DOSTOYEVSKY AND THE SLAVOPHILES

APPROVED:

[Signatures]

Major Professor

S. G. Ballard
Consulting Professor

[Signature]

Minor Professor

E. S. Clifton
Chairman of the Department of English

[Signature]

Robert F. Trousdale
Dean of the Graduate School
DOSTOYEVSKY AND THE SLAVOPHILES

THESIS

Presented to the Graduate Council of the
North Texas State University in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

By

Sharon L. Kingston, B. S.

Denton, Texas
August, 1970
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I. DOSTOYEVSKY: FROM PETRASHEVSKY TO KHOMIAKOV</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. ORTHODOXY: THE RUSSIAN CHURCH</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. AUTOCRACY: THE RUSSIAN GOVERNMENT</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. NATIONALITY: THE RUSSIAN PEOPLE</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V. THE NOVELIST AND THE IDEOLOGISTS</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
To know Fyodor Dostoyevsky is to know much of the history of mid-nineteenth century Russia. His is no tale of a hermit-artist--antisocial, apolitical, and unrecognizable. The events of the 1840's and 1850's greatly influenced the intellectual cast of his mind--his prejudices, his fundamental assumptions and conclusions--and thus affected his writings. His liberal sympathies of the 1840's were not peculiar to himself nor to the members of the particular group of which he found himself a part. Although most of Europe and the western world thought of Russia in terms of perpetual snow, dull peasants, and wolves, much of the turbulence experienced in France, the Germanies, even the United States was reflected at the same time north and east of the Carpathians.

The Great Russian Bear was not immune to the proddings of the dissatisfied and the disillusioned. While monarchy after monarchy tumbled in France, while no unified monarchy--constitutional or otherwise--could be organized in Germany, and while the American Union suffered increasing tension among its sister states, the Imperial Russian Tsar occupied a comparatively ancient throne entrusted to the Romanov family.
since the second decade of the seventeenth century. In Dostoyevsky's lifetime (1821-1881) three of the house of Romanov reigned—Alexander I (1801-1825), his brother Nicholas I (1825-1855), and the latter's son Alexander II (1855-1881). Each witnessed increased dissension and demand for change of the status quo. Alexander I had responded to the liberal element among his subjects, particularly his own nobility; he recognized the peasant problem and intermittently played with different schemes of reform, despite the displeasure of the majority of the aristocracy. Unfortunately, his good intentions dissolved with reports of menacing secret societies.

Governmental internal policy for the rest of the century was made more rigid three years later under the absolutist Nicholas I. His Minister of Education, S. Uvarov, coined a succinct three word description of the tsar's official policy: "Orthodoxy, Autocracy, Nationality."

contributions. Since Peter the Great it had depended on the bureaucratic-secular state, whose head had been autocratic since the days of Ivan III, the first Russian ruler to bind his independent princes to him. To question the autocracy was to question the sacredness of the established order. Legitimism was the watchword. The duty of every Russian, whether noble, gentry, or peasant, was to support the tsar unquestioningly. Every Russian had his particular place in the socio-political hierarchy beneath him. Here was Uvarov's concept of official Nationality. Beneath the tsar existed a "standing army of soldiers, a sitting army of bureaucrats, a kneeling army of priests, and a crawling army of spies."²

The nobility provided individuals for civil and military service, while the lower classes, especially the peasantry, served the crown as soldiers and labor force.³ In between were the landed nobility (gentry), the bureaucrats, the professional class, and the merchants.

By the 1840's, regardless of official dogma, some of the nobility and scores of educated Russians felt the pressures of censorship and the stringent social and political controls; many no longer belonged to the community of Orthodox believers. No one could voice his dissatisfaction; no one could publish

³Harcave, Years of the Golden Cockerel, p. 35.
any written criticism of the government. Marc Raeff analyzes the inevitable result: "the forcible canalization of the quest for self-expression and individuality—especially in its acute, rebellious forms—into the realm of thought, which, for this reason, became the opium of the civilized, their only substitute, pale as it was, for action."^4

Basically, the educated could be placed into one of three main categories: 1) those of the professional class, including some aristocracy and the highest ranks of the army and civil service, not all of whom were dissatisfied with the regime; 2) those who comprised the great majority of the educated who were sick of the unwieldy bureaucracy and the continual threat of spies; and 3) those who comprised a minority of the second group and advocated revolution.^5 The collective name for all these individuals of the three categories was intelligentsia. By the mid-nineteenth century most of them could be roughly divided into two groups: the Westerners and the Slavophiles. Each camp had its liberals and conservatives; here and there among them were some radicals. They challenged one another in the salons, the major

---


^6 Seton-Watson, Decline, p. 22.
battleground, even though relatively few of the antagonists could gain access to them; in journals, albeit under the eye of the censor; and in the lecture halls.7

The Russian who did most to illuminate the great differences between the Slavophiles and the Westerners was probably Peter Chaadaev, a Westerner who in 1836 published the first of his Philosophical Letters. The immediate result of these works besides the disappearance of the unfortunate magazine in which they appeared, the exile of its editor, and the imprisonment of the author, was the initial major and visible break between the Slavophiles and Westerners. Chaadaev wrote the following: "We are alone in the world, we have given nothing to the world, we have taught it nothing. We have not added a single idea to the sum total of human spirit, and what we have borrowed of this progress we have distorted."8 He went on to prescribe a cure for Russia's lack of progress by a turn to the West and, unlike most other Westerners who were self-avowed atheists, a turn to the Catholic Church. Chaadaev and the Westerners detested serfdom as much as the Slavophiles did; however, the latter, also recognizing


shortcomings in the government and culture, suggested that Russians look to their own heritage, their own church, their own potential for improved conditions.

Like the majority of the intelligentsia of which they were a part, most writers and philosophers of note were Westerners. Dostoyevsky himself preferred the company of the liberals, whose ideas he was later to abandon. His early popularity, in fact, grew out of the favorable reviews the famous critic Vissarion Belinsky gave Poor Folk. Belinsky, the expatriate Alexander Herzen, the radical Chernyshevsky, Professor Granovsky of the University of Moscow, Nikolai Gogol, and Ivan Turgenev were with varying degrees of enthusiasm Occidentophiles. Years later in The Diary of a Writer Dostoyevsky spoke of his impressions of two prominent Westerners:

Bielinsky was the most ardent person of all those whom I have met throughout my life. Herzen was quite different. He was a product of our noble class—a gentilhomme russe et citoyen du monde above all—a type which developed in Russia, and which could have sprung up nowhere but in Russia. Dostoyevsky says that Herzen, like many Westerners, was a "ready born emigrant" and that the "majority of them never left Russia." And in the 1840's Dostoyevsky shared many

---

9 Christoff, A. S. Xomjakov, p. 44.
11 Ibid.
of their sentiments. In fact, he gradually became a member of a group which went beyond much of the typical debate of moral issues characteristic of the Westerner-Slavophile conflict.

Mikhail Petrashevsky gave his name to a circle of Russian intellectuals who, beginning in the late months of 1845, gathered to discuss the formation of a Russian socialist state based on the French socialism of Fourier and St. Simon. They formulated several definite goals: the abolition of serfdom, without recompense to the former owners; the reorganization of the judiciary; the institution of a free press; and the inauguration of a republic. Petrashevsky himself had already come to the notice of the tsar and his police upon the publication of A Dictionary of Foreign Terminology and Ways of Raising the Value of Land. The former might loosely be comparable to Diderot's Encyclopédie, also famous for its seemingly innocent definitions of contemporary words—definitions which surreptitiously conveyed Diderot's and Petrashevsky's liberal and rationalistic meanings, their anti-Catholic, anti-establishment attitudes. In the Russian version a plethora of social ideas was defined and discussed:

There were articles on socialism, communism, Fourierism, the constitution, the nature of absolutism, and so on. Most of these articles

---

12 Nicholas Riasanovsky, "Fourierism in Russia: an Estimate of the Petrashevsky," The American Slavic and East European Review, XII (October, 1953), 299.
contained undisguised attacks on the Russian autocracy, but Petrashevsky had taken care to obtain the permission of the Grand Duke Mikhail, the Tsar's brother, to dedicate it to him, and the censor, assuming the book was being published by royal privilege, made no effort to prevent publication.\(^{13}\)

The second book, actually a memorandum, also cunningly dedicated (this time to the nobility in general), was no benign agricultural/economic text; instead it suggested that the most logical way to get rid of serfdom was to appropriate the land and sell it to the merchant classes, who could not by law possess serfs.\(^{14}\) The reaction of the authorities when the real purposes became apparent was immediate and severe censorship. Little wonder that increased investigation and surveillance of Petrashevsky should sooner or later result in infiltration of the weekly meetings by an official agent.

Once inside the group, the informer listened to hours of debate on the doctrines of Fourier and St. Simon, on the glorious future of regenerated and transformed humanity, on the rise of the human mind and intellect out of the Orthodox bog. It is unclear if the agent knew of the more radical group within the Petrashevsky circle—the Durov subcircle which was planning an active rebellion and which included Dostoyevsky as a member. Nevertheless, one evening the spy


\[^{14}\text{Ibid., p. 59.}\]
heard the most damning conversation of them all; Dostoyevsky himself read aloud the famous correspondence between Belinsky and Gogol on the occasion of the publication of the latter's Selected Passages from Correspondence with My Friends (January, 1847), a book of Gogol's letters to various friends entreating them to regroup behind the tsar and to recognize the error of their separation from the church and Russian tradition.

Belinsky composed a disapproving review of the book, and Gogol responded by expressing in turn his unhappiness with the unfavorable review. Belinsky's reaction, as revealed in his second letter (July, 1847), was a vituperative one. He proceeded to annihilate Gogol's reputation and unreservedly to attack official governmental policy--"the black night of Autocracy, Orthodoxy, and Nationalism"--especially the church.15

Advocate of the knout, apostle of ignorance, champion of obscurantism and reactionary mysticism, eulogist of Tatar customs--what are you doing? Look at what is beneath your feet; you are standing on the brink of an abyss. That you should tie in your ideas with the Orthodox Church I can understand--it has ever been the support of the knout and the toady of despotism: but why do you bring in Christ? What do you think He has in common with any Church, and particularly the Orthodox Church? He was the first to teach men the ideals of liberty, equality, and fraternity, and He illustrated and proved the truth of His teachings by His martyrdom. And it was men's salvation only until a Church was organized around it, based on the principle of orthodoxy. The Church was a hierarchy, and hence a champion of inequality, a toady to power, an enemy and persecutor of brotherhood among men, and so it continues to be to this day.16

16Ibid., pp. 255-256.
The tsar certainly could have read himself into the "you" of the entire letter:

Hence you have failed to notice that Russia sees her salvation not in mysticism, not in asceticism, not in pietism, but in the achievements of civilization, enlightenment, and humanitarianism. What she needs is neither sermons (of which she has heard enough!) nor prayers (she has mumbled enough of those!), but an awakening in her people of the sense of human dignity, which has been trampled down in mud and manure for so many centuries; she needs rights and laws conforming not to Church doctrine but to common sense and justice, and she needs to have them rigorously enforced. Instead, she offers the dreadful spectacle of a country in which men trade in men, without so much as the excuse invented by the wily American plantation owners who claim that a negro is not a human being; a country where people refer to themselves not by their proper names but by degrading nicknames such as Van'ka, Steshka, Vas'ka, Palashka; a country, finally, which not only affords no guarantees for personal safety, honor, and property but which cannot even maintain internal order and has nothing to show but vast corporations of office-holding thieves and robbers.17

Not only did Dostoyevsky read aloud these forbidden documents, but he also agreed to help disseminate copies of the two letters. On April 23, 1849, he and the other members of the Petrashevsky and Durov circles were arrested, detained, and interrogated in the Fontanka Prison, and then removed to Peter and Paul Fortress. Eight months later on December 22, 1849, Dostoyevsky, unaware that sentences had just been handed down, was escorted with the other prisoners to the Semyonov Square for execution. The subsequent events are familiar to

17 Ibid., p. 254.
any student of Dostoyevsky--his sentence was commuted to four years hard labor, and he was stripped of his rights of nobility. He disappeared from the life of St. Petersburg for the next ten years.

Years later in *The Diary of a Writer* Dostoyevsky defended his involvement with the arrested, his partiality toward many of the ideas that attracted the youth of his time, and his belief that mankind could be regenerated and healed by new political and societal organization:

Already in '46 I had been initiated by Belinsky into the whole truth of that future "regenerated world" and into the whole holiness of the forthcoming communist society. All these convictions about the immorality of religion, family, right of property; all these ideas about the elimination of nationalities in the name of universal brotherhood of men, about the contempt for one's native country, as an obstacle to the universal progress, and so on, and so forth—all these constituted such influences as we were unable to overcome and which, contrarywise, swayed our hearts and minds in the name of some magnanimity. At any rate, the theme seemed lofty and far above the level of the then prevailing conceptions, and precisely this was tempting.18

The liberal intelligentsia were not alone in their demand for the abolition of serfdom and the reform of many governmental institutions and practices. A. S. Khomiakov, Iurii Samarin, the Aksakov brothers, and the Kireevski brothers wanted the same things; however, they suggested entirely different means to reach that end. These were the most famous Slavophiles, spokesmen for a body of thinkers, writers,

and publishers whose philosophical roots went back to that time immediately after the Napoleonic conflict when Russians began to notice themselves. They read and were influenced like almost everyone else by Karamzin's nationalistic History of Russia, and later they rose to meet the challenge of Chaadaev's 1836 Letters. Their interests were many and diverse—philosophy, religion, fashion, sports; however, the Moscow Slavophiles were most famous for their religio-politico ideas which provided their main defense against the Westerners.

Although a number of Slavophiles lived in St. Petersburg, the most prominent and influential members gathered in Moscow. Most of them were landed gentry holding properties for centuries on the outskirts of Moscow, a great continental center for river trade and a church center since the early fourteenth century. The old manorial system grew up around it. The antipathy felt by the Slavophiles for St. Petersburg was no mere eccentric whim. In 1703 Peter the Great transferred the Russian seat of government from Moscow to St. Petersburg. The new capital became an obvious symbol of everything the Slavophiles hated.

St. Petersburg was a perfect expression of and the natural successor to his Peter's work. This city was the very essence of rationalism,

19Christoff, A. S. Xomjakov, p. 191.
20Ibid., p. 9.
formalism, materialism, legalism, and compulsion: it had been built out of nothing, without spiritual sanctification or historical tradition, even the ground on which it stood was Finnish rather than Russian; yet this artificial, foreign city ruled the whole land, entire Holy Russia, by means of its compulsory decrees borrowed from the West and quite inapplicable to the Russian way of life.  

Philip Rahv calls it "the center of alienation." For Dostoyevsky, who spent most of his life after Siberia there, St. Petersburg personified all the darkness and ugliness and fearsomeness men faced on her streets every day, a "wasteland, the dead end of the world."

The rise and decline of Slavophilism can be loosely confined to the period between 1836 and the abolition of serfdom in 1861, at which time their most detested official institution was altered by Alexander II. Generally speaking, Slavophilism, like Westernism, remained ideological; no "program, tactics, organization and action" resulted from the countless debates and articles written in support of either. Largely under the aegis of Khomiakov, the Slavophiles proceeded to criticize the established order and thus incur the

---


24 Payne, Dostoyevsky, p. 203.


26 Christoff, A. S. Khomiakov, p. 11.
displeasure of the tsar. His feelings toward them must have been mixed, for as a whole they avidly supported the autocracy and loved the traditions and customs of past centuries; however, their view of the origin of the power and jurisdiction of the state, their attitudes toward the Russian Orthodox Church, and their sanctification of the Russian people put an odd twist on just how much the government could trust them. These very tenets made the Slavophiles suspect in the eyes of the radicals. Lukashevich explains their situation well:

For instance, Ivan Aksakov would act as a staunch liberal when he thought that the conservatives were a danger to an adequate settlement of serfdom; yet, on the other hand, when he sensed that the established order was threatened by liberal and revolutionary ideas, he lent a generous hand to reaction. In both cases he was consistent with the Slavophile world view.27

And that world view was founded upon a religious rather than an economic or political basis.28 Briefly, according to Slavophile ideology, the only church was the Russian Orthodox Church, whose membership was composed primarily of the peasantry; they were temporarily separated in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries from the educated and the nobility, many of whom had forsaken Orthodoxy and had welcomed Western habits and ideas. Eventually all Russians would


reunite, and as a body Orthodox Russians would lead their motherland to supersede the rest of the nations of the earth and in so doing save them. Neither the government nor the economical structure of the country nor the educational system stood as crucial features of the Slavophile's forecast of Russian destiny; Orthodoxy alone provided the means required to fulfill the Slavophile prophecy.

The messianic strain running throughout Slavophile ideology may bring to the mind of those acquainted with Russian history the old idea of Moscow as the Third Rome. This concept is rarely mentioned, much less discussed, in histories; usually only a sentence or two alludes to this idea, which originated in the early sixteenth century after the fall of the Byzantine Empire. George Vernadsky defines the theory of the Third Rome:

The doctrine of the Third Rome has often been interpreted as Moscow's aggressive claim to political as well as religious world leadership. Originally the doctrine had no such meaning. Those who first formulated it believed the end of the world was approaching and the Last Judgment. They were merely trying to keep Orthodox Christianity alive as a last refuge to the end. Their followers were less pessimistic and hoped for a Christian millennium; but they too were concerned only with the fate of Orthodox Christianity and preached no crusade against the outside world. Their aim was first of all to clean their own house and improve the organization of the Russian church.29

He does not explain where the messianic idea may have entered Russian thought. The Slavophiles evidently did not adopt this concept per se, although they ultimately considered that the

---

West would be altered and improved by Orthodoxy. Vernadsky's explanation would not satisfy the Slavophile concept of the messianic purpose of the Russian people through the Orthodox Church. Dostoyevsky filled pages in his Diary advocating the reconquest of the Second Rome, Constantinople, and the subsequent conquest and conversion of the West.

The idea that Russia had a responsibility to lead other countries to salvation and prosperity had its roots in Hegelian philosophy. The educated Russian would not have ignored the writings of Europeans; besides, many Russians were educated in German universities. Both Westerners and Slavophiles based their concepts of history on the Hegelian principle "that the history of mankind is but the gradual revelation in this world of a universal absolute idea which is borne in successive stages by various peoples and in consecutive epochs." Westerners contended that Russia would miss its turn if it did not rapidly follow Western Europe's path of development and overtake her. Slavophiles adopted the principle of successive stages; however, they did not see the same end. They "transferred the mantle of the elect from German to Slavic shoulders." Neither Khomiakov nor any other Slavophile decided conclusively on what was to happen to the West after Russia's ascendancy.

---


31 Petrovich, Emergence, p. 8.

32 Ibid.
Hegel's dialectic, if strictly followed, according to the Slavophiles, destined Russia (antithesis) to surpass the West (thesis) with the ultimate result to be a higher synthesis, an incorporation of the better points of the thesis-antithesis. More often than not, the Slavophiles leaned toward obliteration of the West.\textsuperscript{33} No matter what they professed, they, like the Westerners, failed to move out of their respective idealized worlds—the all-perfect West or the all-perfect Russia.

By 1859 Belinsky and Gogol were dead, as were Khomiakov, both Kireevskii brothers, and Konstantin Aksakov. And a former revolutionary/atheist had altered many of his former ideas, indeed had developed several distinct Slavophile tenets to replace the ideas of his youth. Any biography of Dostoyevsky will describe his gentry heritage, his deeply religious mother, his ability at lessons and languages, his early love of Karamzin, and his beloved summers at the family's country estate. Among the six leading Slavophiles (and Slavophiles in general) several similarities are striking: their old and honorable gentry background; their intermarriages and blood relationships; their proximity to and love of Moscow; their superior educations and obvious lack of financial handicaps; their wide reading knowledge of Western writers and thinkers; their unanimous rejection of a life of scholarship; and finally their frequent habit of polemical writing and lack of organized, comprehensive works.\textsuperscript{34}

\textsuperscript{33}Riasanovsky, \textit{Russia and the West}, p. 118.
\textsuperscript{34}Ibid., p. 29.
Dostoyevsky did not share the typical substantial fortune of these men nor their love of Moscow; the closest he came to polemical writings may have been some of his Diary and certain tirades against nihilists/revolutionaries/socialists in his novels. However, this thesis will attempt to draw together the most crucial similarity he had with the Slavophiles; the biographical likenesses are superficial in comparison. He spent the remaining twenty-two years of his life upon his return to St. Petersburg in 1859 working from the same religious base as the Slavophiles—he supported the Orthodox Church and the tsar, and he expounded often upon the future messianic role of the reunited Russian population.

Dostoyevsky was not a Slavophile. In the 1840's he detested and ignored that to which he would later cling. In the 1850's he was completely out of touch with events in Moscow and St. Petersburg. In fact, in The House of the Dead he speaks literally of himself: "Had a great deal happened while I had been away, what emotions were agitating people now, what questions were occupying their minds?" Only two of the six great Slavophiles survived the fifth decade, and they drifted beyond the doctrines of the earlier conservative dissatisfied into Pan-Slavism (as did Dostoyevsky) and other popular movements. Just to what degree Dostoyevsky's thoughts

paralleled those of the Slavophiles will be outlined in subsequent chapters in three major areas--Orthodoxy, Autocracy, and Nationality. Uvarov's old 1828 formula provides a simple outline in which to describe and compare the more complicated core of Dostoyevskyan and Slavophile philosophy.
CHAPTER II

ORTHODOXY: THE RUSSIAN CHURCH

Dostoyevsky's religious beliefs cannot be catalogued
nor defined absolutely; perhaps he himself could not have
done so, faced as he was with intermittent periods of doubt
and aware of the depth of Christianity beyond Orthodox dogma
and ritual. Only months before his death he wrote of that
time in his life when he disavowed his youthful beliefs of
the 1840's, the ideas of the Petrashevskis.

I know them - the people - it was because of them
that I again received into my soul Christ Who had
been revealed to me in my parents' home and Whom
I was about to lose when, on my own part, I trans-
formed myself into a "European liberal."

But to say that he returned to the solace and to the strength
of Orthodox Christianity is impossible. He admits this
himself. He oscillates between submission to his belief and
submission to his doubts. Conceivably, his love of the
Orthodox Church arises not because he is a Christian believer,
but because he loves Christ--because he loves Him, not because
he comprehends or always believes in Him. Dostoyevsky does
not attribute Truth to church doctrine or church ritual; he
does not record his faithful adherence to either. He loves

1Fyodor Dostoyevsky, The Diary of a Writer, edited and
translated by Boris Brasol (New York, 1949), II, 984.
the Idea and the Ideal of Christ; for him the institution of
the church exists as a convenient and moral vehicle of re-
juvenation for Russia, her rejuvenation as a political, eco-
nomic, and religious force. In 1854 Dostoyevsky characterized
himself in a letter written to a Decembrist's wife whom he had
met on his way to prison:

I want to say to you, about myself, that I
am a child of this age, a child of unfaith
and skepticism, and probably (indeed I know it)
shall remain so to the end of my life. How
dreadfully has it tormented me (and torments me
even now)—this longing for faith, which is all
the stronger for the proofs I have against it.
And yet God gives me sometimes moments of per-
fected peace; in such moments I love and believe
that I am loved; in such moments I have formu-
lated my creed, wherein all is clear and holy
to me.2

Twenty-seven years later he created Ivan and the story
of the Grand Inquisitor and in so doing opposed his faith
with his proofs against it. In The Devils Shatov mentions
an idea that Dostoyevsky had first written to that same
Decembrist's widow:

I believe that there is nothing lovelier,
deeper, more sympathetic, more rational, more
manly, and more perfect than the Saviour; I
say to myself with jealous love that not only
is there no one else like Him, but that there
could be no one. I would even say more: If
anyone could prove to me that Christ is outside
the truth, and if the truth really did exclude
Christ, I should prefer to stay with Christ and
not with truth.3

2 Fyodor Dostoyevsky, Letters of Fyodor Michailovitch
Dostoevsky to his Family and Friends, translated by Ethel

3 Ibid.
Robert Payne writes, "He believed and did not believe; but his belief was greater than his unbelief." Undoubtedly, the first part is correct; however, the second clause is viable only if one counts his lifelong search for Christ and His reality as proof of his belief. On this last point Nicholas Berdyaev would certainly disagree. He contends that Dostoyevsky's Christianity is irrefutable, that Dostoyevsky's Christ is positively the biblical representation, and that Dostoyevsky's convictions are undeniably obvious, even in the Inquisitor's tale.

Dostoyevsky could accept the Slavophile concept that the Orthodox Church could not be separated from the Russian people; their love for each other, their concern for the well-being of every other Orthodox Russian, created the gigantic fraternal network of society itself. Society was the body of the church; therefore, in hallowing and supporting this "church," the believer simultaneously blended his religious responsibilities and his patriotic responsibilities, for to support the Orthodox Church was to support Russia, the motherland. About six weeks before his death, Dostoyevsky expressed this idea in a letter to Blagonravov:

You judge very rightly when you opine that I hold all evil to be grounded upon disbelief.

---


and maintain that he who abjures nationalism, abjures faith also. That applies especially to Russia, for with us national consciousness is based on Christianity. "A Christian peasant-people"; "believing Russia": these are our fundamental conceptions. A Russian who abjures nationalism (and there are many such) is either an atheist or indifferent to religious questions. And the converse: an atheist or indifferentist cannot possibly understand the Russian people and Russian nationalism.

The Slavophiles, particularly Khomiakov and Kireevski, had much earlier expressed the same idea: the true Russian could not be apart from the Russian Orthodox Church. The tsar probably would not have quarreled with this principle; however, he and the Slavophiles had a fundamental difference of opinion on the place of the church in Russian society.

In the Slavophile ideology the Orthodox Church was not an arm of the imperial government as the tsar for more than three centuries had considered it. Instead, the government, headed by the tsar, served a purpose for the church in that someone had to carry on the day-to-day state business, enforce the law, and keep general order. Although Ivan Karamazov defends theocracy, Dostoyevsky's other writings do not appear to sanction such a government. Ivan speaks:

... it is not the Church that should seek a definite position in the State, like "every social organisation," or "an organisation of

---


men for religious purposes"... but, on the contrary, every earthly State should be, in the end, completely transformed into the Church and should become nothing else but a Church, rejecting every purpose incongruous with the aims of the Church. All this will not degrade it in any way or take from its honour and glory as a great State, nor from the glory of its rulers, but only turn it from a false, still pagan, and mistaken path to the true and rightful path, which alone leads to the eternal goal.

The tsar already stood as titular head of the church; the Slavophiles contended that the church was above and in front of the state. Secular law was subject to the Christian moral standards and values.

At the heart of Moscovite Slavophilism lies the theory of sobornost', a term whose definition has proved elusive to many translators of Slavophile writings. Peter Christoff's scholarly Introduction to Nineteenth Century Slavophilism (1961) is unusual in its thorough treatment of this term as well as the subject of Slavophilism in general. It provides what is probably the most complete explanation of Slavophile ideology besides the extensive work of Nicholas Riasanovsky. Christoff approaches the concept of sobornost' by way of the "wholeness of spirit" doctrine: how does man reconcile faith and reason? For ages men had debated their choice, often

---


9 Riasanovsky, Russia and the West, p. 130.

developing whole systems of ideas based on one or the other. According to Khomiakov and the Slavophiles, there is a "synthesis of all faculties of cognition." The catalyst to this process is faith, not a faith struggling with reason, but faith supported by and harmonious with reason. The result is Truth. Apparently, Dostoyevsky never succeeded in conclusively satisfying his personal intellectual dilemma concerning the relationship between faith and reason. In Dostoyevsky's last novel Ivan Karamozov, in his story of the Inquisitor and in his hallucinatory conversation with the Devil, cannot, once and for all, justify an object of faith, i.e., Christ or God. Like Dostoyevsky himself, Ivan may want to, but he does not or cannot.

The doctrine of the "wholeness of spirit" (the synthesis of faith and reason) provided the basis for establishing Truth, and Truth was synonymous with Russian Orthodoxy, "the embodiment of the doctrine of sobornost'." What is sobornost'? Christoff admits the failure of translators, including himself, to express precisely the word's connotations in English or German or French. He favors this definition more than most he includes in his book: "L'Eglise pour lui Khomiakov c'était l'unité, l'unité de las grâce de Dieu, /"sic/" \[12\] "Ibid.\[12\], p. 141.
vivante dans une multitude de créatures raisonnables volontairement soumises à cette grâce."\(^{13}\) Another attempted definition cited by Christoff is the following: "the combination of freedom and unity of many persons on the basis of their common love for the same absolute values."\(^{14}\)

Sobornost', in other words, is characterized by mutual love (of Russian Orthodox believers), by "moral freedom in Christ," and by organic unity with all past, present, and future Orthodox believers.\(^{15}\) The "love-rich bond" which binds one believer to another is nothing less than Christ Himself.\(^{16}\) Khomiakov writes:

Christianity, in the fullness of its divine doctrine, propounded the ideas of unity and freedom indissolubly joined together in the moral law of mutual love. The legalistic Roman world was incapable of grasping that law. It saw unity and freedom as two opposing and mutually antagonistic forces; of the two, it of necessity regarded unity as superior and sacrificed freedom to it.\(^{17}\)

Orthodoxy, in Khomiakov's words, is "the coincidence of unity and freedom, manifested in the law of spiritual love."

Here indeed Orthodoxy is "the embodiment of the doctrine of sobornost'."\(^{18}\)

\(^{13}\)Ibid., Footnote 8, p. 139.  
\(^{14}\)Ibid.  
\(^{15}\)Christoff, A. S. Khomiakov, p. 144.  
\(^{16}\)Ibid.  
\(^{18}\)Ibid., p. 215.
Dostoyevsky believed, as did the Slavophiles, that the Russian Orthodox Church had sound historical grounds for its claim of supremacy over other branches of Christianity, particularly Catholicism and Protestantism. In 455 A. D. the Vandals sacked Rome, and the entire Western Empire crumbled within the next two decades. Constantine established a "Second Rome" in the East; Constantinople became the religious center of Christianity. And so the Byzantine capital remained until 1054, when a definite and permanent split divided a church already linguistically and culturally cleft for centuries. Dostoyevsky writes of this division in 1877:

... the idea of the universal Roman empire succumbed, and it was replaced by a new ideal, also universal, of a communion in Christ. This new ideal bifurcated into the Eastern ideal of a purely spiritual communion of men, and the Western European, Roman Catholic, papal ideal diametrically opposite to the Eastern one.  

To the Slavophiles, Roman Catholicism after 1054 was heretical. Religion replaced faith in the Roman church.  

As for Protestantism, Khomiakov considered it "a continuation of the same heresy under a different form." In Hegelian terms (and according to Khomiakov, who seemingly saw no irony in his use of rationalistic Hegel), Protestantism was the antithesis of Catholicism: "Protestantism is a world which

19 Dostoyevsky, Diary, II, 728.  
20 Riasanovsky, Russia and the West, p. 92.  
21 Ibid., p. 93.
denies another world. Deprive it of this other world denied by it, and Protestantism will die: for its entire life is in negation."22 Where does Orthodoxy stand in relation to the two Western bodies? Khomiakov describes Orthodoxy, not as any synthesis of any parts of the other two Christian movements, but rather as the Truth, diametrically opposed to either Protestantism or Catholicism, the latter error being "the deeper and the more dangerous."23

Russian Orthodoxy denied the Western tradition of individualism, "the emancipation of man from the shackles of tradition" characterized by "freedom of thought, feeling, and action."24 Western man denied the community the right to control his life. Khomiakov explained that every Russian believer was free because each dwelt in the "Life of the Spirit"; if each man were free in Christ, in Orthodoxy, his conscience could never be controlled.25 This "freedom of the Life of the Spirit" is decidedly vague, and, in fact, paradoxical in a land under a despot. Nevertheless, the Slavophiles defended the idea that the bond among Russians was Christ Himself. Catholics lived under the strict institutional

22Ibid., p. 94.  
23Ibid.  
25Riasanovsky, Russia and the West, p. 141.
authority of the Roman hierarchy, very tightly controlled and directed. The Protestants, on the other hand, in their revolt against the papacy allowed Christianity "to become the personal acquisition of every isolated individual who was unable to understand it as a whole and who did not form part of a communal church." In communion with other believers, man could share his love and bear his guilt and suffering with them; the isolated Western Christian could never assume the Orthodox Christian moral duty which dictated communal sharing in guilt--the Western Christian stood alone as far as Khomiakov interpreted his position, never fulfilling his Christian responsibilities toward his fellowmen.

There is no doubt that this sense of individual participation in the general guilt, which may seem to some western minds an unreal pretence, is profoundly ingrained in the Russian character, and may presumably be connected with the deep-rooted communistic instincts of the Russian. It probably accounts for the infinite tolerance which has often been regarded as the most characteristic Russian quality. Instead of censoring your fellowman you recognize your share in his guilt.

Khomiakov failed to see one benefit produced by the Protestant Reformation. Thomas Masaryk makes this particular criticism of Khomiakov's contention that Western man could never function as an individual within the church:

26 Chmielewski, Tribune, p. 38.

Homjakov fails to understand that the reformation, by abolishing priestly intermediaries between believer and God, transforming religion into religious individualism and subjectivism, made it more a true matter of the heart and inward conviction.

In The Brothers Karamazov Father Zossima, nearing death, speaks at length about the need for human communality:

All mankind in our age have split up into units, they all keep apart, each in his own groove; each one holds aloof, hides himself and hides what he has, from the rest, and he ends by being repelled by others and repelling them. He heaps up riches by himself and thinks, "how strong I am now and how secure," and in his madness, he does not understand that the more he heaps up, the more he sinks into self-destructive impotence. For he is accustomed to rely upon himself alone and to cut himself off from the whole; he has trained himself not to believe in the help of others, in men and in humanity, and only trembles for fear he should lose his money and the privileges that he has won for himself. Everywhere in these days men have, in their mockery, ceased to understand that the true security is to be found in social solidarity rather than in isolated individual effort. But this terrible individualism must inevitably have an end, and all will suddenly understand how unnaturally they are separated from one another.

Dostoyevsky does not stop with such "philosophizing"; he creates Raskolnikov and Fyodor Karamrazov as examples of two individuals radically and malignantly "individualized."

Zossima also speaks for Dostoyevsky and for the Slavophiles when he reiterates the doctrine of the communality of guilt:

---


29 Dostoyevsky, Karamazov, p. 363.
There is only one means of salvation, then take yourself and make yourself responsible for all men's sins, that is the truth, you know, friends, for as soon as you sincerely make yourself responsible for everything and for all men, you will see at once that it is really so, and that you are to blame for every one and for all things. But throwing your own indolence and impotence on others you will end by sharing the pride of Satan and murmuring against God.

In addition to its aversion to the Western tradition of individuality, Orthodoxy was anti-rationalistic, anti-formalistic, and anti-legalistic. Had Khomiakov and the principal Slavophiles of the 1840's survived into the 1880's, they would have smiled (not in mockery, but in amazement) at Ivan Karamazov, who agonized over his attempt to rationalize, to comprehend by reason, what Dostoevsky and the Slavophiles believed to be comprehensible only by faith and feeling. The miracles of the Testaments, the perfect life of Christ, His rising out of death—how could the mind understand such anti-natural occurrences? Who was to say that human beings could set up their individual intellects as arbiters in the question of whether Christ really were the Way, the Truth, and the Life? Faith was the product of the heart, not the mind.

Ivan Kireevski, a leading Slavophile, describes Western rationalists in general:

30 Ibid., p. 384.

... most European thinkers, unable to accept either a narrowly selfish life bounded by sensual goals and personal considerations or a one-sided mental life in direct contradiction with the fullness of their mental powers, and unwilling to be left without any convictions or to hold convictions they knew to be false, have sought their way out of the impasse by separately, each on his own, inventing new basic principles and verities for the world at large, finding them in the play of their individual dreamy ratiocinations, mixing the new with the old and the impossible with the possible, surrendering themselves wholly to the wildest hopes, each contradicting the others and each demanding general acceptance. Like so many Columbuses, they all embarked on voyages of discovery within their own minds, seeking new Americas in the vast oceans of impossible expectations, individual assumptions, and strict syllogisms.

Catholicism had fallen under the influence of rationalism, according to this view. It spread an institutionalized net over the Western world, heading the church with a religio-political functionary called a Pope, and establishing under him an elaborate hierarchy. These bodies carried out extensive systematizing and codifying of Roman law. The Catholic Church dictated in the light of wrongs and rights set out in its bodies of law. The Russian Church, however, truly founded on communal love arising from the heart, not the mind, embodied a conception of goodness fundamentally different from that of the Western religions: the latter were active, the former passive—Western man was encouraged

---

to do good works and enjoined or forbidden certain actions.\textsuperscript{33} The Orthodox Christian, on the other hand, was subject to "states of feelings":

The two great commandments of Jesus, as contrasted with the Hebrew ten, enjoin not actions but states of feeling—to love God and to love one's neighbor. . . . It follows that sinful actions are more venial than sinful states of mind.\textsuperscript{34}

According to the Slavophiles, the fortunate Orthodox believer had no Pope, nor was he hemmed in by a church system which dictated to him as his government did. Dostoevsky even hypothesized the evolution of the Catholic Church into socialism. What was the difference between the handful of high church officials taking care of the "happiness" of its members, all of whom had gratefully given up the responsibility of making their own decisions, and the handful of men who would eventually grasp power in a socialistic state, the citizens of which are quietly waiting to be made happy? In 1876 Dostoevsky writes of Roman Catholicism:

Why, it has long considered itself above mankind as a whole. So far, it has been plotting only with those possessing mundane power and has been relying upon them to the last moment. But that time is over, it seems, forever, and Roman Catholicism will unquestionably forsake the earthly potentates who, in truth, have long ago betrayed it and instigated in Europe a universal


\textsuperscript{34}Ibid.
baiting campaign whose organization is at present fully completed. Why, Roman Catholicism is known to have made even sharper turns: once upon a time, when this was necessary, it did not hesitate to sell Christ in exchange for mundane power. Having proclaimed the dogma that "Christianity cannot survive on earth without the earthly power of the Pope," it thereby has proclaimed a new Christ, now like the former one, but one who has been seduced by the third temptation of the devil—the temptation of the kingdoms of the world: "All these things will I give thee if thou wilt fall down and worship me."

An academic delineation of the Slavophile biases in regard to the West in general and Catholicism and Protestantism in particular cannot long avoid one major criticism: Slavophile ideology (and often Dostoyevsky's writings), when comparing Orthodoxy and any other body of thought, denigrates the latter and idealizes the former. Must a reader assume that the average Russian Orthodox believer consciously recognized "wholeness of spirit" or sobornost' or communality of guilt? Was Khomiakov idealizing his countrymen when he described them as more loving, more intelligent, more morally fine, more imaginative, more precocious, more honest, and more forthright? To point out this Slavophile tactic is not to say they were unique in using it; it is simply to acknowledge the fact that Khomiakov, the Slavophiles in general, and Dostoyevsky were not objective nor did they pretend to be. Conversely, their opponents, the Westerners,

35 Dostoyevsky, Diary, I, 255:
36 Riasanovsky, Russia and the West, pp. 122-124.
idealized the West, its institutions, its philosophies, and failed to fairly and realistically evaluate their own Russian culture.

Dostoyevsky's criticisms of Catholicism (as well as that leveled by the Slavophiles) are weakened by his continual attacks on the legalism and ponderous organizational structure of the Catholic Church and his obvious failure to admit the significant similarity between the latter and the Orthodox Church. The Russian church was governed by a Holy Synod, metropolitans, exarchs, bishops, and multitudes of other clerical bureaucrats. There were doctrinal quarrels and legalistic questions just as there were in the Western churches. These facts are apparently ignored by Dostoyevsky and by the Slavophiles.

Dostoyevsky looked deeper into Man than available English translations of the works of the major Slavophiles lead us to believe Khomiakov or Kireevski or the others did. Dostoyevsky was no philosopher; however, no reader can mistake the presence of powerful and provocative ideas behind the stories he wrote. In the notebooks for Crime and Punishment, he refers to "the inscrutable ways by which God finds man."

In the light of his collected works, the phrase might be reworded to read "the inscrutable ways by which man finds God." In Christian doctrine God granted to man a free

---

volition, i.e., man has a will, a means of choice. Man also has freedom; otherwise of what use would volition be? It is through his individual volition that man can choose morality, selflessness, God Himself. It is also through his individual volition that man can choose immorality (in fact, he can deny the existence of absolute morality), selfishness, and self-will.

One way man may exercise his freedom of will is to choose to have faith in God. Nicholas Berdyaev explains the relationship between this faith and the idea of freedom:

It is this free choice of Christ that constitutes the Christian's dignity and gives meaning to his act of faith, which is above all a free act. The dignity of man and the dignity of faith require the recognition of two freedoms, freedom to choose the truth and freedom in the truth. Freedom cannot be identified with goodness or truth or perfection; it is by nature autonomous, it is freedom and not goodness. Any identification or confusion of freedom with goodness and perfection involves a negation of freedom and a strengthening of methods of compulsion; obligatory goodness ceases to be goodness by the fact of its constraint. But free goodness, which alone is true, entails the liberty of evil.38

Herein, according to Berdyaev, lies the greatest mystery of Christianity. It is up to the Christian to thread his way among his opportunities for goodness and those for evil. In this process he will exercise his free volition. Edward Wasiolek describes man's predicament—caught between the will

38 Nicholas Berdyaev, Dostoevsky, translated by Donald Attwater (New York, 1957), pp. 69-70.
to good and the will to evil—in slightly different terms,
but with even a finer delineation.

Dostoyevsky's moral world is dialectical: man
is poised with every choice he makes between the
self and God. These two poles are absolute and
unqualified, and man makes his nature by choosing
his acts to serve one or the other. The values
his acts have are born with the choices he makes. 39

In the next sentences Wasiolek expresses an idea about this
dialectic that is voiced by few other critics of Dostoyevsky:

What serves God is good; what serves the self
is evil. What we ordinarily understand as "evil"
may be, because it serves God, "good." Without
God, man triumphs over evil only to meet in a
kind of ascending scale of transformed evils--
usually apparent goods--always equal to his
weakness or his strength. Without God, the
Dostoevskian hero is condemned to meet only
himself, not matter how "good" his act. 40

For instance, in The Idiot, Ippolit, a youth dying of consumption,
speaks of a genuine desire to do something beneficial for
mankind; in fact, he actually does prevent a family's starvation.
Yet, Ippolit is concerned with what other men will think of
his deed, not what God discerns in the act. Here, what on
the surface appears to be good is, in fact, self-serving and
sterile. The Ridiculous Man conjures up a world "unstained
by the Fall, inhabited by people who had not sinned and who
lived in the same paradise as that in which, according to
the legends of mankind, our first parents lived before they

39 Edward Wasiolek, Dostoyevsky: The Major Fiction
40 Ibid.
sinned. How ironic that the Ridiculous Man should speak of a biblical paradise, a Christian paradise, when he himself has no faith; without God how could a new earth be good! In Crime and Punishment Marmeladov is at first glance a man to be pitied, a man destitute and faced with family responsibilities; however, he chooses destitution. The Underground Man suffers, but he chooses to suffer. Versilov in A Raw Youth speaks approvingly of faith in God, but he does not believe his own words.

It is not enough to point out that Versilov once turned to God, or that he believes in virtue, or that he has suffered, or has looked for a great idea, or that he tries to do good deeds, or that he believes in the "golden age" of man's perfection. All of these acts can be dialectically their opposites, and their value is determined by man's choice.1

If one chooses to deny God, where does freedom lead him? Raskolnikov denies moral law and exemplifies the consequences of such negation, as outlined by Berdiaev:
"freedom becomes self-will, self-will becomes compulsion."2

Fyodor Karamozov is "free"—to deny morality and spiritual authority. As Paul Ramsey writes, "Without God, there is nothing a man is bound not to do."3

---


2Wasiolek, Dostoyevsky, p. 142.

3Berdyaev, Dostoevsky, p. 82.

Underground Man, and the Ridiculous Man describe utopias, worlds free of troubles, but not free in the Dostoyevskyan sense, since none of the four envisioned worlds is a "Godly" world. Perhaps the most powerful indictment of such utopian dreams is revealed through Ivan Karamozov's story of the Grand Inquisitor. The latter reproaches Christ for returning to this world and admonishes Him not to add any new revelations to those given fifteen hundred years before:

"Yes, we've paid dearly for it," he goes on, looking sternly at Him, "but at last we have completed that work in Thy name. For fifteen centuries we have been wrestling with Thy freedom, but now it is ended and over for good. Dost Thou not believe that it's over for good? Thou lookest meekly at me and deignest not even to be wroth with me. But let me tell Thee that now, to-day, people are more persuaded than ever that they have perfect freedom, yet they have brought their freedom to us and laid it humbly at our feet."  

And why had the people of the earth done so? As Ivan explains, their surrender of their freedom brought the assurance of a peaceful and untroubled life. They could not bear the terrifying freedom offered them by Christ—they preferred the security offered by the Catholic Church, an institution which promised them direction and all the answers to the doubts and questions. By extension, the parallel between the Inquisitor's church and any socio-political organization such as a socialistic state is obvious.

---

45 Dostoyevsky, Karamozov, p. 298.
What makes Christ's way difficult?

Men crave what he asks them to give up: the firm foundations of conduct that will assure them that they are acting rightly; the assurance that they are right beforehand, so that they may be relieved of the terrors and anxiety of a free conscience, and so that they may have the comfort of knowing that others and, best of all, all others are doing the same thing.

Edward Wasiolek's interpretation of Ivan's story hinges on the critic's conclusion that to choose Christ, to be a Christian, necessitates a personal rejection by each individual of the three temptations Satan offered Christ: therefore, "a free choice based on the condition of earthly comfort, on the assurance beforehand from miracle, mystery, and authority, or on the condition that your neighbor believes as you do, is not free choice."

Surely, Dostoyevsky did not see the Catholic or the socialist make a "free" choice. And, more importantly, Dostoyevsky certainly failed to see among his own countrymen many individuals who could do so, despite the fact that he considered them superior to other nationalities and eventually the just carriers and disseminators of Russian Orthodoxy throughout the West.

It is not the deeper philosophical and theological lessons evident in his novels that Dostoyevsky speaks of

---

46 Wasiolek, Dostoyevsky, pp. 169-170.

47 Ibid.
spreading to other nations. He speaks more in terms of universal humanity and brotherly love. And he writes often of the impending role of his country. Khomiakov had written earlier that Russia was to accept her historical right to enlighten mankind by spreading her Orthodox morality and religion.\(^{48}\) In 1877 Dostoyevsky echoes him:

Every great people believes, and must believe if it intends to live long, that in it alone resides the salvation of the world; that it lives in order to stand at the head of the nations, to affiliate and unite all of them, and to lead them in a concordant choir toward the final goal preordained for them.\(^{49}\)

When he writes of Russian messianism Dostoyevsky's words often become chauvinistic and effusive.

We shall be the first to announce to the world that we seek to achieve our own welfare not through the suppression of national individualities alien to us, but, on the contrary, that we perceive our welfare in the freest and most independent development of all other nations and in brotherly communion with them. . . . We shall maintain spiritual intercourse with them, teaching them and learning from them, up to the time when mankind, as a grand and beautiful tree, having attained full maturity and universal brotherhood through the fellowship of all peoples, shades with itself the happy earth!\(^{50}\)

Dostoyevsky did not believe, as the Slavophiles did, that Russia and the West were irrevocably and eternally separated. In his famous Pushkin speech, delivered June 8,
1880, at the Society of Lovers of Russian Literature, he called for all Russians, Westerners and Slavophiles, to exert their collective national strength toward the eventual accomplishment of their destiny, "acquired not by the sword but by the force of brotherhood and our brotherly longing for fellowship of men through Orthodoxy." Although the true Russian principles were superior to the false Western principles and would ultimately supersede them, the Slavophile writings voicing the Messiahship of their motherland never fully discussed the details. If the writings of Khomiakov are any indication, however, they did believe that much of the success of their impending obligation would rest upon the collective character of the Russian people. Dostoyevsky, however, spoke of success based upon the ideas of Christ carried within the individual Russian.

Dostoyevsky was not subject to the violent antipathies felt by the Slavophiles toward most of the Western nations. For instance, the Slavophiles were not as antagonistic toward the English (even though the latter had been influenced early in history by the Normans and the Benedictines) as they were toward the Catholic French. The Spanish were little better in view of their Catholic fanaticism and their hot spirit of


52 Riasanovsky, Russia and the West, pp. 100-112.
exorcism. Germany was a hotbed of philosophy, the product of human minds! The United States was not only rationalistic, materialistic, and legalistic, but also a nation of fratricides. Lastly, there was Italy, full of beautiful art, but the seat of the papacy! The West was degenerate and surely ripe for the advent of Russian Orthodoxy.

Prince Myshkin speaks for both Dostoyevsky and the Slavophiles, despite their differences, in the following remarks:

We are bringing the world the only thing we can give it, which is, however, the only thing it needs: Orthodoxy, the true and glorious, eternal creed of Christ and regeneration a full moral regeneration in his name.53

Dostoyevsky recorded in 1877 a passage he had found in a 1528 Latin work entitled Prognosticationes. The prediction mentions the eagle which was later to become emblazoned on the crest of the Romanov family.

After that a new eagle shall kindle fire in the bosom of Christ's bride, and there shall be three natural issues and one legitimate issue, and he shall devour the others. A great eagle shall arise in the East, and the Western islanders shall start wailing. He shall capture three kingdoms. This is the great eagle who sleepeth many a year; though wounded he shall arise, and shall compel the Western sea-bound inhabitants of the land of the Virgin and the other proud summits to tremble, and he shall fly southward to retrieve that which had been lost. And God

shall kindle the Eastern eagle with love of mercy so that he may fly on his two wings to accomplish that which is difficult, flashing upon the peaks of Christianity.  

That Dostoyevsky would read the Messiahship of Orthodoxy into these words is understandable; that he could envision his fellow Russians, or for that matter any body of people, as progenitors of the kind of Christianity he conceived—the kind in the tale of the Grand Inquisitor—is doubtful.

Dostoyevsky, Diary, II, 694.
CHAPTER III

AUTOCRACY: THE RUSSIAN GOVERNMENT

Whether because of his pious childhood environment or the terror of the Petrashevsky arrests or the object lesson of the firing squad or his European travels or the disruptive factions of the 1860's (or any combination of these or other reasons), Dostoyevsky was a conservative, an outspoken supporter of the Russian autocracy. In the 1860's many Russians—nobles and non-nobles—were not of similar mind. In fact, there were those who strongly urged the creation of a nationwide representative body and the inauguration of a constitution; some even demanded the dissolution of the autocracy. Following the rush of enthusiasm over Tsar Alexander's liberation of the serfs in 1861 and the subsequent disappointment when he not only refused serious consideration of a number of requests for representative government but also imprisoned those who had proposed them, the political atmosphere of the capital city became heated. The louder the cries of the radicals and liberals, the farther toward the right Dostoyevsky moved.

1Edward C. Thaden, Conservative Nationalism in Nineteenth Century Russia (Seattle, 1964), pp. 74-78.
In the 1840's Dostoyevsky had been attracted to the socialistic writings of Fourier and St. Simon; he had worked inside the Durov circle, plotting a lethal attack on the center of government. After the 1849 Petrashevsky arrests and penalties, most overt political dissent was buried underground temporarily. By the time Dostoyevsky left the Omsk prison and served in the army at Semipalatinsk, it was the end of 1859 before he resettled in St. Petersburg. In the 1860's he witnessed the rise of several major radical leaders: N. G. Chernyshevsky, D. I. Pisarev, P. L. Lavrov, and N. A. Drobrolyubov—the intellectual heirs of the liberals of the 1840's with whom Dostoyevsky had once been associated. Now he denied and castigated most of what he had once valued.

Dostoyevsky made no attempt to differentiate among the various dissident factions; he lumped liberals, radicals, revolutionaries, nihilists, and socialists together, presumably on the basis that all of these desired change, to one degree or another, in the present social structure, usually beginning with the tsar and the government. Despite his strong conservative nature, he wrote often of the benefits—limited as they might be—of learning from Europe and the West. His Pushkin speech implored his fellow Russians to dissolve old animosities between the Slavophiles and the Westerners. Still, he advocated no alteration of the Romanov dynasty or the overall governmental structure. In The Devils
Dostoyevsky included a quotation from St. Luke 8—the Story of the Gadarene swine. Jesus Christ, confronted by a man possessed by demons, cast out the spirits which entered some nearby swine. The herd bolted into a lake and drowned. The elder Verkhovensky hears a friend quote the passage, and he excitedly responds:

But now an idea has occurred to me; une comparaison. An awful lot of ideas keep occurring to me now. You see, that's just like our Russia. These devils who go out of the sick man and enter the swine—those are the sores, all the poisonous exhalations, all the impurities, all the big and little devils, that have accumulated in our great and beloved invalid, in our Russia, for centuries, for centuries! Oui, cette Russie, que j'aimais toujours.2

Dostoyevsky's five longest novels, to one degree or another, exhibit these "big and little devils," whose presence in the body politic threatened catastrophe for the established order.

In The Devils Dostoyevsky gathers into one volume more examples of the kinds of men and ideas he abhors than in any of his other works; it is a veritable catalogue of bedeviled swine. He levels his indictments at the liberals of the 1840's (as portrayed by the elder Verkhovensky and Karmazinov-Turgenev), at socialists (as portrayed by Liputin, Virginsky, Erkel, and Shigaylov), and at nihilists (as

represented again by the same obnoxious men led by Peter Verkhovensky). These characters infect the body politic, and "the sickness has palsied the people's actions, corroded their social relations, twisted their bodies, clouded their thoughts, and confused their feelings."³

Stepan Verkhovensky, or Granovsky, as he is called in the notebooks, is "a portrait of a pure and idealistic Westernizer in his full splendor."⁴ In creating him Dostoyevsky exhibited his seldom seen humor; poor Verkhovensky, long the protege of Mme. Stavrogin and father of an insolent, ungrateful radical, imagines himself one of his country's outstanding liberal spokesmen and a local celebrity of much intellectual note. Encouraging lively conversations on all kinds of appropriate liberal topics, he and Mme. Stavrogin entertain at numerous evening parties during their sojourn in St. Petersburg one winter:

We talked about the abolition of the censorship and spelling reform, of the substitution of the Roman alphabet for the Russian one, of the exile of someone the day before, of some public disturbance in the shopping arcade, of the advisability of a federal constitution for the different nationalities in Russia, of the abolition of the army and navy, of the restoration of Poland as far as the Dnieper, of the agrarian reform and of the political pamphlets, of the abolition of inheritance, the family, children, and the priesthood, of the rights of women, of

⁴Dostoyevsky, The Notebooks for The Possessed, p. 82.
Krayevsky's splendid house, for which no one seemed able to forgive Mr. Krayevsky and so on and so forth.5

What happens to end their idyllic stay? Stepan Verkhovensky publicly admits "the uselessness and absurdity of the word 'mother country,'" and "his readiness to accept the idea of the harmfulness of religion," but he cannot declare Pushkin more important than boots!6 He is booed out of town. Certainly Dostoyevsky must have relished making old Verkhovensky foolish; he takes pains to explain that Stepan is certainly a great scholar, even though he has never published anything worthwhile; that he is a successful playwright, even though his one lyric and noble work is inexplicably published abroad in a revolutionary journal, much to its author's chagrin; that he is once reported dead, and in reaction is reborn into a new determination to prove himself important. Irving Howe contends that "the implication that he 'represents' Russian radicalism is vicious."7 Of course, Dostoyevsky is vicious; Verkhovensky is a summation of Dostoyevsky's feelings about an entire class of Russian men


6 Ibid., p. 39.

whose attitudes and activities were overt encouragement to all who opposed the tsar and the present order.

A liberal brother of Verkhovensky's is the "second-rate gentleman" and author Karmazinov, considered by most critics to be a satirization of Turgenev. Dostoyevsky puts frequent liberal mouthings into Karmazinov's speeches:

... Russia today is pre-eminently the only place in the world where anything you like may happen without the slightest opposition. I know perfectly well why well-to-do Russians all rush abroad and why more and more of them go abroad every year. It's simply instinct. The rats are first to leave a sinking ship. Holy Russia is a country of wood, of poverty. A dangerous country, a country of vainglorious paupers in the highest strata of society, while the overwhelming majority of the people live in tumbledown shacks. She'll be glad of any solution. All you have to do is to explain it to her. The Government alone still tries to resist, but it just waves its cudgel about in the dark and hits its own supporters. Everything is doomed and sentenced to death. Russia, as she is now, has no future.

The height of Dostoyevsky's ridicule of Karmazinov occurs in the chapter which describes Mme. Stavrogon's fete, at which the unfortunate Verkhovensky and the eminent Karmazinov were to speak. Dostoyevsky elaborately describes the oration presented by the renowned author, but not before prefacing the address with these remarks: "Dear me, what wasn't there in it? I can positively say that it would have reduced even

---

8 Dostoyevsky, The Devils, p. 96.
9 Ibid., pp. 372-373.
a Petersburg audience to a state of stupor, let alone ours."^10 Karmazinov speaks of love and water nymphs, rising mists and subterranean caves, hermits and Hoffman, laurel wreaths and icons. The jeering reaction of the crowd no doubt confirmed Karmazinov’s opinion of the stupid, unappreciative Russians!

The provincial, carefully stratified, and well ordered environment of Verkhovensky and Mme. Stavrogin and their "liberal" friends is not allowed to remain a center of such peaceful, intellectual, and polite society. Into it Dostoyevsky introduces bearers of ideologies he hated even more than the old guard liberalism of his younger days. The embodiment of nihilism and destructiveness is the person of Stepan’s son Peter. In his notebooks Dostoyevsky says that the father and son are "there for the purpose of letting two generations of what really are the same Westernizers, those of pure vintage and the nihilists, meet each other."^11 Most critics agree that Peter was modeled upon the notorious Nechaev, author of "The Revolutionary Catechism"; the newspapers had covered his murder of a student in November, 1869, after which police discovered the network of revolutionary cells Nechaev had organized across western Russia.

^10Ibid., p. 475.

In fact, Peter Verkhovensky is called "Nechaev" throughout the preliminary notebooks to the novel. In one place Nechaev-Verkhovensky explains why he has come to his father's town (and the other places he has visited) to organize a group of revolutionary socialists:

... what would have happened of itself centuries later, will be brought about much sooner by a blow of the axe. Everything will be aimed at eliminating differentiation and ignorance. Actually, everybody will be happy, because this is inherent in the system as such, whether they want it or not. They are going to have: a peaceful life—for everything will be aimed at establishing a beehive; 2) a common effort and a common goal; 3) the dissemination of common knowledge regarding certain facts through incessant research in the natural sciences; 4) general meetings, marriages in the evening, perhaps music and balls. 12

He continues later by vowing that "God, marriage, family, and private property are the foundations of life as it exists now, and that ... foundation is the greatest poison." 13 The notebooks contain one other significant speech by this young man, one which is characteristic of the Peter in the novel:

All these reforms, adjustments, and improvements—they are all a lot of nonsense. The more you improve and reform, the worse it is; for by so doing you artificially prolong the life of something which must in any case die and be destroyed. The sooner the better; the earlier you start, the better (first of all, God, kinship, family, etc.) One must destroy everything in order to erect a new structure; it is quite absurd to keep propping up the old building with props. 14

Peter denies tradition, law, family, God, personal responsibility, freedom, all those attributes and privileges sacred to Dostoyevsky, the Slavophiles, most of the novel's characters, and indeed most Russians in general.

And who will help Peter destroy and rebuild? He gathers together a motley collection of small-town liberals in order to organize them into an effective link in a chain of such "groups-of-five" determined to subvert the Russian government and society. Who could mistake Dostoyevsky's sentiments toward these men when he describes their first formal meeting?

The meeting is a bitter burlesque of the pretensions of socialists. They have gathered to organize the world, but they cannot even organize a meeting. They have gathered to preach the gospel of social harmony and the universal love of man, and they hate each other intensely and fall into chaotic disharmony over trifles. They are the flower of the town's liberalism, and never has Dostoyevsky exposed more ruthlessly the contradiction between the abstract love of humanity men carry in their heads and the reality of their petty wills and vicious actions.15

Shigaylov wants to grant one-tenth of the population absolute freedom over the obedient herd, the other nine-tenths of the people; Lyamshin suggests that the nine-tenths simply be blown up; Virginsky, eager to fall in behind Peter, is obsessed with his own liberal marital attitudes even though he cannot

condone his wife's lover; his friend Liputin admires Fourier and preaches atheism while persecuting his family and slandering his friends; Shatov, a former socialist, preaches Orthodoxy but cannot believe in God; and Kirilov, a structural engineer, concludes that if man really desires freedom he can attain it only by suicide. These are the men who greet Peter ready "forever more for truth to stand, / Against the bonds so triple twined, / Dark deceivers of the human mind, / Marriage, church, and family ties, / That filled the old world with tricks and lies." 16

How did the liberals in Dostoevsky's reading public feel toward The Devils? Undoubtedly they considered the characterizations "a calumny on the Russian intelligentsia"; the conservatives, obviously, saw only the righteous Dostoevsky standing staunchly in defense of the autocracy and the church, defending the established order against the growing ranks of nihilists and anarchists. 17 Other earlier novels had revealed the author's feelings toward radical elements of Russian society, yet none do so to the extent The Devils does.

In The Idiot Prince Myshkin is confronted by four youthful nihilists who accuse him of cheating his benefactor's

16 Dostoevsky, The Devils, p. 354.
illegitimate son out of a substantial fortune; the boys demand redress. The conservative reaction to their demands is voiced by Mme. Epanchin in her fury at their behavior:

Why did you come in to-night with your heads in the air? "Make way, we are coming! Give us every right and don't you dare breathe a word before us. Pay us every sort of respect, such as no one's heard of, and we shall treat you worse than the lowest lackey!" . . . We demand, we don't ask, and you will get no gratitude from us, because you are acting for the satisfaction of your own conscience! Queer sort of reasoning! . . . Lunatics! 18

Later, at another gathering, a friend of Mme. Epanchin's discusses the connotations of the word "liberal." He believes that liberalism attacks not the existing state of order but the motherland herself. A liberal "hates the national habits, Russian history, everything"; he may speak of a love for his country and suggest that he knows how to cure Russia's ills, but he is "ashamed of the very idea of 'loving' one's country." 19 Dostoyevsky would undoubtedly be thinking of many of the liberals of the 1840's when he wrote this.

In A Raw Youth Dostoyevsky depicts another group of socialists to which the youth Arkady Dolgoruky is exposed; the members are as argumentative and confused as those in

---


19 Ibid., p. 325.
The Devils. Arkady's stepfather, Versilov, like Stepan Verkhovensky, is an old-guard, 1840's liberal. He is "the flower of Russian society, who in his espousal of 'European' ideas comes to believe in culture as a substitute for God."20 He believes that human virtue is worth something without God. Arkady's tutor characterizes Versilov as "a nobleman of ancient lineage, and at the same time a Parisian communard," a lover of Russia who denies her, and a believer without religion.21 His concern for patriotism or piety is superficial. Dostoyevsky speaks through the tutor who says, "What to my mind is of most consequence is the finality of the forms and the existence of some sort of order, not prescribed from above, but developed from within."22 Men like Versilov had contributed to the uneasiness and turbulence, "the chips flying in all directions" of the years since Peter and his "westernizing" of Russia.23 It was, and is in Raw Youth and in the history of Dostoyevsky's lifetime, men like Versilov, "fathers and heads of what have been cultured families," who laugh at "what their children perhaps would have liked to believe in."24

20 Wasiolek, Dostoyevsky, p. 140.


22 Ibid., p. 605.  
23 Ibid.

24 Ibid.
Crime and Punishment is essentially a study of a man who believes he is free to murder, especially if his victim is worthless in his eyes, and who believes he can employ force against another individual and in so doing actually benefit mankind. However, in this book there is an interesting passage about nihilism. Dostoyevsky is characterizing a young man, a minor character and a progressive; he describes him as "one of the numerous and varied legion of dullards, of half-animate abortions, conceited, half-educated coxcombs, who attach themselves to the idea most in fashion only to vulgarise it and who caricature every cause they serve, however sincerely." In fact, Lebeziatnikov, the young man, derives great pleasure from evangelizing the idea of abstaining from christening children and acquiescing if one's wife wants to take a lover. During an animated conversation about the virtues of prostitution, he enthusiastically exclaims, "If ever I regretted the death of my father and mother, it is now, and I sometimes think if my parents were living what a protest I would have aimed at them!" It is revealed in the discussion between Lebeziatnikov and Luzhin that in reality the former had selfishly had an affair with a girl while he busily defended himself by saying he was

---

26 Ibid., p. 317.
trying to "develop her," to "rouse her to protest." Dostoyevsky's point is unmistakable. Lebeziatnikov sums his philosophy up in one terse sentence: "it's all the environment and man himself is nothing." He concludes by saying he is still trying to "develop" that young girl.

Dostoyevsky frequently attacks socialism, in his view a prime means of controlling man's environment and making him "nothing." In the notebooks to Crime and Punishment, apparently after having considered suicide, Svidrigaylov voices Dostoyevsky's principal criticism of socialism:

If I were a socialist, I would certainly continue to live, because I would have something to do. No people have more conviction than the socialists. And the chief thing in life is after all conviction. Try to shake his convictions. He'll feel that he's losing the very stuff of life. . . . What does this conviction consist of? The chief thought of socialism is mechanism. There are rules for everything. Man becomes a stranger to himself. The living soul is cut away.

On the next page of the notebook, Dostoyevsky randomly inserts an additional remark: "Socialism--that's the despair of ever creating a real man; hence, they create despotism and say that it is freedom!"

His last novel, The Brothers

---

27 Ibid., p. 318.  
28 Ibid.  
30 Ibid., p. 195.
Karamozov, includes yet other reminders of his antipathy toward socialism. Very early in *Brothers* he introduces Alyosha and explains why the young man chose to leave his studies incomplete and enter a monastery.

As soon as he/Alyosha/ reflected seriously he was convinced of the existence of God and immortality, and at once he instinctively said to himself: "I want to live for immortality, and I will accept no compromise." In the same way, if he had decided that God and immortality did not exist, he would at once have become an atheist and a socialist. For socialism is not merely the labour question, it is before all things the atheistic question, the question of the form taken by atheism to-day, the question of the tower of Babel built without God, not to mount to Heaven from earth but to set up Heaven on earth.31

Here Dostoyevsky points out that socialism is not merely a political condition; but in *The Devils*, *The Idiot*, and *A Raw Youth* his attacks are primarily upon socialism in the political sense—a particular organization of a society.

In *The Brothers Karamozov* Dostoyevsky includes the theological student Rakitin, who speaks pontifically of Russia's hope in Europe and disgusts his friends by his selfishness and pseudo-intellectualism. Equally obnoxious is Mitya's worldly guardian Miusov, a Europeanized Russian liberal of the type "common in the forties and fifties," who always insinuated that he had put his life in jeopardy on

the Parisian barricades during the 1848 revolution. A third obvious mouthpiece for Dostoyevsky's ridicule of the foolish liberal is the young boy Kolya, perhaps created to warn Russians of the product of a liberal, progressive education. Kolya proudly asserts that the only worthwhile subjects are mathematics and the natural sciences and that the study of classical languages is merely instituted "to bore and stupify the intellect." He calls himself a socialist and tells his young friends that he will someday try to explain that term to them when they are old enough. He derides Russian literature and calls the concept of God a hypothesis, a convenient way to explain the order of the universe and nothing more. Even though the boy is a minor character, he is undeniably a carrier of many of the ideas that Dostoyevsky held to be pernicious and unfit, ideas whose tenacious hold on thousands of minds could lead only to turmoil and chaos for Russia. To be a Kolya or a Versilov or a Peter Verkhovensky—to be atheistic or socialistic or nihilistic—was to threaten two of Russia's major institutions, Orthodoxy and Autocracy.

32 Ibid., p. 7.
33 Ibid., p. 668.
34 Ibid., p. 671.
The Slavophiles' attitudes toward the autocracy were substantially those of Dostoyevsky. Both respected the tsardom and its traditions; neither questioned it, although the Slavophiles' concept of why the tsar had the position he holds is not found in Dostoyevsky. In his article "On the Internal State of Russia," Konstantin Aksakov, one of the two famous Slavophile brothers, attacks the typical Western view of the place of the Russian populace under the tsar: contented people sitting with their vodka, unaware of their slave mentality and in awe of the dictatorship of the tsar. The opposite view is propounded by many misguided Russians: happy people living in a natural state of law and order. The actual fact of the matter, he contends, is that the people "lack the very spirit of politics," that they have "no desire to limit in any way the powers of the authorities," and that they are "apolitical." By saying this he, of course, intends to intimate why the people by nature would harbor no revolutionary tendencies nor any desire or need for a constitution. In the notes for The Devils the Prince (an early version of Stavrogin) echoes Aksakov:

This is a natural brotherhood. The Tsar is at the head. Slave and yet free (St. Paul). (I Corinthians 7:22) The Russian people will never rise against their Tsar (which some Tsars failed to realize, fearing an uprising). But they will come to realize it. The Tsar is for his people an incarnation of their soul, of their spirit.36

The obvious question—if this is so, why does the tsar continually maintain strict censorship and watchful measures to avert uprisings?—is answered simply. Either the tsar or his authorities do not understand the fundamental nature of their own people. The inevitable result is that "such preventive measure by our government—measure for which there is no need and no basis—must of necessity be harmful, as drugs are to a healthy man who does not require them."37

In other words, the government spawns that which it is trying to avoid. This explanation, particularly the part about the tsar's lack of knowledge of his own people, is apparently satisfactory to the Slavophiles, even though it is not based on fact; there is no evidence that Dostoyevsky reasoned along the same line.

Aksakov continues by explaining, as Khomiakov does, that the essential element in the life of the Russian people,

if it is not political, is "their internal communal life of the spirit."\textsuperscript{38} And at this point the core of Slavophile ideology in regard to the position of the autocracy is clarified:

Having renounced political government, the Russian people reserved for themselves the domain of communal life and entrusted the state with the task of enabling them to lead such a life. \ldots \ldots Hence, leaving the kingdom which is of this world to the state, the Russians, being a Christian people, set their feet on another path—the path to inner freedom, to spiritual life, to the kingdom of Christ: "The Kingdom of God is within you." That is the reason for their unequaled submission to authority; that is the reason for the complete security of the Russian government; that is why there can be no revolution on the part of the Russian people; that is why there is tranquility within Russia.\textsuperscript{39}

This was written in 1855, well before the rise of the new radicals in the 1860's and 1870's. Aksakov did not live to see them, for he died in 1860.

Separated as they are, there is still a relationship between the people and the state. What is it? Aksakov says it is "mutual noninterference":

The positive duty of the state to the people is to safeguard and protect their life, to give them material security, and to provide them with all the requisite means and ways to

\textsuperscript{38}Ibid., p. 234.
\textsuperscript{39}Ibid.
enable them to prosper, attain their full development, and fulfill their moral destiny on earth. . . . The positive duty which the people owe to the state is to carry out its demands, give it the strength it needs to put its plans into execution, and supply men and money when these are required.\(^{40}\)

According to the Slavophiles, this idealistic arrangement had been upset since the advent of Peter's reign, because the government had become repressive, authorities more corrupted, people more contaminated, and discontent more widely spread. Despite this internal imbalance, Dostoyevsky calls the tsar "guardian and unifier" and liberator of Orthodoxy out of the hands of "Mohammedan barbarism and Western heresy."\(^{41}\) Konstantin's brother Ivan also voiced his concept of the state-people relationship:

\[\ldots \text{the state does not represent in any way the consciousness of a people. The state is the form, the exterior shape given by the people to their way of living in an organized entity; its functions are of a purely executive nature. . . .}\]

Risanovsky calls the Slavophiles "anarchists of a peculiar kind" because they "considered all formalism and compulsion and therefore every form of state as evil, but they were convinced that the state could not be avoided."\(^{43}\)

\(^{40}\)Ibid., p. 239.


\(^{43}\)Nicholas Riasanovsky, Russia and the West in the Teaching of the Slavophiles: A Study of Romantic Ideology (Cambridge, 1952), p. 149.
They, therefore, determined to limit the scope of the state. Khomiakov reasoned that "if power was an evil burden, the fewer men who had to carry it the better."^44

Given the nature of real government as opposed to the Slavophile theoretical and idealistic government, Ivan Aksakov's explanation of the defense the masses had against an impinging government is scarcely comforting or encouraging: development of its "public conscience," its articulation of the trespasses against itself.\textsuperscript{45} How? To whom?

Once again the Slavophiles have an answer—the people can communicate through a revived \textit{Zemskie sobor} and through free press and free speech. The new \textit{Zemskie sobor} ("Assembly of all the Land"), like those of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, was to be a "consultative institution," an "expression of the mutual trust that existed between the tsar and his people."\textsuperscript{46} Besides renewing this ancient custom, the Slavophiles dreamed of the Russian future, not only in terms of the great gifts the tsar and the people would eventually give the West, but also in terms of the peaceful and idyllic homeland organization.

\textsuperscript{44} Ibid., p. 150.
\textsuperscript{45} Lukashevich, \textit{Ivan Aksakov}, p. 58.
\textsuperscript{46} Ibid., p. 10.
The Slavophiles imagined their Russia of the future as a multitude of peasant communes ruled by democratic principles under the aegis of an autocratic tsar. Democracy at the local level and autocracy at the state level were to coexist harmoniously. The Zemskie sobor was to serve as a link between these two forms of government. It would discourage the desire for a western-style constitution and would, at the same time, reduce the power of the bureaucracy.\(^{47}\)

How would everyone who lived elsewhere—in the cities, for instance—fit into the social structure? Khomiakov and his friends apparently omitted filling out their plan in detail. Their enthusiasm was not disciplined and directed toward a systemization of workable, viable plans.

The Slavophiles believed that even though the people exercised their independence from the state, from the tsar to whom they willingly submitted, they must be able to show the state what they wanted or needed. The people determined the principles by which the government ran. How did the state know these principles? How did it exist for the people? It, in the person of the tsar, listened to popular opinion; therefore, the tsar would have to protect free speech and free press if he were to hear the people.\(^{48}\) (Here is one of the repressions Konstantin Aksakov reconginzed in contemporary government; the tsar was not providing one of the "requisite

---

\(^{47}\)Ibid.

means and ways to enable his people to prosper." In the earlier Zemskie sobors, one of which elected the first of the Romanovs in 1612, even some free peasants had been allowed to join in the discussion of problems affecting the people; in other words, the earlier Romanovs, unlike Alexander I, Nicholas I, or Alexander II in Dostoyevsky's time, gathered public opinion from the congregated peasants, dignitaries, nobles, and clergy.

In the nineteenth century Khomiakov reasoned that since man was naturally a walking, breathing being, as well as a taking being, speech was free. This contention must have frustrated Khomiakov in the light of the Slavophiles' beleaguered presses and publications. If Orthodox Russians, true loyal followers of their tsar, possessed the truth, their inability to always get their truths published is ironic. The government—not the people—violated custom in the 1800's. If Dostoyevsky supported the institution of a new Zemskie sobor, he wrote little of his hopes; neither did he complain publicly of the censorship which had several times severely handicapped him.

Dostoyevsky's love for his tsar and the Russian autocracy did not alleviate his disgust for the majority of

49 Riasanovsky, Russia and the West, p. 141.
bureaucrats and officials in the vast hierarchy beneath the tsar. Unlike the Slavophiles, he occasionally lampooned them. In *The Devils* he allows the radical Peter Verkhovensky to confuse and ridicule Governor Lembke. In *The Idiot* he exhibits Lebedyev, whom he calls one of those "omniscient gentleman" who know everything—other people's jobs, salaries, friends, dowries— and General Epanchin with his "certain dullness of mind . . . an almost necessary qualification, if not for every public man, at least for everyone seriously engaged in making money." Dostoyevsky was not blind to the foibles and universal weaknesses he saw in his fellow Russians, as were the Slavophiles, who populated their ideal Russia with ideal Russian citizens. Very seldom did Dostoyevsky allow himself to write sentimentally and unrealistically of the Russian character.

The Slavophiles dated Russia's troubles from Peter's reign. He loved the West and brought much of it to Russia. The Slavophiles were faced with purging their motherland of almost two hundred years of western influence and ideas. Dostoyevsky did not share their sentiment. He contended that pre-Petrine Russia had begun to realize it possessed a unique treasure in Orthodoxy—that Russia was "the conservatrix

---

of Christ's truth, genuine truth -- the true image of Christ which had been dimmed in all other religions and in all other nations. Perhaps it was natural that many Russians believed that close contact with the West would contaminate the Eastern truth and affect Russian ideas.

Thus ancient Russia, in her isolation, was ready to be unjust -- unjust to mankind, having taken the resolution to preserve passively her treasure, her Orthodoxy, for herself, to seclude herself from Europe - that is, mankind . . .

Dostoyevsky could be referring here to Russia's possible denial of her messianic mission rather than to a closed-door policy toward anything culturally European; nevertheless, in other passages he challenges Russia to realize that a certain amount of contact and trade with the outside world could in all probability help her intellectual and economic growth. In 1876 he wrote the following:

We, Russians, have two motherlands -- Russia and Europe -- even in cases when we call ourselves Slavophiles: let them not be angry at me for this remark. This should not be disputed. The greatest among their great future designations, already apperceived by the Russians, is the designation common to the whole human race -- service rendered to mankind as a whole, not only to Russia, not only to Slavs in general, but to humankind in toto. Think of it, and you will agree that the Slavophiles held an


53 Ibid.
identical view, and this is why they urged us to be more rigid, firmer and more responsible Russians...

In his Pushkin speech in 1880 Dostoyevsky echoed the same thoughts:

Yes, the Russian's destiny is incontestably all-European and universal. To become a genuine and all-around Russian means, perhaps (and this you should remember), to become brother of all men, a universal man, if you please. Oh, all this Slavophilism and this Westernism is a great, although historically inevitable, misunderstanding. To a genuine Russian, Europe and the destiny of the great Aryan race are as dear as Russia herself, as the fate of his native land, because our destiny is universality acquired not by the sword but by the force of brotherhood and our brotherly longing for fellowship of men.

A year later, and nearing death, he again repeats that "hard as we may try we shall never completely tear ourselves away from Europe." In The Devils he makes a subtle comment on his beloved country. Shatov is quarreling with his wife, who is trying to engender some enthusiasm from him on a proposed bookbinding business; Shatov derides the idea.

... to read a book and have it bound are two stages in development, and enormously different stages too. At first he [a reader] gets slowly used to reading. That takes him ages, of course, but he doesn't take care of his book and throws it about. Doesn't take it seriously. To have a book bound, on the other hand, implies a respect

54 Ibid., p. 342.


56 Dostoyevsky, Diary, II, 1048.
for the book; it implies that they not only like to read it, but regard it as something essential. Russia has not yet reached that period. Europe has been binding books for a long time.57

Dostoyevsky and the Slavophiles looked proudly and hopefully toward Russia's future promise. They based their pride and hope upon the maintainance of traditional order, and the root of this order lay in the autocracy. To alter it would be to alter Russian history even more radically than Peter had done two hundred years before.

57 Dostoyevsky, The Devils, p. 574.
CHAPTER IV

NATIONALITY: THE RUSSIAN PEOPLE

The explanation of the terms "Orthodoxy" or "Autocracy" is not so difficult as the third term Uvarov includes in his definition of Nicholas I's official national policy--"Nationality." It connoted a Russian national consciousness, a recognition by Russians of a unique cultural and historical tradition contributing to an identifiable national character. Official nationality declared that a Russian was a Russian because he had a particular place in the social hierarchy beneath the tsar; in other words, Uvarov defined nationality in political terms.¹ Perhaps this can become more evident set against the Slavophile concept of nationality.

Khomiakov and the Slavophiles also recognized a national consciousness in the Russian people; however, instead of saying that this general feeling of brotherhood, of national character, arises because each individual Russian finds himself at a particular socio-political level beneath the head of state, the Slavophiles contend consciousness arises as a result of the

individual's realization that he is a child of the Russian land, of the huge brotherhood of Orthodox believers, of the strong folk who share the same language, traditions, etc.

Thomas Masaryk points out the intricacy of the concept:

Nationality, the national character or "spirit," is displayed not only in language, but also in manifold manners and customs (clothing, etc.), in the methods of settlement and habitation (arrangement of houses, villages and towns), work and domestic economy, law and the state, morals, religion, science and philosophy, culture and art—any and all of these may be regarded as expressions of national character. 

To be defined in Uvarov's terms, to be politically defined, is to see nationality born of external justice, external compulsion; it is to be the tsar's soldier, the tsar's bureaucrat, the tsar's priest, the tsar's peasant. To be defined in Slavophile terms, to be socially defined, is to see nationality born of internal justice; it is to be a Russian soldier, a Russian bureaucrat, a Russian priest, a Russian peasant.

Above all else, nationality in Slavophile terms relied on Russian Orthodoxy. The earthly church was the body of Christian believers, not simply Slavs. Khomiakov considered the Russian people the only true earthly Christian community;

---


3 Petrovich, Emergence, p. 52.

4 Ibid.
their spirituality arose, not from Slavdom but from Jesus Christ.\textsuperscript{5} Under the institution of serfdom, the peasantry had been tied to the land by compulsion, by legalism, "the dependence of the peasant on the land."\textsuperscript{6} The Slavophiles hated it, for it punished and stifled the great majority of the Russian people they loved. The supremacy of the Russian people was denied; the Orthodox Church in effect condoned the condition when it supported the autocracy. After 1861 the Slavophiles saw the "dependence of the land on the peasant."\textsuperscript{7} The new relationship between the Russian land and the Russian people, their inseparability, came closer to the idealized Slavophile vision of the people on the one hand and the autocracy on the other, both open to the guidance and authority of the other.

When Slavophile nationality is discussed, it is the people, the peasantry—not the government nor the land-owning nobility nor the intellectuals—who possess national consciousness and national character. The liberal intelligentsia, much of the westernized nobility, even the nineteenth century tsars, embodied too much foreign influence to be truly Russian. Later Dostoyevsky's personal observations on this condition will be outlined; however, in one entry of the notebooks to \textit{The Devils} he concludes that the essence of nationality, not universally


\textsuperscript{6} Ibid., p. 139.

\textsuperscript{7} Ibid.
present in the Russia of his day, was a national self-assurance, a confidence in the morals and ideals built up among Russians over their entire history. He tries to explain by this analogy:

I used to know a man in Germany who owned a house, and meanwhile a three-story brick building which gave him an income, but meanwhile he continued to ply his shoemaker's trade, and kept working with his own hands, making shoes. This man is thrifty and calculating; he makes it by being so persistent. He saves, knowing ahead how much he is going to save. He is calm and firm, he remains steady; even if he gets acquainted with ideas and acquires an education his shoemaker's mallet won't leave his hands.8

This German had the self-assurance and confidence which Dostoyevsky believes was rooted in centuries of a sense of nationality. What had the Russians done?

... we have built 10,000 versts of railways, yet without having a single engineering plant in our whole country until very recently, as everything was being ordered from abroad, because we had no faith in ourselves, nor did we bother to start anything here at home. The whole cause of it, I repeat, lies deep inside. The cause is a moral one. We Russians were derailed once and for all, and later kept under tutelage all the time. We have lost our moral self-assurance. (I am not speaking of the plain people.)9

Where did Dostoyevsky gain his knowledge of a concept of Russian nationality? When and why did he consciously study

---


9 Ibid., p. 214.
the relationships between men and men and between men and God—the relationships which would breed awareness of nationality? His childhood in Moscow, even though he was of the hereditary nobility, did not separate him from the peasantry. He and five of his six living brothers and sisters were nursed by a serf woman who for years made semi-annual trips from the back country to visit them in Moscow. Robert Payne describes her peasant ways—her linden bark shoes, her beloved and fantastic nighttime stories, her prayers. The peasant woman, Alyona Frolovna, constant companion of the children throughout the years before their mother's untimely death, offered her lifetime savings to the distraught doctor when his entire country estate burned; Fyodor never forgot her and later wrote of the incident in his Diary. Neither did he forget the other serfs who populated the family estate outside the city. One of them was immortalized in his story "The Peasant Marey." In The House of the Dead he records a childhood memory:

I remembered how sometimes standing in church as a child I looked at the peasants crowding near the entrance and lavishly parting to make way for a thickly epauletted officer, a stout gentleman, or an overdressed but pious lady, who invariably made for the best places and were ready to quarrel over them. I used to fancy then that at the church door they did not pray as we did, that they prayed humbly, zealously, abasing themselves and fully conscious of their humble state.

---


Even though Dostoyevsky occasionally falls into an unrealistic and sentimental description of the general character of the Russian peasant, he surely had seen instances of their viciousness and unpredictability at his family estate or on St. Petersburg's streets or in prison. Perhaps the vignette about the mare-beating in *Crime and Punishment*—where peasants club an old horse to death before the eyes of a stunned young boy—is autobiographical. Undoubtedly, several of the peasant prisoners in *The House of the Dead*, convicted murderers like Lutchka and Lomov, were actual acquaintances of Dostoyevsky. He described their crimes as unmotivated and unmerciful. Most personally, his widower father was murdered at the Darovoye estate by his own serfs.

Dostoyevsky's four-year stay in the Omsk prison provided intimate and prolonged contact with the people. He had ample opportunity to test his liberal hypothesis that man is by nature good. He wrote General Totleven, defender of Sebastopol, March, 1865, telling him that "the hard and painful experiences of the ensuing /since the 1840's/ years have sobered me, and altered my views in many respects." Edward Wasiolek describes what Dostoyevsky found among his fellow prisoners: the man-beast and the man-executioner. He recognized among all men


mare-beaters, child-punishers, and parricides; nevertheless, the spirit of the people-prisoners, peasants, serfs—was to him a living, identifiable essence arising out of their roots in the land and in Orthodoxy.

Not the years of exile—not suffering—have subdued us. . . . No, something different has changed our outlook, our convictions and our hearts . . . This something different was the direct contact with the people, the brotherly merger with them in a common misfortune, the realization of the fact that one has become even as they, that one has been made equal to them, and even to their lowest stratum.

I repeat: this did not occur so quickly, but gradually—and after a long, long time. Not pride, not self-love, prevented confession. And yet I was, perhaps, one of those . . . to whom the return to the popular root, to the understanding of the Russian soul, to the recognition of the people's spirit, has been made particularly easy. I descended from a pious Russian family.

As Goryanchikov-Dostoyevsky leaves prison in The House of the Dead, he expresses his admiration for those he had come to know there: "Perhaps they were the most gifted, the strongest of our people. But their mighty energies were vainly wasted, wasted abnormally, unjustly, hopelessly." Perhaps the principal reason Dostoyevsky wrote this in the early 1860's was that he had, upon his return to St. Petersburg, become aware of the vast gulf separating the Russian people from the nobility, the landed, the intelligentsia, and much of the clergy.

---

14 Fyodor Dostoyevsky, The Diary of a Writer, edited and translated by Boris Brasol (New York, 1949), 1, 152.

Even though Dostoyevsky most frequently exhibited his awareness of the cleavage in Russian society around 1875-1877, his earlier novels are full of comment on the separation of the great masses of people from the rest of Russian society. Robert Payne's contentions that Dostoyevsky was "a defender of aristocrats" who believed indeed that God had "reserved a special place for the Russian aristocrat, the custodian of Russia's future," and that Dostoyevsky seemed "to have only disdain for the Russians en masse," are at least questionable, if not downright fallacious.16 Dostoyevsky had a peculiar way of defending the aristocracy if one studies the Epanchins or Totsky in The Idiot; Versilov or Prince Sokolsky in A Raw Youth; Stavrogin or Stepan Verkhovensky or Mme. Stavrogin or the Lembkes in The Devils; Miusov or Mme. Hohlakov in The Brothers Karamazov. The landed and wealthy in his novels are usually liberals, old westerners, if not worse. Shaposhnikov, who will later become Shatov in The Devils, answers Payne:

The people were exempt from the German reform from the very beginning; they were given up for hopeless. They were even allowed to keep wearing beards. . . . The people weren't considered essential at the time, but they were closely guarded, but as to their internal, proper life, it was left to them in its entirety . . . the entire upper class of Russia ended up being transformed into Germans and, uprooted, got to love everything German and to hate and despise everything of their own.17

16Payne, Dostoyevsky, pp. 300, 107.

17Dostoyevsky, The Notebooks for The Possessed, p. 146.
In the novel, Shatov continues his accusation:

You've not only overlooked the people, you've treated them with horrible contempt, and that because you could not imagine any people except the French people, and even then only the people of Paris, and you were ashamed that the Russian people were not like them. . . . You may be sure that those who cease to understand the people and lost contact with them, at once and to that extent lose the faith of their fathers and become atheists or are indifferent.18

In the Diary, 1877, Dostoyevsky asserts that educated Russians, no doubt many of whom are of the aristocracy, were characterized by their "flippancy and meaninglessness."19 He develops this idea with references to other equally degrading habits and frames of mind, all of which increase a long catalogue of remarks which hardly lead one to believe Dostoyevsky revered the hereditary nobility and despised the masses.

How separated are the people and the upper classes? Zossima sees the latter as followers of science, men who believe justice can be defined only by reason, and not by morality and Christianity; the vast majority of the rest of society live the reverse—believers in faith and Christ and justice arising from Him and moral law.20 Versilov condescendingly admits that even though loving the people is

19 Dostoyevsky, Diary, I, 861.
impossible, he and the rest of his class must hold their noses and close their eyes and simply try to live with them. In The House of the Dead Dostoyevsky speaks again and again of the overt separation even in prison between the peasantry and the gentry. In The Idiot when Prince Myshkin finds himself encircled by the Epanchin's friends, "society" as he calls them, it does not take him long to detect the undercurrents of pettiness and jealousy and competition among them. Their elegance is superficial, a collective mask. Mrs. Lembke, the bumbling Governor's wife in The Devils, is probably representative of Dostoyevsky's impression of the typical woman of her class (of course, in the 1840's he would have moved in her salon):

She was in favour of big agricultural estates, the aristocratic element, and the increase of the Governor's prerogatives and, at the same time, of the democratic element, the new institutions, law and order, free-thinking, and social reforms; the strict etiquette of an aristocratic salon and the free-and-easy, almost public-house manners of the young people who surrounded her.

Dostoyevsky could be writing about her, and her apparent ignorance of the existence of any people outside her own circles, when he defended the uneducated and unlanded in his Diary, 1877:

---


23Dostoyevsky, The Devils, p. 348.
This "intelligent" Russian who has dissociated himself from the people would be surprised to hear that the illiterate peasant fully and unwaveringly believes in the unity of God, that there is but one God, and no God other than He. . . . That educated fellow will never understand that the teacher of the peasant "in the matter of his faith" is the soil itself, the whole Russian land; that these beliefs, as it were, are born with him and are fortified in his heart together with life.  

If Dostoyevsky believes that Orthodox Russians will fulfill Russia's national messianic duty, then how can the liberal, atheistic or agnostic, rationalistic, westernized aristocracy and landed gentry be the potential disseminators of that which they deny? In order to reunify Russians and reawaken the awareness of national consciousness and character throughout all levels of society, the upper classes would have to throw off their foreign habits and ideas and return to the Russian Orthodox Church. This Dostoyevsky knew. He had only to look about him to see the people and their isolation.

Dostoyevsky not only observed his fellow Russians first-hand but also listened to what others said of them abroad. He was never entirely at ease outside his own country. He was forty when he first set foot in Europe—in Berlin and Dresden and Cologne and Paris, all of which antagonized him for one reason or another. London was not so bad, nor did Florence displease him entirely. Even before his long tour, however,

---

24 Dostoyevsky, Diary, II, 747.
he had written of the Western misunderstanding of Russia; for instance, in January, 1861, he wrote the following:

To Europe, Russia is one of the riddles of the Sphinx. The perpetuum mobile or the elixir of life will be discovered sooner than Western Europe will comprehend the Russian truth, the Russian spirit, character or turn of mind. In this respect even the moon has been explored more thoroughly than Russia. At least it is absolutely certain that no one lives on the moon; on the other hand, it is known that people live in Russia and even that they are Russians, but what kind of people?²⁵

He then includes further comment along the same line—with a touch of the wry humor he so seldom allows in his writings:

When Russia is under discussion a kind of stupor descends on the very people who invented gunpowder and numbered so many stars that they became convinced that they could snatch them out of the sky. . . . They know, for instance, that Russia lies between certain longitudes and latitudes, she abounds in certain raw materials, etc., that there are places in it where dogs are used for driving. They know, too, that besides dogs there are people in Russia, very strange people who are like other people and yet seemingly unlike anyone; they seem to be Europeans and yet at the same time also barbarians. They know that our common people are quite intelligent, and yet possess no genius; that they are very handsome, live in wooden cottages, but are incapable of higher development because of the hard frosts. They know that Russia has an army, and a big one, too, but think that the Russian soldier is an automaton made out of wood, that he walks on springs, that he is incapable of rational thought and has no feelings, and that this is why he is so steadfast in battle, but has no idea of independence and is inferior to the Frenchman in every respect.²⁶


²⁶Ibid., p. 42.
Many years later and after other European travels, he still wondered if Europe would ever cease considering Russians barbarians, good only for warfare and deserving only of contempt and haughtiness.\(^{27}\) Of course, the reason the West did not understand Russia was that the former did not understand Russian Orthodoxy, and as long as men did not they would "never comprehend anything concerning our people."\(^{28}\)

In the 1840's both the Westerners and Slavophiles hoped for the eradication of serfdom. The Westerners--such as Belinsky, Turgenev, Herzen--pitied the unfortunate masses; the Slavophiles saw them as living testaments to pure, unspoiled Russian tradition. Dostoyevsky, immersed in his Petrashevsky work, wrote patronizingly of the people for whom his liberal reforms were intended. This excerpt is dated April 13, 1847:

\begin{quote}
Have you noticed, gentlemen, how our common people enjoy themselves on their holidays? In the Summer Gardens, for instance. A huge, dense crowd moves along slowly and sedately--all in their Sunday best . . . On all faces a very naive question is written: what next? Is that all? . . . And it seems as though this immense multitude feels annoyed at these new customs, at these metropolitan amusements of theirs. They cannot help imagining a trepak, a balalaika, an unbuttoned, tight-fitting pleated peasant coat with stand-up collar, vodka galore, in short, everything that would let them display themselves, let themselves go as they had been used to, in accordance with their national spirit. But what prevents them is the feeling of decorum, the feeling
\end{quote}

\(^{27}\)Dostoyevsky, \textit{Diary}, II, 782.

\(^{28}\)Ibid., I, p. 236.
that it is not the right time for this sort of thing, and the crowd disperses sedately to their homes, not, of course, without dropping into a bar on the way.29

By the 1860's he still wrote of them, but no longer with such sarcasm. In fact, if anything, he occasionally approached the soaring praises and idealistic reveries of the Slavophiles with whom he shared many sentiments concerning the peasants.

Both Dostoyevsky and Khomiakov believed that Russians had a peculiar and original national gift--they could with great ease understand and learn foreign languages. In fact, this propensity was so remarkable that it carried "great promise for the future" and Russian destiny; unfortunately, Europeans as a rule learned other European tongues, finding this easier than mastering Russian or grasping the "Russian essence."30 As dubious and unproved as such a contention might sound, it was in accord with the frequent descriptions Dostoyevsky records of the people; both he and Khomiakov usually portray them as such scions of virtue and integrity that whatever truth their ideas might hold is lost amid the romanticized, overly sentimental descriptions.

In The House of the Dead Dostoyevsky mentions the great "sober-mindedness and grasp of reality" of the average Russian, as well as his "sense of justice and eagerness for it."31 He

29Dostoyevsky, Occasional Writings, pp. 6-7.
30Dostoyevsky, Diary, I, 75-76.
observes that Russian women exhibit "more sincerity, perseverance, seriousness and honor, sacrifice and search for truth" than even the Russian men.\footnote{Dostoyevsky, \textit{Diary}, I, 142.} In \textit{The Brothers Karamazov} Dostoyevsky calls the peasantry "silent and long-suffering"\footnote{Dostoyevsky, \textit{Karamazov}, p. 53.}; Zossima reminds his priests of the love and gratefulness the peasants hold for those who teach them. He admonishes the monks:

\begin{quote}
Fathers and teachers, watch over the people's faith and this will not be a dream \textit{the salvation of Russia and the rest of the world through them}. I've been struck all my life in our great people by their dignity, their true and seemly dignity. . . . They are not servile, and even after two centuries of serfdom, they are free in manner and bearing, yet without insolence, and not revengeful and not envious.\footnote{\textit{Ibid.}, p. 379.}
\end{quote}

Zossima assures his brother monks that even though the people were bereft of education and naive they were morally and spiritually alive and eager to listen to those who taught them Scripture--"the orthodox heart will understand all!"\footnote{\textit{Ibid.}, p. 349.} In \textit{A Raw Youth} Prince Sergay romanticizes the role of the peasant; he dreams of being free of the world, settled on his own little piece of land, with "a family, and myself a tiller of the soil or something of the sort."\footnote{Dostoyevsky, \textit{A Raw Youth}, p. 337.} To his children he would leave
his strip of earth and "the loftiest of principles." In the same novel the youth's landlord relates a Russian folktale to Dolgorky and Versilov. The story involves a huge stone which rested in a street down which the tsar often rode; he thought it out of place and unsightly and ordered its removal. The tsar assigned several Englishmen to the task. They insisted that the job was impossible unless a railroad could be built and the stone removed by a steam engine. Montferant (a Frenchman?) suggested that someone smash it. The main obstacles to his plan were the enormous sum of money required to hire a machine to do the work and the trouble to find a place for all the rubble. Into this dilemma wandered a Russian laborer who requested 100 rubles to rid the street of the rock; of course, the tsar's curiosity was aroused. The next morning the stone was indeed gone. The workman and his friends had dug out a hole into which the stone dropped and was subsequently covered. And Russian ingenuity in all its simplicity had triumphed.

Several of Dostoyevsky's characters, including Smerdyakov, Kolya, Versilov, and Kraft, deride the peasantry. Their criticisms, like Versilov's comment that "the toiling masses" were fond of idleness and Smerdyakov's sarcastic questioning of whether the uneducated Russian could "be said to have

---

38 Ibid., p. 129.
feeling," stand as proof of Dostoyevsky's disapproval of all who shared their political and social ideas.

The Slavophile Ivan Kireevski, who died in 1856 while Dostoyevsky was still imprisoned, lauded the masses in idealistic terms, too, while Khomiakov probably used more superlatives than any other Slavophile in support of the people. Konstantin Aksakov differentiated between the public and the people:

The public speaks French, the people speaks Russian. The public follows Paris fashions. The people has its Russian customs. The public (at least in its great part) eats meat; the people observes fasts. The public sleeps, the people are already arisen long since and works. The public works (mostly with its feet on the dance floor): the people sleeps or already rises again to work. The public despises the people: the people forgives the public. . . . The public and the people have their epithets: we call the public honorable, and the people Orthodox.

Somehow, despite their loud and dramatic protestations of the treatment the peasantry received at the hands of the upper classes and despite their love and concern for their fellow Russians, the Slavophiles' descriptions of their national character come out of the comfortable libraries and studies of men who seem never to have opened their windows and looked out into the reality of the day-to-day lives of the average peasants. Their hatred of serfdom is unquestionable, yet their idyllic descriptions of the people subjected to that

---

39 Dostoyevsky, Karamazov, p. 267.
40 Riasanovsky, Russia and the West, p. 153.
institution leave doubt as to the necessity for severe and rapid alteration of the serf system. Thomas Masaryk suggests that the Slavophiles might have more clearly outlined their concept of nationality. They fail to answer numerous important questions: 1) is nationality conceived in physiological or psychical terms, or both? 2) if societies progress, do national characteristics alter? why or why not? 3) can individuals change nationalities? 4) can national sentiments alter? 5) must an individual ignore foreign languages or literature or peoples? 6) what if several languages are spoken in one nation?\footnote{Masaryk, The Spirit of Russia, I, 274.} In presenting the questions Masaryk is pointing out a major criticism of the Slavophile ideology; it seldom delineates its terms precisely.

The bearers of the multitude of national characteristics were an integral part of the Slavophile ideology, not simply because they were collectively an object of pride and living history, but rather because they were the future promise for Russian messianism. Dostoyevsky agreed. In February, 1876, he wrote:

And now Slavophiles and Westerners are agreed on one and the same thought: that at present one has to expect everything from the people, that they have arisen and they are marching, and that they—and they alone—will utter the last word.\footnote{Dostoyevsky, Diary, I, 199.}
One major historical act would have to occur before the Russian nation would consciously take upon themselves their moral task of freeing the decadent West from itself. They would have to be reunited with the rest of Russian society—nobility, gentry, intelligentsia. Konstantin Aksakov explained the historical class division, beginning with Peter's advent and his encroachment upon the life style and traditions of the people—for instance, his early tax on beards, his preference for French, his dislike of Moscow. Eventually, as Aksakov says, the men of the land returned to older customs, whereas those around the tsar, his bureaucracy, many of the intelligentsia did the changing. Unfortunately, they soon began to look askance at the vast majority of the populace; the latter became somehow contemptible. The upper classes did the renouncing, not the people. Khomiakov contended that classes were natural in the legalistic, rationalistic West, but "alien to the Russian spirit, which was based on the higher principles of wholeness and organic unity." Once again, the Slavophiles never described the exact process of reunification even though their theory of Russian messianism depended upon it.

The doctrine of sobornost' embodied Khomiakov's Orthodox theology; the sister doctrine of obscinnost' (communality)

---


44 Riasanovsky, Russia and the West, p. 152.
embodied his "political, social and, to a certain extent, economic and ethical views."\textsuperscript{45} An obscina was a peasant commune, the origin of which remains debatable, even though Khomiakov swore each commune was "an outgrowth of the socially conscious Slavs."\textsuperscript{46} It is not clear whether such organizations actually appeared in the mid-nineteenth century or if the Slavophiles were merely projecting future history. Nevertheless, K. Aksakov defined such a commune:

A commune is a union of the people, who have renounced their egoism, their individuality, and who express their common accord; this is an act of love, a noble Christian act, which expresses itself more or less clearly in its various other manifestation. A commune thus represents a moral choir, and just as in a choir a voice is not lost, but follows the general pattern and is heard in the harmony of all voices: so in the commune the individual is not lost, but renounces his exclusiveness in favor of the general accord--and there arises the noble phenomenon of harmonious, joint existence of rational beings (consciousnesses); there arises a brotherhood, a commune--a triumph of human spirit.\textsuperscript{47}

If the Slavophiles wished for the growth of such bodies in Russian society, an obvious question arises: would not communes carry on class separation? Would not the men of the land still remain cut off from the rest of society, the city


\textsuperscript{46} Ibid., p. 207.

\textsuperscript{47} Riasanovsky, Russia and the West, p. 135.
dwellers? Turgenev wrote to the senior Aksakov about his son Konstantin:

I fear that I will never agree with Konstantin Sergeevich. He sees in the peasant commune some sort of the universal medicine, panacea, the alpha and omega of Russian life; and I, recognizing it as a peculiarity of Russia, still see in it only one original and primary basis, but no more than a basis, a form, on which is erected and not into which is poured the state. There can be no tree without roots, but it seems to me that Konstantin Sergeevich would like to see roots on the branches. The right of personality he destroys, whatever he says, while I have fought for this right till now and will fight it to the end.48

Of course, the Slavophiles would see in Turgenev a Westerner, an individualist, one incapable of seeing the logic and worth of their ideas. The communal dwellers were not concerned with political rights in the Western sense nor did they care about personal property nor personal freedom in the same way.

Slavophilism had its own concept of the individual:

Personality and its development are precious, but the egotistical nature of man can be curbed, and personality ennobled only through love freely given in an organically united society; society is not an evil but only the condition and the indispensable milieu for the growth and development of personality.49

Dostoyevsky does not write about the Russian commune. He does assert that the people must repair their class differences and get on with their moral task, that Russians--tsar, nobility,

landed, unlanded—must communicate in love and respect. His concept of Russian nationality could not be separated from his concept of Orthodoxy. To be one was to be the other.

Within the Russian commune itself was the true and absolute foundation for all society, the family. Here lay the groundwork for life's strongest bonds and here lay the means through which the young became Orthodox Christians. If familial responsibilities were met, the whole of society would remain stable, and it was the great mass of Orthodox humanity whose collective spirit made Russia unique. The Slavophiles would not have found the ideal Russian family in Dostoyevsky's novels. In fact, they would not have found any ideal peasant families. What they would have seen instead was sound evidence of the horror of abnormal family relationships among the gentry or nobility. The lusty Fyodor Karamazov is hardly an archetypal Slavophile father; his relationship with Dmitri and Ivan is tempestuous. The Verkhovenskys—father Stepan and son Peter—and the Stavrogins in The Devils are "abnormal" in that they embody the liberalism Dostoyevsky detested, and their ideas could not help but affect their relationships among themselves and those outside their families. The "raw youth" Dolgorky is the illegitimate son of Versilov. The boy oscillates back and forth between veneration for his stepfather and disgust with him for never marrying his true mother. The Epanchins

50Riasanovsky, Russia and the West, p. 132.
and the Ivolgins in The Idiot approach normality as do the mother and sister of Raskolnikov in Crime and Punishment, whose actions are motivated by their love and concern for their son and brother. In the same book the Marmeladov family becomes progressively poorer and weaker as the father succumbs to drink, is run down and killed in the streets, and leaves a sickly wife to rear the children, one of whom turns to prostitution for money.

Most of the members of these families are gentry or nobility or educated, even if nearly destitute. Seldom does Dostoyevsky use peasants or men of the land in his novels: Makar Dolgorky and Sofia Andreyevna in A Raw Youth; Shatov, Anisim Ivanov and the peasants near the end of The Devils; and Lizaveta the Idiot, her son Smerdyakov, Grigory and Marfa in The Brothers Karamazov. He writes of such people in his Diary and in his letters and articles in Time and Epoch. Irving Howe says that "everything in his work implies an exalted vision of the peasants yet he is one of the few Russian masters who barely touches on their life."51 Twice, however, Dostoyevsky wrote fondly and carefully of a peasant.

Aksakov and the Slavophiles would have approved of Makar Ivanovitch who appears in A Raw Youth. He is the legal, but not actual father of the young Dolgorky. He speaks to the

boy about his long life, his God, his stories, his approaching
death. The other peasant is Marey in the short story "The
Peasant Marey," which was not only published by itself but
also appeared in *The House of the Dead* and *Diary of a Writer.*
It is autobiographical--Dostoyevsky is the nine-year-old who
panics at the cry "Wolf! Wolf!" and finds shelter and comfort
in the company of the nearby Marey. The peasant's hands are
loamy, with dirt under the fingernails; Dostoyevsky stresses
this twice. And it is those fingers which touch the boy's
mouth and make the sign of the cross over him.

... and if I had been his own son, he
could not have looked at me with eyes
shining with brighter love. And who
compelled him to look like that? He was
one of our serfs, a peasant who was our
property, and after all I was the son of
the master. ... Only God perhaps saw
from above with what profound and enlightened
human feeling, and with what delicate, almost
womanly, tenderness the heart of a coarse,
savagely ignorant Russian serf was filled,
a serf who at the time neither expected nor
dreamt of his emancipation.

Tell me, was not this what Konstantin
Aksakov perhaps meant when he spoke of the
high degree of culture of our people?52

Dostoyevsky shared the Slavophiles' affection for the
people, frequently recording his concern for their isolation
from the rest of Russian society; yet he did not write novels
of social protest or sermonize about their economic plight.

He focuses, instead, as Ernest Simmons says, upon their souls, admitted infrequently upon peasant souls. A February, 1876, entry in the Diary points up his Slavophile sympathies in regard to a concept of nationality as well as a certain degree of realism concerning his attitudes and his own fallibility:

We all, lovers of the people, regard them as a theory, and it seems that none of us like them as they really are, but as each one has represented them to himself. Even more: should the Russian people, at some future time, turn out to be different from our conception of them, we all, despite our love of them, would possibly renounce them without regret. I am speaking about everybody, not excepting the Slavophiles; these would, perhaps, renounce the people more bitterly than the rest.  

The major Slavophiles were dead even before Dostoevsky wrote the above; five years later he himself was dead. None renounced the people. None lived to find their concept of Russian nationality altered.

54 Dostoevsky, Diary, I, 203-204.
CHAPTER V

THE NOVELIST AND THE IDEOLOGISTS

Although separated in the 1840's by their extreme divergence of ideas and in the 1850's by death and imprisonment, the Slavophiles and Dostoyevsky interpret Russian Orthodoxy, Autocracy, and Nationality in much the same terms. The basic and obvious fact that the Slavophiles are ideologists and Dostoyevsky a novelist does not matter. Both identify the highest morality in the spiritual virtues of the Russian peasantry, even though neither explains exactly how one can definitively and absolutely determine those virtues. Howe says that the Slavophiles' faith in the people is "a sign of their distance from the peasants." Both consider the upper, educated classes, in effect, apostates, neither ever conceding that that portion of society possessed the least bit of patriotism or concern for its motherland. Both revere the tsar. Both believe Russia a Christian nation; however, neither the Slavophiles nor Dostoyevsky mention the large numbers of non-Christian Russians nor question the fact that numerous Russians were Christians in

name only. In fact, available translations of Khomiakov, Kireevski, and the Aksakov brothers show no evidence of a Slavophile concern with Christ or the fundamental Christian tenets. Their unorganized philosophy theorizes an idealistic, romantic, impossible world when Russian was already deteriorating toward 1905.

Dostoyevsky's ideological sympathies with the Slavophiles belie his recorded impressions of those men. When Ivan Aksakov first published his paper Day, Dostoyevsky published his own critique:

It is the same Slavophiles, the same pure, ideal Slavophilism, not a whit changed, whose ideals and reality are so strangely mixed up: for whom there are neither events nor lessons. The same Slavophiles with the same bitter hatred of everything that is not theirs and with the same inability for reconciliation; with the same intolerance and pettiness, and completely un-Russian formal approach to things.²

He speaks of the Slavophiles' "passionate but somewhat bookish and abstract love for our country" and their "confused and vague ideal" of seventeenth century Russian history and the "ancient way of life."³ He also criticizes them in the same terms he had used to describe the separation of the peasantry from the upper classes:

What have you been doing Mr. Aksakov? And if not you, then the rest of you Slavophiles? One reads some of your opinions and one cannot help


³Ibid., p. 216.
coming to the conclusion that you place yourself entirely apart, that you look on us as if we were some alien tribe, as though you dropped from the moon on us, as though you do not live in the same kingdom as we or at the same time as we, as though it were not the same kind of life you were living! It is as though you were making some kind of an experiment, as though you were studying someone under a microscope.¹

Here is only one of a series of comments Dostoyevsky makes about the Slavophiles; in his letters and articles in _Time and Epoch_, even occasionally in his novels, he records similar feelings about them, apparently never numbering himself among them. The Slavophiles did not share Dostoyevsky's conviction that European influences—be they in philosophy or science or whatever—need necessarily be tainted or useless.

Dostoyevsky, through the characters in his novels, gives a depth and substance to his ideas not found in the Slavophile writings. His Christianity is not simply the universal Russian acceptance of Orthodoxy, but rather a highly personal and individual process of becoming a Christian or an agonizing struggle to deny Christianity. He does not preach Orthodoxy; he is concerned with Christ and Christianity. For Raskolnikov the days of agony following the murder of the two women are filled with his tortuous rationalizations of the act. He is condemned to eight years of imprisonment after hearing the humiliating judgment that, instead of committing a crime of reason and justification, he had committed it while temporarily

¹Ibid., p. 220.
insane, "through homicidal mania, without object or the pursuit of gain." Like the Lazarus Sonia had read to him about, he promises the same rebirth, although Dostoevsky only intimates that this will happen eventually. Raskolnikov's conversion might have been a powerful subject for another novel, but his Eastertime promise of regeneration seems practically a nov- }

elastic afterthought.

Ivan struggles to accept Christianity. Throughout The Brothers Karamazov he seems to cry for a settled and comfortable belief in a God he can really believe in. Like Solomon in Ecclesiastes he detects order and meaning in the world, but he cannot empirically identify either. Where does he falter?

... in the final result I don't accept this world of God's, and, although I know it exists, I don't accept it at all. It's not that I don't accept God, you must understand, it's the world created by Him I don't and cannot accept.

He concedes that he believes that suffering will be ended, that "the humiliating absurdity of human contradictions" will vanish, that everything evil and inhumane and unforgiven will one day be atoned for, forgiven, and justified. Still he cannot accept a world without justice, where the innocent suffer and the guilty go blameless. He is tormented especially...

---


7 Ibid., p. 280.
by suffering children. What can he do, he asks, but "respectfully return Him the ticket." His is the magnificent story of the Grand Inquisitor, and his the "conversation" with the Devil. He falls victim to brain fever and lies delirious and weak, still unable to rid himself of his religious dilemma. His brother Alyosha is a Christian, a devout and humble young man, who experiences a severe blow with the death of Father Zossima and the malicious and insensitive atmosphere created by Zossima's enemies when the monk's body prematurely decays. Alyosha, despite the turmoil and notoriety his family had been involved in even before his father's murder, concludes the novel with an optimistic reaffirmation of Christian doctrine: "Certainly we shall all rise again, certainly we shall see each other and shall tell each other with joy and gladness all that has happened!" Ivan's agony, unlike the problems confronting Alyosha and Prince Myshkin, parallels the doubt and skepticism often felt by Dostoyevsky himself. In fact, artistically it is Dostoyevsky's doubters who "are much more convincing, and by far better artistic portrayals, than his believers," writes Andrew MacAndrew.

Dostoyevsky analyzes through his characters a particular concept of sin, a theological topic apparently not worked out

---

8 Ibid., p. 291.
9 Ibid., p. 940.
by the Slavophiles. Chapter II discussed Dostoyevsky's belief in the freedom given mankind to individually choose God or deny Him. This choice determines a definition of sin: if one chooses for Self instead of for God he sins. The freedom to do one or the other is a terrible and for many an overwhelming condition.

As Dostoyevsky reveals through his characters his personal philosophy of Christianity and even more specifically his concepts of freedom and sin, he also mirrors warnings of dangerous and weak points in contemporary Russian thoughts and actions. In Crime and Punishment Raskolnikov stands as an archetype of those who place human rationality above all else, of those who make themselves sources of morality, of those who deny all tradition and law. He determines the worthlessness of the pawnbroker, murders her (and her sister who surprises him in the room), and reasons that he has in reality benefited mankind. Howe sees Raskolnikov as an example of "the autonomous intellect," the intellectual "loosed from the controls of Christianity and alienated from the heart-warmth of the Russian people."\(^{11}\) Raskolnikov thus reflects Dostoyevsky's state of mind in the 1840's and prefigures the later Ivan Karamazov. The logical outcome of Raskolnikov's ethic is revolution--individuals commandeering collectively their rights as

individuals, or as Carr says, "The Raskolnikov of private life is the nihilist of politics."¹²

In The Idiot Ippolit, Keller, Burdovsky, and Doktorenko, the four young nihilists, reflect their selfish, willful, valueless contemporaries in the Russian society of 1860-1870. The Epanchins, particularly the General and his wife, and the Ivolgins reflect the values of the wealthy. And Lebedyev, whom Myshkin first meets on the train in the novel's first pages, is the epitome of the hypocritical self-seeker, a canker in a thoroughly corrupt society. Wasiolek explains Lebedyev's probable import:

To entertain his listeners further, Lebedev tells them a grotesque story about a medieval man who during a famine turned to cannibalism and ate sixty monks and six small boys. Finally, and in full knowledge of the medieval tortures, he gave himself up to the ecclesiastical authorities. Lebedyev's moral is obvious: if a man with a conscience can, because of circumstances, be driven to cannibalism, then why may be expected of an age with no conscience?¹³

Versilov in A Raw Youth is a prototype of the Europeanized Russian liberal, patronizing the peasantry and mouthing Orthodoxy while denying Christ. His stepson Dolgorky personally views the madness of the socialist gathering at D ergatchev's home, where a group of so-called humanitarians

---


break into derogatory chasement of those they supposedly wished to help. Even the youth himself for a time espouses early in the novel his individuality, his responsibility to no one outside himself, not "bound to love my neighbor." This occurs, however, before he meets Makar Ivanovitch, his legal father, before he outgrows his youthful liberalism as Dostoyevsky himself did.

In The Devils the reader finds gathered in one volume more of the ideas and types of peoples Dostoyevsky detested than one finds in any of his other works. Here are the Verkhovensky's, father and son, the elder a liberal of the 1840's and the younger the logical extension of his father, a nihilist and revolutionary. Stepan, Peter's father, is the epitome of the old guard romantic, an irresponsible father since he never concerned himself with instilling in his son values, much less Christian values. Here again is a group of socialist-revolutionaries, unable to organize themselves without animosity and the lash of Peter's direction. One of the socialists suggests the annihilation of nine-tenths of the population in order to allow the full fruition of the other tenth. Another, Kirilov, defends freedom for every man and admits that the logical end of absolute freedom is suicide, annihilation of self in order to prove the supremacy of the individual. Shatov is an ex-socialist and in The Devils an

apparent Slavophile who does not admit to belief in God! Mme. Stavrogin is a liberal, a pseudo-intellectual who panders to the younger people in hopes of being included and admired by them. Her son, an almost mysterious personage moving in and out of the story, is Dostoyevsky's principal example of a totally free man--tied neither to morals nor law nor tradition, Kirilov's free man-God. According to Wasiolek, he is the last in a line of progressively "freer" men.

The Underground Man is the first step toward Stavrogin, but he is "attached" to life by anger, spite, revenge, and the whole range of negative emotions. Raskolnikov is really on the side of God, although he deceives himself that he wants freedom. Svidrigaylov and Rogozhin are not fully developed, and one is "attached" to sensuality, the other to Nastasya. Only Stavrogin stands undeceived, consistent, terribly and devastatingly free.15

And, of course, his freedom necessitates Dostoyevsky's choice of motivation for all he does--for Self or for God. Stavrogin denies God and, as in Kirilov's theory, asserts his absolute freedom through suicide, an act which smacks not so much freedom but of Dostoyevsky's concept of the ultimate end of nihilism.

Warnings in three instances are perhaps intentionally couched in superficially humanistic plans--the Golden Age dream. The Ridiculous Man, Versilov, and Stavrogin speak of "a paradise on earth, where gods descended from heaven," where

---

people were innocent and beautiful, where woods and lakes and music abounded, and where the sun shone unclouded. In their dreams men see the promise of a comfortable, idyllic life. But it is a life without God, and in Dostoyevsky's terms, that is no world. It is Stepan Verkhovensky who wanders deliriously out of his town with one question: "Existe-t-elle la Russie?" And it is Stepan who voices Dostoyevsky's answer: like the devils cast out of the sick man, Russia, having been exorcised of her impurities—men like Peter Verkhovensky and the socialist-revolutionaries—"will be healed, and 'will sit at the feet of Jesus.'" If God can be felt and accepted by the old liberal Verkhovensky, Dostoyevsky is surely saying He can be the source of redemption and regeneration and continuing promise through Orthodoxy for all Russians.

Uvarov's official policy--Orthodoxy, Autocracy, and Nationality--organized the social-religious-political life of his time into one succinct phrase; his emphasis was upon the Autocracy for whose support the church and people existed. The Slavophiles shifted the emphasis; the people, the actual body of the Orthodox Church, delegated authority to the autocrat for the good of the people. The Slavophiles and their principal opponents the Westerners flourished in the 1840's and the early 1850's. When Konstantin Aksakov died in 1860

17 Ibid., p. 535.
18 Ibid., p. 648.
(and later in that same year Khomiakov), the outspoken Westerner Alexander Herzen composed his famous obituary and published it in The Bell:

Yes, we were their opponents, but very strange ones. We both had one love, but not in the same manner. In them and in us there burned from childhood a single, strong, unconscious, physical, passionate, feeling that they took to be memory—and we, prophecy; the feeling of the unlimited and all embracing love for the Russian people, the Russian way of life, the Russian mind. And like Janus, or the double-headed eagle, we faced in opposite directions while one heart beat within us.

This could have been Khomiakov's epitaph written by Dostoyevsky himself, who saw the promise in the Russian people he revered, and his weaknesses, in habit and logic. He based his world view, like the Slavophiles, upon Orthodoxy, and, like them, he saw his beloved tsar not as a tyrant, but as a beloved father. The people were gifted and energetic and potentially the world's most dynamic civilization; on this Dostoyevsky and the Slavophiles agreed. However, Dostoyevsky knew more than appearances and habits of the Russian people. He knew them individually; in fact, he probably dissected them spiritually more meticulously than any other Russian writer. In this way he was one face of the Roman Janus or the double-headed Russian eagle, while the Slavophiles were the other. In comparison to Dostoyevsky's odyssey into man's psyche, the Slavophiles knew only man's shell.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

BOOKS


Brasol, Boris, translator, The Diary of a Writer (2 volumes), New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1949.


—, The Diary of a Writer, edited and translated by Boris Brasol (2 volumes), New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1949.


The Russian Mind: From Peter the Great Through the Enlightenment, Norman, Oklahoma, University of Oklahoma Press, 1953.


Articles

Leshinsky, Tania, "Dostoevski—Revolutionary or Reactionary?" The American Slavic and East European Review, IV (December, 1945), 98-106.


