member of *The People's Will* and one of the chief organizers of the assassination of Tsar Alexander II—who said, "History moves too slowly, it needs a push."[586] Markedly, Lenin remarked that the Russian Marxists needed "Social-Democratic [Marxist] Zheliabovs."[587] In fact, Lenin, across a series of essays, emphasized the role of active initiative and revolutionary will in shaping historical outcomes.[588] Just before he initiated the socialist revolution in October 1917, when Lenin was impatiently observing Russian developments from exile, he expressed, in *Letters From Afar* (1917), his view that the nation was about to undergo "an extraordinary acceleration of world history" insisting that "it was also necessary that history make

580 Lenin, *Collected Works,* vol. 1, trans. Joe Fineberg and George Hanna, 338.

581 Ibid., 499.

582 Ibid.

583 Ibid.

584 See Lenin, *Collected Works,* vol. 5, trans. Joe Fineberg and George Hanna, 313-320.

585 Adam Ulam, *The Bolsheviks: The Intellectual and Political History of the Triumph of Communism in Russia* (New York: Collier Books, 1965), 249.

586 Andrei Zhelyabov, quoted in David Footman, *Red Prelude, The Life of the Russian Terrorist Zhelyabov* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1945).

587 Lenin, *Collected Works,* vol. 5, trans. Joe Fineberg and George Hanna, 509. Again, the term 'Social-Democrat' was synonymous with 'Marxist.'

588 See Lenin, *Where to Begin* (1901), in *Collected Works,* vol. 5, 13-24; Lenin, *What Is To Be Done?* (1902), in *Collected Works,* vol. 5, 347-530; Lenin, *One Step forward, Two Steps Back: The Crisis in Our Party* (1904) in *Collected Works,* vol. 5, 203-425.

particularly abrupt turns."[589]

In fact, Lenin's desire to rush toward a socialist revolution was repeatedly condemned as violations of Marxist doctrine by Plekhanov and his 'Orthodox' colleagues, who warned against the dangers of interfering with the organic timeline of societal evolution. Specifically, they argued that an accelerationist intervention in the process of Russian development would constitute a dangerous attempt of prematurely constructing a historical stage whose necessary preconditions had yet to appear in Russian society. This critique was most notably observed during the 1906 congress of the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party in Stockholm, when Plekhanov and his Menshevik faction keenly criticized Lenin and his Bolshevik sect for trying to "thoughtless[ly] construct 'socialism' under such [present] circumstances:" the nation's material conditions were still too industrially underdeveloped and capitalist structures were still premature; consequently, Lenin's critics held, Russia was not 'ready' to reach for the post-capitalist socialist phase, which stood at the end of Marx's linear timetable of societal progression.[590]

Reversing 'Backwardness'

How, then, did Lenin justify this hurried approach to a socialist revolution while remaining formally adherent to Marxist principles? This section argues that Lenin did so by reviving the Narodnik and Slavophile argument of identifying historical advantages within societal 'backwardness'—a theme which he re-formulated in Marxist terms and concepts. Granted, by this time, the peasant-communal structures on which such themes were originally specifically based, among the previous movements, had declined enough to no longer constitute a prime talking point. Yet, nevertheless, it appears that Lenin inherited the heart of the logic behind this old belief. In particular, this characteristically Narodnik and Slavophile logic of reversing the implications of societal underdevelopment can be strikingly observed in Lenin's theory of 'the weakest link.' For context, Marxists had long assumed that the ripest locations for socialist revolution were the societies in which capitalism was most highly developed, i.e., where class antagonisms were most acute. However, Lenin derived a formula, in Marxist terminology, explaining how the most advanced nations had actually grown farther from socialist prospects, while the most underdeveloped and 'backward' societies had become the prime candidates for manifesting the revolution first. This argument flipped the Western script of linear progress in a manner deeply reminiscent of the pre-Marxist theorists of Russian historical exceptionalism.

In 1916, Lenin published the book *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*. Through a series of economic analyses, Lenin explained that capitalism evolved into a form unforeseen by Marx, who had been dead for over three decades now: it had become a global system in which the most-developed capitalist nations began exploiting the labor of workers from 'backward' societies, thereby bringing externally-extracted wealth back home. In doing so, these developed nations were able to inflate the standard of living for their domestic working-class population, thereby quelling the inter-class hostilities. Under this diminished level of eco-

589 Lenin, *Collected Works,* vol. 23, trans. M.S. Levin, Joe Fineberg, 297.

590 Kichitaro Katsuda, "Russian Intellectual History and the Gorbachev Revolution," *International Journal on World Peace* 8, no. 2 (June 1991): 33.

nomic discontent, a socialist revolution of the working class could no longer occur in these highly-developed capitalist nations[591] At the same time, the sharp decline in living standards, from which the laborers of the dominant nations were shielded, were instead displaced onto the working populations of the colonial peripheries.[592] As a result, these 'backward' societies now contained the sociological stratum most inclined to revolt. Lenin thereby concluded that the first proletarian revolution would now have to occur in one of the most underdeveloped countries within this global system, with Russia embodying the paradigmatic case. In this vein, Lenin deduced that the socialist revolution would first break out where the "chain" of world capitalism had its "weakest link," i.e., where its forces were least developed.[593] Therefore, Lenin asserted against the prognosis of Marx and Plekhanov a line of reasoning that was characteristic of all Narodnik thinkers and Herzen's Slavophile- esque model of history: it was now "easier for the [socialist] movement to start" in a "backward country" unburdened by deep capitalist development, once believed to be the most significant precondition for a socialist revolution.[594]

Through this logic of reversing the implications of 'backwardness,' Lenin thereby re-positioned Russia's place in the queue of socialist revolution to the front of the line. Well before formalizing his theory of the 'weakest link,' as early as 1902, Lenin had proclaimed that the Russian working class was "the vanguard of the international revolutionary proletariat," i.e., the first in charge.[595] Later in 1905, Lenin envisioned that the Russian uprising would "carry the revolutionary conflagration into Europe,"[596] essentially acting as the spark or inspiration to set their Western neighbors into motion. As historian David Lane notes, a peculiar feature of Lenin's thought was the idea "that the developing and exploited countries—Russia being the paradigmatic case—have become the vanguard of socialist revolution."[597] This flipping of the conventional Western-centric narrative of linear progression toward socialism deeply echoed the Slavophile and Narodnik perspectives on history in which Russia would beat the West to its own aspirations and even teach the West how to move forward. Such a stance effectively inverted the notion that Russia was perpetually a student of the exemplary West, occupying the shameful position of trailing behind and needing to catch up to the advanced Occident: an image which

591 See Lenin, Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism (1916), in Selected Works (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1963), vol. 1, 667-766.

592 Ibid.

593 Ibid.

594 Lenin, *Collected Works,* vol. 26, trans. Yuri Sdobnikov and George Hanna, 471. Leon Trotsky (1879-1940), who would later play an indispensable role in helping Lenin actualize his vision in the Russian Revolution of 1917, explained Lenin's theory of the 'weakest link' in a speech (eight years after Lenin's death). He elaborated on how "the proletariat reached power for the first time in such a backward country as ... Tsarist Russia," a "fact that ... seems mysterious only at first glance" in the context of traditional Marxist frameworks; he explained that though "Russia is a backward country," it was "part of the world economy ... an element of the capitalist world system;" as such, though it itself was not yet deeply capitalist in development, its working masses bore the exported burdens of the developed capitalist nations that brought about revolutionary conditions; thus, "the sharper the antagonisms" grew in the major capitalist countries, "the more difficult it became for the weaker participants" of the system and "That is precisely why the backward countries assumed the first places in the succession of collapse:" "In this way the chain ... broke at its weakest link." See Leon Trotsky, "In Defence of October: A Speech Delivered in Copenhagen, Denmark in November 1932" (Copenhagen, 1932).

595 Lenin, quoted in Robert C. Tucker, ed., *The Lenin Anthology* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1975) 22.

596 Lenin, *Collected Works,* vol. 9, trans. Abraham Fineburg and George Hanna, 57.

597 David Lane, "V.I. Lenin's Theory of Socialist Revolution," *Critical Sociology* 45, no. 3 (May 2021): 465

the Russian national consciousness has had to wrestle with since the program of Petrine Westernization discussed in chapter one. Thus, by embracing the counteracting Narodnik and Slavophile spirit that 'the last shall be first,' Lenin thereby reintegrated into Marxism the notion that societal 'backwardness' represented not an obstacle but rather a shortcut to the historical finish line.

Touting the virtues of underdevelopment as a historical advantage on the road to socialism, Lenin thus displayed a contradictory attitude toward Plekhanov's insistence on the necessity of ridding Russia's 'backward' features in alignment with the Western image of modernity. This is most prominently seen in Lenin's refusal to completely dismiss the utility of the Russian peasantry in the upcoming socialist revolution. In contrast, Plekhanov had deemed this agrarian constituency to be a 'hold-over' demographic which needed to be replaced by an industrial proletariat—a necessary marker of a mature capitalist society truly ready to progress into the subsequent socialist stage. At a meeting with the representatives of 'Orthodox' Marxism—Plekhanov and Pavel Axelrod—in Geneva, Lenin brought with him a copy of *On Agitation (Ob Agitatsii)*. This was a pamphlet written by the Jewish socialist Arkadi Kremer, which had expressed Narodnik views: in particular, it argued that "Our urban workers are not, like those of the West .... A social revolution would succeed only if the industrial workers supported the peasants."[598] Lenin demanded that the Marxists re-publish this pamphlet—to the dismay of the 'Orthodox' leaders. Though they eventually capitulated to this request, Plekhanov and Axelrod made sure to preface the publication with a long commentary to point out its un-Marxist ideas: specifically, they wrote that "the program was no more or less a reversion to the old Bakuninist program the Marxists long left behind."[599]

Against Plekhanov's Marxist literalism, Lenin would continue to see revolutionary value in the Russian peasantry. In fact, he even stretched Marx's "proletariat" concept to include not just the urban industrial workers but also the peasants, whom he would call the "rural proletariat."[600] Further, as historian Ondrej Marchevsky has noticed, the term Lenin used for working class was "definitely the Narodnik term," a habit that "was the subject of mockery among the Marxist circles."[601] Later, in a 1909 letter to his comrade Ivan Skvortsov-Stepanov, Lenin once more defended the revolutionary value of the Russian peasantry, while also expressing his contempt and doubt of any utility of the liberal bourgeoise which 'Orthodox' Marxists had insisted were necessary allies in revolution:

> While fighting Narodism as a wrong doctrine of socialism, the Mensheviks [the 'Orthodox' faction led by Plekhanov and Axelrod], in a doctrinaire fashion, overlooked the historically real and progressive historical content of Narodism ... Hence their monstrous, idiotic, renegade idea ... that the peasant movement is reactionary, that a Cadet [liberal] is more progressive than a Trudovik [the ideological heir of the Narodnik movement in Lenin's time].[602]

598 Quoted in Pipes, "Russian Marxism," 333.

599 Ibid.

600 Lenin, The Tasks of the Russian Social Democrats, in Tucker, *The Lenin Anthology*, 9-10.

601 Marchevsky, "V.I. Lenin and the Case," 103.

602 Lenin, *Collected Works,* vol.16, 119-20.

This aversion to awaiting the full proletarianization of the peasantry and the emergence of the liberal bourgeoise, which Plekhanov had preached in his multi-stepped road to a socialist revolution, significantly recalled the Narodnik and Slavophile sociological stances—but also placed Lenin in a thorny theoretical position apropos his Marxist allegiance.

Modifying Marxist Stages of Revolution

How could Lenin reconcile his defense of Russia's underdeveloped features—its persistent peasant population and lack of a substantial bourgeoise—with the Marxist model of revolution? Indeed, the latter blueprint, as illustrated earlier by Plekhanov, required two separate stages of revolution, the first of which was to nullify those very 'backward' sociological aspects before the second, and socialist, one could be launched. Despite the apparent incompatibility, Lenin once more integrated his Narodnik- esque vision of accelerating to socialism amid premature conditions within the Marxist lexicon.

This ideological adaptation was particularly evident in his reaction to the 1905 revolution. On the 22nd of January 1905, a wave of unrest broke out across the Russian Empire, largely against the Tsar and ruling nobility, lasting almost two and a half years. Ultimately, despite some political concessions made by the crown, the conclusion of the event saw the defeat of the revolutionaries and the retention of the throne.[603] Orthodox Marxists such as Plekhanov had hoped that this event would constitute the moment in which Russia enacted their version of the liberal revolution, as precedented by various Western-European nations, in which an emergent bourgeoise would take political control to accommodate the new capitalist economy with a constitutional and democratic model of governance. Only after this revolution and the full completion of its historical stage of development could the socialist uprising then be launched.[604] Though a legislature, the Duma parliament, was finally established in Russia, it was essentially powerless due to the Tsar's retention of complete veto powers.[605] Overall, the revolution was ultimately seen as a failure.[606] As such, Russia had yet to complete even the first of two anticipated revolutions on the long road to socialism.

At the core of this failure stood the striking absence of a substantive bourgeoise demographic upon whom Marx had entrusted the historical role of executing this stage of political transition. If it was not already clear by then, the 1905 revolution confirmed the fact that, in Russia, "the growth of a native bourgeoise had been stunted."[607] In response, Plekhanov and the 'Orthodox Marxists' maintained their faith in the universal 'iron laws' of Western historical progression: they preached the need to await the maturation of a Russian bourgeois class to arise and fulfill this mission, as their Western counterparts had done earlier. However, Lenin did not want to wait. Assessing the predicament of a prepubescent Russian bourgeoise, plus an insufficient population of industrial proletarians, as well as the persistent masses of un-proletarianized agrarian peasants, Lenin made a fascinating adaptation

603 See Abraham Ascher, *The Revolution of 1905* (Stanford University Press, 1988).

604 See Karl Marx, *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy,* trans. S.W. Ryazanskaya (Moscow, Progress Publishers: 1977), 21.

605 Nicholas V. Riasanovsky, *A History of Russia,* 6th ed (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 457.

606 See J.L.H. Keep, "Russian Social-Democracy and the First State Duma," *The Slavonic and East European Review* 34, no. 82 (December 1955): 180-199.

607 George Brinkely, "Leninism: What it Was and What it Was Not," *The Review of Politics* 59, no. 1 (Winter 1998): 152.

to ideology. Through a logic deeply reminiscent of the Narodnik philosophy, rather than delaying revolutionary action until Russian conditions finally aligned with Western precedents, Lenin sought to work with the underdeveloped features of Russia as they were at present—and found in them advantages that expedited the road to socialism.

In *Two Tactics of Social Democracy in the Democratic Revolution* (1905), Lenin responded to these circumstances by declaring that the 'bourgeois' revolutionary stage would not be carried out by a Russian bourgeoise: "the abortive 1905 revolution proved ... that the weak Russian bourgeoise was incapable of carrying out the prerequisite democratic revolution to bring Russia into full capitalist development."[608] In their place, then, Lenin proposed that this phase would instead be executed by the "Dictatorship of the Proletariat *and the Peasantry*."[609] This adapted scheme revealed further continuities with pre-Marxist Russian thought. First, by refusing to leave out the agrarian peasantry in his model of revolution, as Plekhanov did, and instead grouping them alongside the industrial proletariat as fellow constituents of the same working class, Lenin echoed the Narodnik and Slavophile insistence on a Russian-specific framework that catered to the nation's peasant-dominant orientation. Secondly, by dismissing the role and utility of the liberal bourgeoise in this event, and replacing them with another social class, Lenin essentially cut out the very demographic around which the 'liberal-bourgeois revolution' was originally and fundamentally premised on. In other words, the working class would carry out the bourgeoise's revolution on behalf of them. In this way, Lenin disregarded the Marxist guidelines in all but the name with which he labeled this stage. Through this modification, Lenin thus technically avoided proposing the single-staged model of revolution propounded by the Narodniks by formally titling the upcoming revolution as a 'bourgeois' one—though demanding that it be executed by the very population that was to launch the final socialist phase.

Leninism's parallels to the earlier pre-Marxist intellectual traditions which he purported to reject did not stop here. As we recall from the previous section, Plekhanov had emphatically insisted that not only ought there to be two different revolutions—the 'liberal-bourgeois' and then the socialist one— but the two events had to be significantly separated from each other to ensure that each phase was fully processed in accordance with the Western model of successive eras of development, i.e., to counter the old Narodnik desire to rush or skip to the socialist conclusion. However, in the same essay, Lenin explained that his version of the two-stage framework would not be separated to such an extent. He indicated that "from the democratic ('liberal-bourgeois') revolution we shall *at once* ... begin to pass to the socialist revolution. We stand for uninterrupted revolution. We shall not stop half-way."[610] It is clear that Lenin was, as he wrote, in a hurry to "pass on as quickly as possible to the new and higher task—the socialist revolution."[611] Thus, Lenin envisioned that the two revolutions mandated by Marx and Plekhanov would, in Russia, almost coincide in time, moving directly from one to the next, the first to the last. In this way, Lenin appeared to further demonstrate a revival of the Narodnik and Slavophile belief

608 Ibid.

609 See Lenin, *Collected Works,* vol. 9, 236-7.

610 Ibid.

611 Ibid., 237.

that Russia's present lack of modern-Western features need not prompt a need to catch up through patient imitation of Occidental precedents; rather, their absence allows for a more direct and immediate pursuit of the final ideal.

Thirteen years later, Lenin re-affirmed these views. In an article titled *The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky* (1918), Lenin accused "the Mensheviks," the 'Orthodox' faction led by Plekhanov, for "substituting liberalism for Marxism" through their excessive warnings against a rushed approach to the stages of revolution.[612] Lenin critiqued their conclusion that "the proletariat therefore must not go beyond what is acceptable to the bourgeoise" during the first stage of revolution "and must pursue a policy of compromise with them."[613] Averted to any alliance with the capitalist class enemy, a pact which Plekhanov had preached as necessary, Lenin insisted that the working class should ignore the interests of the liberal class—to "not allow itself to be 'bound' by the reformism of the bourgeoise," but instead pushing straight on into "a socialist revolution."[614] In the same work, Lenin additionally responded to accusations of trying to skip the bourgeois stage of revolution by claiming that "we [Bolsheviks] have never attempted to skip this necessary stage of the historical process."[615] However, when elaborating on his purportedly Marxist-friendly approach to the revolutionary process, Lenin once again displayed a refusal to separate the distinct stages, condemning the Mensheviks for "[an] attempt to raise an artificial Chinese Wall between the first and second, to separate them," while demonstrating a clear intent to effectively accelerate into the socialist finale: "the revolution cannot now stop at this stage ... whether one likes it or not [it] will demand steps forward, to socialism."[616] In other words, Lenin appeared to have found a loophole in formally labeling two distinct stages but, as seen from this passage, practically and functionally squeezing them into one continuous process—in essence, a singular and direct transition into socialism reminiscent of the Narodnik mission.

In sum, Lenin's peculiar views on the nature of Russian historical development toward socialist revolution seemed to display an apparent revival of the particular ideas of Russian historical exceptionalism of the Narodnik and Slavophile ideologies, which were, by principle, hostile to the Marxism that Lenin purported to obey. Indeed, Lenin's insistence on the imminence and immediacy of socialist revolution in an underdeveloped Russia saw him spurn 'Orthodox' Marxist principles by seeking to capitalize on the 'backward' features of the nation, particularly in his defense of the un- proletarianized agrarian peasantry's utility and his preclusion of the historical role of the liberal bourgeoise—positions which deeply recalled the attitudes of the Narodniks and Slavophiles whom Plekhanov repudiated in the name of Western historical universalism.

Anti-Liberal Politics

Viewing liberalism as a counterintuitive development in his expedited roadmap of Russian societal progression, Lenin's philosophy thus continued the anti-liberal tradition characteristic of the Slavophiles

612 Lenin, *Collected Works,* vol. 28, p. 294.

613 Ibid.

614 Ibid.

615 Ibid., 299-300.

616 Ibid.

and Narodniks. As shown by his adjusted Marxist framework, Lenin perpetuated this attitude by essentially displacing the liberal bourgeoise and their class interests from his modified model of revolutionary stages: Lenin's historically-exceptional prescription for Russia's road to socialism therefore neglected the "bourgeois-democratic" phase, i.e., the liberal stage of political development.[617] In doing so, Lenin frequently exhibited the political positions of his pre-Marxist predecessors. Like the Slavophiles and Narodniks, Lenin refused to heed to the Orthodox Marxist insistence on allying with the liberals. As early as 1896, in a meeting in Geneva, Switzerland, Plekhanov and Axelrod confronted Lenin about his conspicuous aversion to the "liberal bourgeoise:" Axelrod, in his memoirs, recalled that he told Lenin, "You show ... exactly the opposite tendency" on this topic of a liberal alliance, to which Lenin replied: "You know, Plekhanov made exactly the same remarks about my articles. He expressed his thoughts in picturesque fashion: 'You,' he said, 'turn your behind to the liberals, but we our face.'"[618] Further, Lenin's animosity toward the liberal demographic—his "most hated, most feared enemies of all"—and their political concepts was often articulated in the same manner in which the Slavophiles and Narodniks characterized liberal institutions as promoting a false sense of freedom, which Lenin similarly bashed as "constitutional illusions."[619] Moreover, like the Slavophiles and Narodniks, Lenin justified his aversion to liberalizing Russian politics by insisting on Russia's incompatibility with Western political paradigms: when Lenin called for the immediate and complete disenfranchisement of the liberal constituency, he argued that "depriving" this segment of society "is a purely Russian question ... a question of the specific national features" of Russia.[620]

Yet despite these fundamental similarities, Lenin did not deduce the same political implications of the anti-liberalism that typified the Slavophile and *Classical* Narodnik milieus, i.e., an opposition to centralized authority that sought to devolve power to the masses. Rather, Lenin's version of anti-liberal politics was inherited from *Revisionist* Narodism. This line of thinking was exemplified by Tkachev's philosophy and the principles of *The People's Will*, which reversed the original praxis of revolution by preaching the need for intelligentsia hegemony over the people. Under such a view, a small sect of intellectual leaders took over the people's mass movement via an anti-democratic coup d'état that precipitated a dictatorial state. This elitist strategy not only flipped the original praxis of Slavophilism and Classical Narodism, but it also represented the very form of revolution which the Orthodox Marxists warned against. However, amid the broader genealogy of ideas that this thesis has been tracking, this was the ideological strain of anti-liberalism inherited by Lenin—a strain which deeply shaped the anti- democratic nature of the Bolshevik revolution that has bulked the Westernizer narrative of the evolution of Russian radical thought.

Disregarding a Political Awakening of the Masses

The slippery slope toward an authoritarian execution of the socialist revolution begins with how Le-

617 Robert Service, *Lenin: A Biography* (London: Macmillan, 2000), 238-239.

618 Perepiska G.V. Plekhanova i P.B. Akselroda, vol.1, Moscow 1925, 271, quoted in Pipes, "Russian Marxism," 332.

619 V.I. Lenin, *Pobeda kadetov i zadaci rabocej partii, Sochinenija* (4th ed.), X (1947), 195, in Donald W. Treadgold, "The Constitutional Democrats and the Russian Liberal Tradition," *American Slavic and East European Review* 10, no. 2 (1951): 94.

620 Lenin, *Collected Works,* vol. 28, 256-7.

nin's anti-liberalism led to a neglect of developing the political consciousness of the working masses. Indeed, Lenin's approach of subordinating the liberal stage of historical development manifested in the exclusion of the political programs which Plekhanov and the Orthodox Marxists had deemed essential for awakening the masses to their revolutionary autonomy. As Richard Pipes notes, throughout Lenin's career, the organizations he led "largely ignored the political program which constituted perhaps the main plank in the Russian Marxist platform."[621] Additionally, the Russian Marxist Vladimir Akimov (1872-1921), a contemporary of Lenin, remarked that "not a single proclamation of [Lenin's group] revealed any *political* tendency."[622] As discussed in the previous chapter, the term 'political,' in the Russian context, specifically denoted the Western-European, liberal political framework of constitutional and representative governance meant to stimulate mass participation in politics. To Plekhanov and Axelrod, this "failure to think in Marxist political terms," seemed to indicate "a rejection of the principles on which Russian Marxism had always rested."[623] As such, Plekhanov critiqued the Tkachevian ideas of *The People's Will* on these same lines: "they do not understand that the *political* education of the masses ... constitutes the chief precondition for the success of the revolution."[624] In other words, this political infrastructure, which Lenin spited for its associations to liberal interests, constituted the means by which the working class was to develop the self-consciousness necessary to self-lead their eventual socialist revolution.

However, Lenin, like the Revisionist Narodniks, did not want to wait for the masses to slowly evolve the revolutionary consciousness needed to self-construct the revolution. Consequently, Lenin, like Tkachev in the disillusioned generation of Narodniks, shifted the locus of revolutionary activity from the working class to the intelligentsia. Instead of hoping that the 'unready' masses would eventually become conscious of their own political interests and reach socialist conclusions, the intelligentsia, who already possessed a revolutionary consciousness, should take control of the movement on behalf of the people. Under this logic, Lenin, in his pamphlet titled *What Is To Be Done?*, argued that the stimulus for revolution would have to come from *outside* of the masses: "there could not have been Social-Democratic [Marxist] consciousness among the workers. It would have to be brought to them from without."[625] Meanwhile, Lenin reasoned, the socialist consciousness stemmed from the privileged stratum of society to which revolutionary theorists, such as himself, belonged: "The theory of socialism ... grew out of the philosophic, historical, and economic theories elaborated by educated representatives of the propertied classes, by intellectuals."[626] Here, Lenin even cited how "the founders of modern scientific socialism, Marx and Engels, themselves belonged to the bourgeois intelligentsia"—to justify his elitist conclusion, insisting that "in the very same way, in Russia, the theoretical doctrine of Social- Democracy [Marxism] arose altogether independently of the spontaneous growth of the working-class movement,"

621 Pipes, "Russian Marxism," 335.

622 V. Akimov, *Materyaly dilya kharakteristiki razvitiya rossiiskoi sotsialdemokraticheskoi rabochei partii* (Geneva, 1904- 1905), quoted in ibid.

623 Ibid.

624 Plekhanov, quoted in Mayer, "Dictatorship of the Proletariat," 275.

625 Lenin, *Collected Works,* vol. 5, 375-6.

626 Ibid.

but rather "arose as a ... among the revolutionary socialist intelligentsia."[627]

A 'Revolution' Without The People

Thus, Lenin's version of the anti-liberal ideological inheritance manifested in the form of the technocratic conclusions of the Revisionist Narodniks—believing that the theorists of revolutionary ideas ought to assume authority of the movement on behalf of the ignorant masses. This logic was captured, earlier, by Tkachev's insistence that,

> This great task can be accomplished ... only by the people who understand it ... people who are highly developed intellectually and morally, that is to say the minority. This minority, by virtue of its higher intellectual and moral level of development, always had and is bound to have intellectual and moral power over the majority.[628]

Following this line of reasoning, Lenin declared the need for a new type of party structure. As opposed to the vision of a mass movement of the working class at-large that the Orthodox Marxists had preached, Lenin sought to restrict authority to the intellectual elite. Specifically, Lenin sought to create a 'vanguard' party, i.e., a small sect of the most politically conscious and prepared revolutionaries to lead the way for the rest of the population.[629] Here, Lenin envisioned a group of specialists or "professional revolutionaries."[630] This specialization of revolutionary activity further implied that the revolution would be executed by a small, compact circle of individuals: "specialization necessarily presupposes centralization," Lenin wrote, "and in turn imperatively calls for it."[631] This insistence on the centralization of the revolutionary movement bore remarkable parallels with the strategy advocated by the Revisionist Narodnik Tkachev, in the previous chapter, who called for "a closely knit organization ... disciplined, hierarchical, subordinating"[632]—"an organization based on *the centralization of power*."[633] In both cases, the idea was for a highly exclusive sect of revolutionaries to be separated from the rest of the population. According to Robert Mayer, Lenin believed that the exclusivity of such a group would even require it to be removed from the working class itself: "this organization would stand outside the class itself ... since it could not consist of full-time factory workers."[634] Indeed, Lenin wrote, at-length, on the need to "confine the membership of such an organization only to those who are professionally engaged in revolutionary activity."[635] Furthermore, this minority sect would

627 Ibid. Yet in contradiction to Lenin's logic, Marx had previously declared, "We cannot ally ourselves ... with people who openly declare that the workers are too uneducated to free themselves and must first be liberated from above." Against this elitist model, Marx unwaveringly asserted that "the consciousness of a profound revolution, the communist consciousness, arises from the class itself." See Karl Marx, "Circular Letter to Bebel, Libeknecht, Bracke, et al," in *The First International and After*, ed. David Fernbach, (Middlesex: Penguin Books Ltd., 1974), 375.

628 Tkachev, "Program of the Journal," 290-1.

629 Lenin, *Collected Works,* vol. 5, pp. 440.

630 Ibid., 466.

631 Ibid., 470.

632 Tkacehv, "Excerpts from *Nabat*," 656.

633 Tkachev, "Program of the Journal," 292.

634 Mayer, "Lenin and the Concept of the Professional Revolutionary," *History of Political Thought* 14, no. 2 (Summer 1993): 256.

635 Lenin, *Collected Works,* Vol. 5, 464.

even hide its planning from the masses on whose behalf it claimed to work: Lenin clarified that such an exclusive party structure would also require "the strictest secrecy."[636] Yet all this was justified as ultimately beneficial for the people in whose name such a process was declared: indeed, Lenin believed that the masses were "better served if they deferred to the expertise of the specialist."[637]

By planning a 'revolution' on behalf of the 'unready' masses, who were denied a participatory role in it, Lenin was thereby calling for precisely the sort of elitist-conspiratorial strategy that Plekhanov had warned against. Seeking to seize power from the top-down as opposed to raising a mass uprising from the bottom-up, Lenin's political strategy was inherited from the Revisionist Narodnik branch of thought. Markedly, this inheritance additionally included, and logically precipitated, a dictatorial approach to the post-revolutionary society.

Justifying Authoritarianism

If this elitist seizure of power on behalf of the people was prompted by the present 'unreadiness' of the masses to create their own revolution in time, such an 'unreadiness' would not disappear overnight in the new post-revolutionary society erected by the intelligentsia alone. Indeed, in contrast to the Orthodox Marxist model that preached the delaying of the revolution until the working class came to socialist convictions en masse, Lenin's strategy would create a post-revolutionary realm in which the population was largely still lacking a developed socialist consciousness. Thus, just as the rushed 'revolution' was forced against the tempo of natural conditions, so too, now, must the new authority in power artificially force their subjects into alignment with their ideals that ran ahead of the larger nation's organic pace of progression. In other words, due to the premature circumstances in which this revolution was to be declared, the actual era of socialist reality would still have to be ushered into existence. Consequently, the period following the hasty seizure of power would have to be a *transitional phase*, i.e., socialism had to be constructed through decrees from above. In the words of the Tkachev, the Revisionist Narodnik who originated this strategy in the last century, "The revolution is not just the seizure of power. There is also the second step ... the creation of a revolutionary state."[638] Here, Lenin's anti-liberal politics would translate into dictatorial measures.

Working from this logic, Lenin planned an authoritarian regime to take control of the new society. As early as 1905, he declared that "a provisional revolutionary government must act dictatorially [for] the task of such a dictatorship is to destroy the remnants of the old institutions,"[639] i.e., the societal remnants that did not yet naturally dissipate due to this early voluntaristic intervention in the timeline of historical development. 12 years later, on the eve of the revolution, he clarified that such a dictatorship would "take life in its entirety under their control,"[640] in order to mold the present reality into alignment with the aspired socialist image, "for the purpose of leading the great mass of

636 Ibid., 480.

637 Mayer, "Lenin and the Concept," 257.

638 Tkachev, "Program of the Journal," 291; Tkachev, "Excerpts from *Nabat*," 656.

639 Lenin, *Collected Works,* vol. 9, 131.

640 Lenin, quoted in Brinkley, "Leninism," 158.

the population ... in the work of organizing socialist economy."[641] In this manner, Lenin precisely echoed Tkachev's justification for dictatorial measures, who, over forty years prior, argued for the necessity of a "revolutionary state which ... fights and destroys the conservative and reactionary elements in society" and then assumes comprehensive control over all aspects of life—bringing about revolutionary changes through state dictations "in the sphere of economic, political, and legal relationships within the social body."[642]

Further, since the population below still lacked a socialist consciousness, they would also lack a genuine desire for and understanding of the new socialist society being proclaimed from above. As such, Lenin had foreseen that his seizure of power would encounter "resistance to the revolution not only by capitalists ... but also by the vast mass of the working people."[643] Again claiming to be acting in the interest of the masses even if they did not yet comprehend it, Lenin thereby insisted that the vanguard of intellectual elites ought to create a "state apparatus" designed to "break resistance of every kind."[644] In *The State and Revolution* (1918), Lenin wrote spoke of the necessity of "state power, the centralized organization of violence, for the purpose crushing the resistance" that would inevitably arise.[645] Seeking to correct their views into alignment with that of the ruling intelligentsia, Lenin thus also planned on the 're-education' of the masses along the principles of the leading party. In other words, he sought to force a socialist consciousness onto the people and intended to "fight to instill into people's minds acceptance of Soviet state control."[646] Again, this tactical heritage can be traced back to Tkachev's argument for the revolutionary state "to change man's nature itself ... to re-educate him."[647] Revisionist Narodism thus prefigured this rationale: "when the minority does not want to wait for the majority to become itself conscious of its own demands, it would then turn to "impos[ing] this consciousness on the majority."[648] In this spirit, Lenin insisted that Russian people would "have to give up their autonomy and allow the professionals [to take charge]."[649]

To convey ideological legitimacy within Marxist doctrine, Lenin justified such dictatorial ends by redefining the Marxist term 'Dictatorship of the Proletariat.' As aforementioned in the previous section, the original term denoted the coming-to-power of a social class at-large—not the hegemony of a single party of leaders. Lenin, however, made it a central slogan of Bolshevik rhetoric and deployed the term "far more than any other Marxist ever had,"[650] while using it to justify his intended authoritarian measures and suppressive policies. In fact, he even clarified that "the dictatorship of the proletariat is an absolutely meaningless expres-

641 Lenin, *Selected Works,* Moscow, vol. II, 157.

642 Tkacehv, "Excerpts from *Nabat*," 656.

643 Lenin in Brinkley, "Leninism," 159.

644 Lenin, *Collected Works,* vol. 26, 109.

645 Lenin, *Selected Works,* 157.

646 Lenin, quoted in Brinkley, "Leninism," 160.

647 Tkachev, "Program of the Journal," 290.

648 Tkachev, "Zadachi revoliutsionnoi propagandy v Rossii" (1874), III, 64, quoted in Theen "The Idea of the Revolutionary State," 387.

649 Lenin, *Collected Works,* vol. 5, 466.

650 Mayer, "The Dictatorship of the Proletariat," 272.

sion without ... coercion."[651] Elsewhere, he explained that "dictatorship means unlimited power based on force, and not on law."[652] In his *April Theses*, written just before the actual revolution he was to lead, Lenin, describing the proposed state that was to follow the seizure, indicated that "such power is a dictatorship, i.e., it rests not on law, not on the formal will of the majority, but on direct, open force."[653] In a prescient observation of the logical conclusions of Lenin's approach to revolution, Plekhanov warned that the Bolsheviks "obviously confuse the dictatorship of the proletariat with dictatorship *over* the proletariat," arguing that in such a "centralized organization there is no place for the proletariat," a structure that would inevitably devolve into absolute rule of the leading minority.[654]

In sum, Lenin's authoritarian praxis was the logical outgrowth of his model of a revolution launched prior to the natural development of the people's own consciousness, will, and initiative for entering the stage of history that he sought to immediately introduce. By rejecting Plekhanov's 'orthodox' Marxist adherence to a patient unfolding of the successive temporal stages that awaited the natural maturation of material conditions and the population's mentality—most crucially via the liberal stage of developing mass political involvement and consciousness—Lenin sought to rush to the historical conclusion in a manner highly reminiscent of the Narodniks. And in doing so, he appeared to have inherited the Revisionist Narodnik variant of anti-liberal politics. The latter was exemplified by the teachings of Tkachev, a thinker who similarly sought the immediate realization of a socialist revolution in Russia before the people were ready to undertake such an endeavor themselves. The resulting praxis of revolutionary transition thus planned a revolution to be commenced without the people, followed by a period of dictatorial rule in which the intellectual minority would force an anachronistic reality into alignment with their untimely image of the future.

651 Lenin, quoted in Valentinov, *Encounters With Lenin,* 71.

652 Lenin, *Collected Works,* vol. 31, 340.

653 Lenin, *Collected Works,* vol. 24, 239.

654 Plekhanov, quoted in Mayer, "The Dictatorship of the Proletariat," 275.

Revolutionary Theory in Practice

Throughout all these years of theorizing the revolution—serially writing pamphlets, essays, and treatises which now fill over 50 volumes of collected works across tens of thousands of pages—Vladimir Lenin was commenting from the sidelines. In fact, he was removed from direct involvement in any revolutionary activity in Russia ever since he was exiled to eastern Siberia in 1897.[655] In 1900, to evade the Tsarist police, he left for Western Europe. Moving between Switzerland, Germany, and England,[656] Lenin formulated his theories for Russia's future from afar and had his writings smuggled in.[657] As such, his significant adaptations to Marxist stage theory was completely conceived thousands of miles away from the action. Lenin's work would remain restricted to abstractly theorizing from a distance until 1917, when the 'February Revolution' broke out in St. Petersburg. [658] Mounting military defeats, widespread hunger, and a scandal-ridden monarchy ignited mass demonstrations on the streets and violent armed clashes with police, ultimately concluding with the abdication of Tsar Nicholas II, the end of the Romanov dynasty, and the fall of the Russian Empire.[659] Yet, here, too, Lenin played no part, but merely saw this as an opportunity to finally return to Russia, after being kept out by the Tsarist police for the last 17 years. With the threat of arrest now removed, Lenin finally returned to Russia in April 1917, and began putting his theories into practice.

Coming back to a Russia in which authority was only *de jure* in the hands of a 'provisional government' and in which the populace was deeply divided over what the next political form should be for the nation, Lenin saw his opportunity to strike. Remaining true to their Marxist Orthodoxy, Plekhanov and the Menshevik Marxists saw the recent February Revolution as the initiation of Russia's "bourgeois-democratic" era, under which Russia would slowly evolve a matured capitalist economy alongside liberal-constitutional politics—seen as the intermediary and necessary preparatory stage prior to a socialist revolution.

Lenin, however, had different ideas. Retaining his peculiar ideological convictions inherited from and influenced by the heritage of Slavophile and Narodnik thought, Lenin sought a direct and immediate transition to the socialist age. Upon returning to Russia, historian Martin Malia writes, Lenin "cast aside the two-stage revolution entirely."[660] Ella Belfer similarly notes that Lenin "renounce[ed] the idea of two revolutions [and] faithfulness to historical determinism" to instead "preach immediate transition to a social revolution."[661] This is all, in essence, true. But more specifically, Lenin still tried to maintain, in formality, the Marxist dogma of two revolutions. He did so by claiming, in his *April Theses*, that through the February Revolution, "the bourgeois, or the bourgeois-democratic, [stage] in Russia is *completed*;"[662] yet less than two months had

655 Christopher Read, *Lenin: A Revolutionary Life* (London: Routledge, 2004), 31.

656 Helen Rappaport, *Conspirator: Lenin in Exile* (New York: Basic Books, 2010), 32-33.

657 Christopher J. Rice, *Lenin: Portrait of a Professional Revolutionary* (London: Cassell, 1990), 69-70.

658 The city was renamed Petrograd at the start of the First World War due to anti-German sentiment.

659 See Sheila Fitzpatrick, *The Russian Revolution* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017).

660 Martin Malia, "Lenin and the 'Radiant Future,'" *The New York Review* (November 2001).

661 Ella Belfer, "Zemlya vs. Volya," *Soviet Studies* 1, no. 3 (1978): 310.

662 Lenin, *Collected Works,* vol. 24, 44.

passed before this declaration—a timespan that could barely constitute a true historical epoch in the original Marxist sense preached by Plekhanov.[663] Even despite this explanation and justification, Lenin also nearly admitted that he had discarded with the two-stage formula altogether: in *Letters on Tactics*, Lenin wrote, "To deal with the question of 'completion' of the bourgeois revolution ... is to sacrifice living Marxism to the dead letter ... In real life, however, things have *already* turned out differently ... This fact does not fit into the old [original Marxist] schemes."[664] Indeed, in Trotsky's account titled *Lessons of October*, he noted how many Marxist colleagues, even Bolsheviks, were concerned about how "the bourgeois-democratic revolution is not completed," to which Lenin confirmed, "It is not. The formula is obsolete ... And it is no use trying to revive it."[665] With this expedited formula of historical stages, Lenin thus, called for the "immediate seizure of power" by the Bolshevik socialists against the "liberal" provisional government that had only just come into being just over 30 days prior.[666] Across just two days in late October,[667] the Bolsheviks executed its conspiracy of a coup, seizing control of the capital city of Petrograd and then taking control of the Winter Palace, declaring such an event a completed socialist 'revolution.'[668]

This directness toward the final historical stage and unwillingness to process through the intermediary stages of history as precedented by the West thereby illustrates the significant extent to which the Narodnik and Slavophile precursing ideas of Russian historical exceptionalism had survived in continuity into the actual Russian socialist revolution. Indeed, Lenin, in his own words, sought to "do the utmost to facilitate and accelerate the transition to the socialist revolution."[669] As such, he noted that "on the very first day of the proletarian, socialist revolution, private ownership of land was abolished in Russia;"[670] all this "we accomplished instantly, at one revolutionary blow," featuring a series of firm extermination of all things capitalist and liberal, i.e., "all the big capitalists, owners of factories, joint- stock companies, banks, railways, and so forth, were also expropriated without compensation."[671]

Lenin's insistence on the immediacy of revolution also reflects the thought of the late Narodnik generation: specifically, the idea that Russia's historically-exceptional path is but a short window of opportunity that, if not intervened upon *voluntaristically*, would fade away as conditions became more developed. Thus, just as Tkachev, decades earlier, cried, "Today the whole future of the country is still in the hands of revolutionaries, tomorrow it will be too late,"[672] Lenin similarly urgently warned:

> The situation is critical in the extreme. In fact it is now absolutely clear that to delay the uprising would be fatal. With all my might I urge com-

663 Ibid., 19-26.

664 Ibid., 45-46.

665 Ibid., 42-54.

666 The *April Theses* were declared on the 17th of April 1917; the Provisional Government was established on the 15th of March 1917.

667 October 25-26 via the Julian Calendar; November 7-8 via the Gregorian calendar.

668 Alexander Rabinowich, *The Bolsheviks Come to Power: The Revolution of 1917 in Petrograd* (2004), 273-305.

669 Lenin, *Collected Works,* vol. 28, 314.

670 Lenin, ibid., 313-14.

671 Lenin, *Collected Works,* vol. 30, 109.

672 Tkachev, "Program of the Journal," 288.

> rades to realise that everything now hangs by a thread; ... we must not wait. We must at all costs, this very evening, this very night, arrest the government, having first disarmed the officer cadets (defeating them, if they resist), and so on. We must not wait! We may lose everything! ... The value of the immediate seizure of power.[673]

More broadly, this attitude also recalled the Slavophile and Narodnik idea that Russian underdevelopment constituted a form of advantage, i.e., its backwardness and distance from the modernity of capitalist-economic and politically-liberal developments—which Westernizers believed was essential to progressing further—instead precisely provided its exceptional path to reaching the end goal more directly. As such, Lenin concluded in a 1917 pamphlet that "Owing to ... the greater backwardness of Russia ... the revolution broke out in Russia earlier than in other countries."[674]

Furthermore, by seeking to eliminate any waiting period of further historical development preceding the socialist age, Lenin's preclusion of the liberal stage of political development also manifested along the same form of anti-liberal praxis advocated by the Revisionist Narodniks. As opposed to the Orthodox Marxist model of a necessary liberal phase of cultivating the masses' political consciousness, Lenin bypassed the 'unready' masses by way of a coup d'état from above. On the eve of the Bolshevik revolution, Lenin argued that the party must "alone" seize power—without waiting for the masses to get behind it.[675] Lenin did not want to wait for the people to democratically come to socialist conclusions, which the Marxist deterministic model predicted would occur among the working class by the end of processing through the liberal era. Instead, Lenin, in *Toward the Seizure of Power*, asserted that, regarding the notion of receiving mass support from below, "such a guarantee history has never proffered, and is absolutely in no position to proffer in any revolution."[676] Continuing, Lenin held that the Bolsheviks ought not wait for a democratically-decided decision by the masses through representative voting, but rather through more direct measures which bypassed any sort of constitutional or democratic procedure:

> To wait for the Constituent Assembly, *which will obviously not be for us*, is senseless ... With all my power I wish to persuade the comrades ... that on the order of the day questions that are not solved by conferences, by congresses (even by Congresses of Soviets), but ... by the struggle of armed masses.[677]

Two weeks after the Bolshevik coup d'etat, elections for the Constituent Assembly were held, constituting the sole free and "truly democratic election" ever held in 1,000 years of Russian history.[678] The result indicated a total defeat of the Bolshevik Party, receiving less than a quarter of the vote, losing to the Socialist Revolutionary Party.[679] Seeing that he did not have popular support, Lenin refused to abide by the will of

673 Lenin, *Collected Works,* vol. 26, 234.

674 Lenin, *Collected Works,* vol. 25, 368.

675 Lenin's *Collected Works,* vol. 26, 19-21.

676 Lenin, quoted in Karpovich, "A Forerunner of Lenin," 348.

677 Lenin, *Collected Works,* vol. 26, 234.

678 Kichitaro Katsuda, "Russian Intellectual History and the Gorbachev Revolution," *International Journal on World Peace* 8, no. 2 (June 1991): 25.

679 Dmitri Volkogonov, *Lenin: Life and Legacy*, trans. by Harold Shukman (London: Harper Collins, 1994), 173.

the masses as expressed constitutionally in this liberal-democratic institution. Thus, the very next day, the Bolsheviks locked down the building and declared that the Assembly had been dissolved.[680]

Instead of such democratic and representative measures of a liberal paradigm, Lenin opted to lead by authoritarian rule. He argued that this more direct approach of asserting the intelligentsia's will on behalf of the people would make "the masses" goal "a reality more quickly and effectively than will a parliamentary republic," and that such will proceed "more effectively for the benefit of the people if the whole state power is in its hands."[681] Indeed, "after the October Revolution, Lenin increasingly touted the ability of experts to solve the proletariat's problems and insisted that they [the party leaders] be given autonomy to do the work."[682] Here, Lenin was justifying the need for a "revolutionary dictatorship," which he noted constituted "an entirely different kind of power from the one that generally exists in the parliamentary bourgeois-democratic republics of the usual type still prevailing in the advanced countries of Europe and America," i.e., the West which he felt Russia was a historical exception from.[683] Over the next two years, Lenin would forcefully expel all other parties and interest groups from the government— not only those representing other social classes such as the liberals, but also fellow socialists such as Plekhanov's Mensheviks and the Socialist Revolutionaries who won the election.[684] This was the birth of the one-party state, a notion which Martin Malia called an "unprecedented political system" up until that point,[685] which soon became authoritarian dictatorship that the Soviet Union would become notorious for.

Under this model, the revolution was declared by the intelligentsia before the mass populace and the societal conditions were ready for such a transition. Hence, this gap in 'correct' consciousness justified the authority of a 'transitory' state that would force the party's ideals onto the people. As such, the role of the Leninist party and official doctrine of the new state was to politically educate the workers in socialist doctrine and "dispel societal false consciousness," correcting them toward a state-mandated mentality.[686] This logic held, too, for the material realities and resources of Russia, which were still far from developed enough to realistically enter the communist dream. Consequently, in the decades to follow, the people would be dictatorially commanded to work to bring about the missing conditions of the new age they had sought to rush into. In this way, the state's all-embracing authority was justified as a temporary means to a distant end. Indeed, Lenin, less than a year after the Bolshevik coup, outlined the blueprint for the following steps to "complet[ing]" the revolution: In "The Immediate Tasks of the Soviet Government" (1918), Lenin clarified that a true realization of the promised socialist society was "only just beginning."[687] Until then, the populace had to pledge an "iron discipline while at work" and an "unquestioning obedience to the orders of individual

680 Read, *Lenin: A Revolutionary Life*, 139.

681 Lenin, *Collected Works,* vol. 24, 53-54.

682 Mayer, "Professional Revolutionary," 260.

683 Lenin, *Collected Works,* vol. 24, 38.

684 Stephen J. Lee, *Lenin and Revolutionary Russia* (London: Routledge, 2003), 98-99.

685 Martin Malia, "Lenin and the 'Radiant Future.'"

686 Lenin's *Collected Works,* vol. 31, 316-317.

687 Lenin's *Collected Works,* vol. 27, 235-77

representatives of the Soviet government ... unquestioning obedience to the will of a single person, the Soviet leader;" the masses had to surrender their autonomy to the revolutionary dictatorship, trusting that the latter's mandated plans of action would eventually bring about the promised utopia—"only its fulfilment will give us a socialist system."[688]

Conclusion

In the last letter he ever wrote, Plekhanov recalled a remark from a fellow Marxist leader:

> I am rem[ind]ed of what Victor Adler said to me half-jokingly and half-seriously: 'Lenin is your son.' I replied: 'If he is my son, he is obviously illegitimate.' I think that the Bolsheviks' tactics are completely illegitimate conclusions drawn from those tactical positions which I preached, relying on the theory of Marx and Engels.[689]

From his conversion until his death, *Plekhanov,* the 'father of Russian Marxism' had sworn by what he believed were the original principles of the Western philosophy which he popularized in his nation. Inspired by promising trends of industrialization, Plekhanov sought to dispel the notion of Russian historical exceptionalism and declare the indisputable advent of Western modernity. Preaching a multi- staged itinerary of historical progression modeled after Occidental rhythms, he argued that Russia could not rush into the socialist age through some unique and expedited path but rather had to humbly follow in the footsteps of Western developmental precedents. Thus, in dismissing the notion of a historical advantage and shortcut via societal 'backwardness' and preaching the necessity of an era of political liberalism, Plekhanov ultimately asserted the conviction that Russia was not historically exceptional, after all, but rather belonged to the Western universal timeline of history. Crusading against the Narodnik movement, Plekhanov introduced a foreign socialist methodology that reared a new generation of Russian revolutionaries, who would ultimately bring about the long-theorized revolution. Yet his pupil who ultimately brought the revolution to fruition, Vladmir Lenin, deeply modified the original doctrine—revisions that ultimately resulted in the rushed and technocratic nature of the Russian Socialist Revolution.

These controversial characteristics of the Russian Socialist Revolution evidently displayed a continuity of the older indigenous ideas that the Orthodox Marxist creed had rejected. Despite the decline of the original Narodnik movement, its intellectual heritage of Russian historical exceptionalism ultimately survived into Lenin's theory and practice. Though the peasant commune was declining, the concept of 'reversing backwardness,' first begun by the Slavophiles, appeared to deeply figure in Lenin's approach to justifying the timing of the revolution. Through his theory of the 'weakest link,' he rationalized how the socialist revolution would first arise not among the most developed capitalist societies of Western Europe, but rather in the most underdeveloped peripheries. Through such a theoretical corollary, Russia's 'backwardness' would, indeed, provide a more expedited course of progression into the highest stage of development. Further, instead of awaiting the completed proletarianization of the peasantry and the emergence of a domestic bourgeoise—which the Western- centric Orthodox Marxists had mandated as historical precon-

688 Ibid.

689 Plekhanov, quoted in Mayer, "The Dictatorship of the Proletariat," 276.

ditions—Lenin sought to capitalize on his nation's incomplete or premature conditions: he devised a strategy of incorporating the peasantry alongside a fledgling proletariat as the demographic to complete a stage of revolution otherwise reserved for a liberal segment of society that had yet to develop. Moreover, within this adapted framework of stage progression, Lenin repeatedly emphasized the need to instantaneously proceed into the socialist phase—ultimately presenting an accelerated and voluntaristic vision of revolution that only formally maintained Marxism in name, while essentially calling for a direct transition into the socialist epoch.

As part of this mentality, in seeking to practically cut out the liberal political phase which the Orthodox Marxists insisted ought to precede the socialist era, Lenin displayed a conspicuous revival of the anti-liberal positions of the earlier theorists of Russian historical exceptionalism. Unconsciously echoing the Slavophiles, Herzen, and the Narodniks, Lenin was similarly hostile to the development of liberal institutions and constitutional frameworks, which Plekhanov's Westernizing worldview had prioritized. Yet, crucially, Lenin's inheritance of the anti-liberal tradition particularly featured the political praxis of the Revisionist Narodnik branch of thought, i.e., the last turn in the intellectual genealogy's evolution before the original movement's decline amid the rise of Russian Marxism. Indeed, the Revisionist Narodnik's political strategy for ensuring a rushed revolution and direct progression to socialism in the absence of suitable conditions and an unprepared populace proved fitting for the comparable circumstances in which Lenin sought to construct such a historical transition. Accordingly, then, Lenin rejected liberalism for authoritarianism, ultimately precluding a popular movement from below in favor of an elitist coup from above—putting the intelligentsia in power of a technocratic state through which to actualize the missing conditions of communism via dictatorial command over the masses. The idea of an exceptional Russian path of historical progression, which survived, evolved, and adapted across multiple generations of thinkers, finally culminated in this ruthless manifestation. Reflecting on the unprecedented nature of the revolution he led, Lenin proudly recalled in an essay titled "Our Revolution" (1923), that his nation uniquely possessed and capitalized on "the opportunity to create the fundamental requisites of civilization in a different way from that of the Western European countries."[690]

690 Lenin, *Collected Works,* vol. 33, 476–80.

Conclusion

ON THE 28TH of December, 1922, the Soviet Union was officially proclaimed, formalizing the establishment of the world's first 'socialist' country.[691] Five years after seizing power in October 1917,[692] Lenin and his Bolshevik faction had prevailed through a bloody civil war, crushing resistance and securing authority over the former Russian Empire. Marxism was declared the official ideology of the state. Yet this foreign philosophy, bred in the industrially-advanced and politically-reformed lands of Western Europe, did not expect its vision for the next stage of history to be first attained by such an underdeveloped nation to the East, a still-predominantly agrarian society fresh out of a monarchical autocracy. Nor did the original theorists behind this doctrine intend for the supposed epoch of working- class liberation to come through a dictatorial regime that sought to decree the conditions of communism into existence.

Though this event has long appeared to be conspicuously divergent from the original code through which it signaled its legitimacy, this thesis has shown how the Russian Revolution's peculiarities from Western historical frameworks deserve an alternative angle of analysis. Rather than focusing on how it departed from the models it claimed to follow, this thesis has instead shown how such apparent divergences from one philosophical tradition may, rather, stand as consistent continuations of another. In identifying an unexpected ideological ancestry that prefigured, survived, and evolved into core ideas behind the Bolshevik Revolution, this study has sought to illuminate a different contextual foreground for explaining the roots of this controversial event.

In particular, this thesis has tracked an intellectual tradition whose genealogy can be traced from an anti-Westernizer philosophy, formulated by monarchist conservatives in the early-to-mid-1800s, to the faction of revolutionary radicals who ultimately launched the socialist revolution at the start of the new century. In doing so, this narrative specifically challenges the dominant conception of the Russian revolutionary heritage as having culminated out of the Westernizer school—by instead presenting an ideological ancestry founded against that very ethos. In this way, the revolution's departures from Western normativity, instead, signified the manifestations of a prefiguring worldview precisely founded on making such departures from the West.

This intellectual inheritance centered around the concept that Russia's timeline of historical progression was exceptional from that of Western Europe. This notion was first posited by the conservative Slavophiles in the 1830s-40s, as a reaction against the Western image of Russia as a 'backward' society perpetually lagging behind and belatedly following the West's trend-setting developments. These thinkers responded by turning this notion on its head: reversing the connotations of 'backwardness,' they celebrated Russia's underdevelopment as rather signifying a separate and superior road of societal evolution from that of the

691 John Schwarzmantle, *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Nationalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 643-651.

692 The 'October' Revolution (based on the Julian Calendar) occurred in November 1917, according to the Gregorian calendar.

West. Specifically, they insisted, Russia's 'backward' holdouts against modernity would prove to provide a more conducive path to attaining the very type of societal ideal which Western progressives were chasing: a collectivistic freedom, i.e., socialism. This belief system glorified the nation's emblem of underdevelopment, its communalistic agrarian communities, as the basis of its dream of beating the Occident to a communal utopia.

The politically-ambivalent Alexander Herzen in the 1840s-50s sympathized with these Slavophile concepts and radicalized such premises into an explicitly socialist vision. Russia, he declared, by virtue of its retention of archaic communalistic foundations, possessed a shortcut to evolving a socialist society, thereby precluding the need for modernizing along Western examples. In other words, the original conservative call for a temporal return from Occidental modernity now evolved into a vision of skipping over it, i.e., seeking to leapfrog into the next stage of history. These ideas were then inherited by the Narodniks of the 1870s, who clashed against the Western universalism of the increasingly-popular Marxists, instead continuing to assert Russia's exceptional path of bypassing the capitalist paradigm to proceed directly from, and through, its 'backward' conditions into the socialist future. Finally, such ideas evidently survived into Lenin's peculiar application of Marxism. Through a series of theoretical modifications to the Marxist framework of successive-stage progression, Lenin embraced and capitalized on the nation's underdeveloped features to push a premature Russia into the coveted age of socialism.

In identifying such continuities, this thesis has also carved out a novel lineage of intellectual evolution which ties together seemingly-incompatible and mutually-hostile schools of thought. Interestingly, this study has found that such political hostilities and differences ultimately converged through a common aversion to the liberal paradigm. Indeed, the Slavophile longing for a pre-liberal Russia seemed to horseshoe with the post-liberal objectives of the Narodnik and Bolshevik socialists. Yet it is also within this continuous theme that one finds a doctrinal flexibility that allowed this ideological heritage to survive not only across different political philosophies but also through the changing material circumstances that constantly challenged the feasibility of such idealistic visions. As such, the notion of anti-liberalism was redefined in terms of political praxis to accommodate the perpetuation of the old vision amid new realities.

The political differences and generational separations between each constituent milieu of this ideological lineage inevitably gave rise to logistical impracticalities and antimonies—in maintaining the feasibility of the inherited ideals as they grew ever more anachronistic from the original contexts in which they were first posited. Ever since the Slavophiles' conservative aims were remade into radical-socialist ones under Herzen, the following generation of Narodniks had to reckon with the paradox of striving for a progressive evolution via the retention of societal underdevelopment. At first, the hole in practical logic was filled by a mythical image of 'the people' and their supposedly communistic ways, which was expected to be the vehicle of conjuring the intended socioeconomic transformation. However, once the masses were increasingly revealed to not have embodied such sophisticated

philosophies, coupled with a decline of communal arrangements amid a modernizing Russia, the dream of a historically-exceptional road had lost the hollow foundations on which it was originally built. In other words, perhaps Russia was not naturally predisposed to make this back-to-front leap in the race of historical development, after all. To fill this enlarging gap between infeasible realities and a stubborn adherence to the exceptional plot, the intelligentsia increasingly saw the need to intervene—to forge the ideals once thought to have uniquely and organically existed in their society. What was once believed to sprout from 'the people' below now had to be imposed onto the same people from above. Thus, Lenin inherited a blueprint in which he ultimately tried to rush his 'backward' nation into the promised utopia, where the missing preconditions now had to be artificially, and dictatorially, forced into existence. In this way, perhaps one could say that the last became first; but at what cost?

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