

SAMUEL C. RAMER

The Traditional and the Modern in the Writings of Ivan Pnin

Studies of political reform in the Russian Empire during the first decade of Alexander I's rule have focused largely on the emperor and his most prominent advisers: the unofficial committee of four close friends who counseled him in secret during the first two years of his reign; powerful court factions, particularly those nobles who sought to augment the status and political power of the Senate; and, finally, high state officials such as Michael Speransky.¹ The nature of reformist thought emanating from sources less directly involved in the actual preparation of legislation has been unduly neglected. There were, for instance, a number of minor writers who sought to influence state policy by submitting their ideas to Alexander. A study of the kind of society they hoped to create and the ways in which they thought social change achievable can enhance our appreciation of the variety of reformist thought in Russia at the beginning of the nineteenth century.

Ivan Petrovich Pnin was one of the most important of these political writers. In the historical literature he is most frequently associated with Alexander Radishchev, whom he knew and admired. Certainly Pnin's denunciation of serfdom and his devotion to the ideal of justice recall the passionate moral protest Radishchev made against the cruelty and inhumanity of Russian

1. For the political atmosphere at the beginning of Alexander's reign I have relied primarily on the following studies: M. A. Korf, "Aleksandr I i ego priblizhennye do epokhi Speranskogo. Neizdannaia glava iz 'Zhizny grafa Speranskogo,'" *Russkaia starina*, 113 (January 1903): 5-36; (February 1903): 211-34; Olga Narkiewicz, "Alexander I and the Senate Reform," *The Slavonic and East European Review*, 47, no. 108 (January 1969): 115-36; Nikolai Mikhailovich, *Velikii Kniaz', Graf Pavel Aleksandrovich Stroganov (1774-1817)*, 3 vols. (St. Petersburg, 1903); A. V. Predtechenskii, *Ocherki obshchestvenno-politicheskoi istorii Rossii pervoi chetverti XIX veka* (Moscow and Leningrad, 1957); Marc Raeff, "Le climat politique et les projets de réforme dans les premières années du règne d'Alexandre Ier," *Cahiers du monde russe et soviétique*, 2 (October-December 1961): 415-33; Raeff, *Michael Speransky: Statesman of Imperial Russia, 1772-1839*, 2nd rev. ed. (The Hague: M. Nijhoff, 1969); V. I. Semevskii, "Liberal'nye plany v pravitel'stvennykh sferakh v pervoi polovine tsarstvovaniia imperatora Aleksandra I," *Otechestvennaia voina i russkoe obshchestvo*, vol. 2 (Moscow, 1912), pp. 152-94; Semevskii, "Vopros o preobrazovanii gosudarstvennogo stroia v Rossii v XVIII i pervoi chetverti XIX v.," *Byloe*, January 1906, pp. 1-53; February 1906, pp. 69-117;

The author wishes to express his gratitude to the Russian and East European Center of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and to the Committee on Research of Tulane University for summer grants which facilitated the final drafting of this article.

life. But the usual description of Pnin as a "Radishchevite" is only partly accurate, since it ignores both the differences in the two men's views and the intrinsic interest of Pnin's own ideas.² What little is known about Pnin's life is helpful in understanding those ideas.

Born in 1773, Pnin was the illegitimate son of Prince Nikolai Vasil'evich Repnin, the Russian field marshal and diplomat.³ His name is an abbreviation of his father's surname, a common practice with illegitimate children during the eighteenth century. His mother's identity is not known. He was raised and educated as a member of the Russian nobility: from 1782 to 1787 he studied at the Free Noble Boarding School at Moscow University, after which he transferred to the Artillery-Engineering Academy for Noble Cadets in St. Petersburg. In 1789 he left the academy to begin active military service. Except for his participation in the Russo-Swedish war of 1788–90, little is known about him until his voluntary retirement from service in 1796.

Following that retirement, in 1797 he took up residence in St. Petersburg. There he lived with Alexander Fedoseevich Bestuzhev, who had been

March 1906, pp. 150–98; and G. G. Tel'berg, "Senat i pravo predstavleniia na vysochaisshie ukazy," *Zhurnal Ministerstva narodnogo prosveshcheniia*, 25 (January 1910): 1–56. For the problems facing Alexander immediately following his accession see Allen McConnell's excellent article "Alexander I's Hundred Days: The Politics of a Paternalistic Reformer," *Slavic Review*, 28 (September 1969): 373–93.

2. Pnin's works have been reprinted in a number of places. The most complete collection is Ivan Pnin, *Sochineniia*, ed. and with an introductory article by I. K. Luppel, commentary by V. N. Orlov (Moscow, 1934), hereafter referred to simply as Pnin. Several poems and essays have appeared more recently in I. Ia. Shchipanov, ed., *Russkie prosvetiteli (Ot Radishcheva do dekabristov): Sobranie proizvedenii v dvukh tomakh* (Moscow, 1966), vol. I. Pnin's most important single essay, *An Essay on Enlightenment with Reference to Russia (Opyt o prosveshchenii otositel'no k Rossii)*, has been translated by Marc Raeff and reprinted in his *Russian Intellectual History: An Anthology*, intro. by Isaiah Berlin (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1966), pp. 125–58. Quotations from Pnin's *Essay* are taken from Raeff's translation, with minor variations. Pnin's poetry has been reprinted in two important collections edited by Vladimir Orlov. See V. N. Orlov, ed., *Poety-radishchevtsy: Vol'noe obshchestvo liubiteli slovesnosti, nauk i khudozhestv*, introductions by V. A. Desnitskii and V. N. Orlov (Leningrad: "Biblioteka poeta," 1935) and V. N. Orlov, ed. and annot., *Poety-radishchevtsy (Ivan Pnin, Vasilii Popugaev, Ivan Born, Aleksandr Vostokov)* (Leningrad: "Biblioteka poeta, malaia seriia," 1961).

3. For most of the biographical information in this article I am indebted to the exhaustive study of Pnin's life and work contained in Vladimir Orlov, *Russkie prosvetiteli 1790–1800-kh godov*, 2nd ed. (Moscow, 1953), pp. 91–207. The most thorough prerevolutionary biography of Pnin is N. Dadenkov, "Ivan Petrovich Pnin: Opyt ego biografii i obzor literaturnoi deiatel'nosti," *Izvestiia istoriko-filologicheskogo instituta kniazia Bezborodko v Neshine*, 27 (1912). For an analysis of Pnin's thought differing from Orlov's interpretation see my unpublished doctoral dissertation "Ivan Pnin and Vasily Popugaev: A Study in Russian Political Thought" (Columbia University, 1971).

an officer at the Artillery-Engineering Academy during Pnin's tenure as a student. Bestuzhev, who was twelve years his senior, has been overshadowed in the historical literature by his four Decembrist sons, one of whom was the writer Alexander Bestuzhev-Marlinsky. In the late 1790s, however, he was himself a prominent intellectual figure in St. Petersburg. He occupied the post of director (*nachal'nik*) of the administrative offices of the Academy of the Arts, and his home was a frequent gathering place for writers and artists.

Pnin's friendship with Bestuzhev proved a fruitful one. In 1798 they collaborated in publishing the *Sankt-Peterburgskii zhurnal*, the most important serious journal to appear during Paul's repressive reign.⁴ It contained a variety of articles, both translated and original, on the most important issues of the day, and provided the reader with a sense of intellectual contemporaneity unmatched by other journals of the time. Alexander himself subsidized the *Sankt-Peterburgskii zhurnal* in an effort to advance the cause of enlightenment in Russia, and his involvement doubtless encouraged the editors to be more daring with the censorship. Alexander's refusal to continue as patron led to the journal's demise after only a year of publication.⁵

The diversity of the *Sankt-Peterburgskii zhurnal's* contents reflected the eclectic literary tastes of its editors and of the period in general. Serious works on social or political themes appeared side by side with mediocre verse and sentimental paeans to the simple life. The journal's almost radical civic-mindedness was quite remarkable given the censorship under Paul, yet in retrospect it seems as significant for the kinds of literature it didactically urged on its readers as it does for the substantive content of its own articles. The uncritical praise which the editors lavished on Western writers such as Montesquieu, Rousseau, and Filangieri must be understood in the context of their effort to attach value to such reading, and thus to promote the study of serious social and political works in Russia.⁶

4. Although Pnin was the only editor listed on the masthead, it is clear that the journal was a collaborative enterprise. Bestuzhev's sons have implied unfairly that Pnin's role was only that of a front for their father. The amount of writing in the journal which is clearly Pnin's attests to his own active participation. See Orlov, *Russkie prosvetiteli*, pp. 110–12. For a discussion of the historiographical issues surrounding the journal see P. N. Berkov, *Istoriia russkoi zhurnalistiki XVIII veka* (Moscow and Leningrad, 1952), pp. 377–87, as well as Anthony Cross's more illuminating recent article "Pnin and the *Sankt-Peterburgskii zhurnal* (1798)," *Canadian-American Slavic Studies*, 7 (Spring 1973): 78–84. For the difficulties of publishing during Paul's reign see the same author's "The Russian Literary Scene in the Reign of Paul I," *ibid.*, pp. 39–51.

5. Orlov contends that Alexander no longer wished to subsidize a journal which went beyond his own moderate liberalism. There are, in fact, no documents that state why Alexander cut off his support. See Orlov, *Russkie prosvetiteli*, p. 120.

6. For a more detailed discussion of the *Sankt-Peterburgskii zhurnal's* contents see Ramer, "Ivan Pnin," pp. 53–59, and Orlov, *Russkie prosvetiteli*, pp. 107–44.

The quality and independent character of the *Sankt-Peterburgskii zhurnal* established Pnin as one of St. Petersburg's most promising young intellectuals. His activities during the rest of Paul's reign are unknown, but he returned to active state service immediately after Alexander's accession as an assistant to the newly formed State Council. A year later he transferred to the new Ministry of Public Education, where he joined such aspiring *littérateurs* as K. N. Batiushkov, D. I. Iazykov, N. A. Radishchev, and N. I. Gnedich. The years he spent in service at the ministry were intellectually the most productive of his life, although the extent to which service itself stimulated his efforts is not clear. Apparently it intensified the interest in educational problems which he had already displayed as an editor and writer. Suffering from tuberculosis, Pnin retired from service again in August 1805. A month later, on September 17, he died at the age of thirty-three.

Three events during the last years of Pnin's life are of particular importance in studying his work. The first is Repnin's death on May 12, 1801. Pnin had hoped that his father would one day recognize him as his legal son, thus removing the social stigma of illegitimacy. Repnin not only failed to do this but excluded him entirely from a will which did provide for one other illegitimate son. Pnin was thus deprived of both an inheritance and a social position he considered rightfully his, and his reaction was one of disappointment and anger.

He channeled his bitterness into an essay denouncing the treatment of all illegitimate children in Russia. The essay, entitled "A Cry of Innocence, Rejected by the Laws" ("Vopl' nevinosti, otvergaemoi zakonami"),⁷ was a private appeal to Alexander to change the laws concerning illegitimacy. Fathers of illegitimate children, he argued, should not only have the right to recognize them as their own—under existing law special imperial dispensation was required—but should in fact be obliged both to recognize and care for their offspring.⁸ Children of uncertain paternity, he wrote, should be given the right to choose the legal estate⁹ to which they would belong. Pnin went on

7. Pnin, pp. 105–17. Alexander rewarded Pnin with a signet ring for having written this essay. (At that time such token awards were quite commonplace.) Although the essay was never published, its contents were known at least to the intellectual circles of St. Petersburg through the manuscript copies that circulated and the inevitable word-of-mouth summaries of those manuscripts. See Orlov, *Russkie prosvetiteli*, pp. 153–55. The work was first published in *Istoricheskii vestnik*, 37 (July–September 1889): 147–60.

8. Pnin urged that obligatory recognition apply only to future births. For those who already suffered the stigma of illegitimacy, he recommended that their fathers be required only to allot them part of their estates in order to "guarantee their economic position and protect their innocence." Pnin, pp. 109–10.

9. Here Pnin used the word *sostoianie*, "status," or "condition," but clearly meant legal estate. *Ibid.*, p. 110.

to give an angry indictment of the social mores of the Russian aristocracy. As we shall see, his condemnation of the aristocracy's sexual behavior was only part of a more general critique of the values which he felt not only sanctioned but encouraged such behavior.

Pnin's personal acquaintance with Alexander Radishchev is the second event of importance during these years. According to Radishchev's son Pavel, Pnin was one of several young men who visited his father during the senior Radishchev's last year in St. Petersburg. The brevity of their relationship makes it unlikely that the two were close personally,¹⁰ but Pnin's respect for Radishchev is clearly expressed in the ode he composed at his death:

We will bless his remains!
 He, who sacrificed himself so much
 Not for his own, but for the general good,
 He who was a true son of the fatherland,
 Who was a citizen and exemplary father
 And who bravely spoke the truth.¹¹

It is important to note that Pnin valued Radishchev most not for his specific ideas but for his overall commitment to the "general good," his courage in expressing his views, and the example of sacrifice for a better society which his life represented. For Pnin, Radishchev embodied those personal and civic values which he considered indispensable in the true citizen.

A third aspect of Pnin's life germane to a discussion of his political thought was his membership in the Free Society of Lovers of Literature, Sciences, and the Arts, which he joined in 1802. Founded a year earlier in St. Petersburg, the Free Society was one of the most important literary societies to emerge following Alexander's accession. It was composed of young men whose main unifying bond was neither social origin nor official position, but a desire to participate in Russia's cultural development. Most were sons of the poorer nobility or plebeians who worked as teachers or minor civil servants. They found the Free Society important as an outlet for friendship and as a formal setting in which they might continue their intellectual growth.¹²

10. Pavel Aleksandrovich Radishchev, "Aleksandr Nikolaevich Radishchev," *Russkii vestnik*, 18 (December 1858): 426–27. Relying on our knowledge of Radishchev's movements during this period, Orlov calculates that their first meeting most probably occurred after December 1801, only nine months before Radishchev's death. Orlov, *Russkie prosvetiteli*, pp. 145–46.

11. Pnin, p. 62.

12. The most thorough study of the Free Society's early history is Orlov, *Russkie prosvetiteli*, passim. For the society's later history see V. Bazanov, *Uchenaia respublika* (Moscow and Leningrad, 1964), a revised edition of the same author's earlier *Vol'noe obshchestvo liubitelei rossiiskoi slovesnosti* (Petrozavodsk, 1949). For some suggestions

Pnin rarely attended the Free Society's meetings, and was even issued an official reprimand for his inactivity. Given the society's emphasis on active participation, his sudden election as president in July 1805 requires some explanation, as does his decision to accept that office. Orlov connects the society's choice of Pnin with its desire to play a more prominent role in contemporary intellectual life. His editorial experience and longstanding personal ties equipped him to guide the organization into new activities that would place it more in the public eye. He was apparently willing to devote his full energies to the society. Several sources indicate that his retirement from service in 1805 was occasioned not only by poor health but by his desire to work more actively as a publicist and as the society's leader.¹³

During the first three years of his membership, the Free Society itself obviously meant little to Pnin. His willingness to assume the presidency, however, indicates an increased appreciation of the importance of providing organizational support for individual publicistic efforts. In all likelihood this change in attitude was related to his own battle with the censors after the proscription in 1804 of his most substantial work, *An Essay on Enlightenment with Reference to Russia* (*Opyt o prosveshchenii otноситel'no k Rossii*).

The respect with which the society's members regarded Pnin is vividly illustrated in the poems and speeches several of them wrote at his death.¹⁴ Similar in both style and content to Pnin's ode on Radishchev, the poems praised him for his wisdom, his courage in "telling the truth," and his contributions to the cause of enlightenment in Russia. Even allowing for the hyperbole inevitable in the eulogies for a man who died so young, it is clear that his personal influence on acquaintances was extraordinary. Unfortunately there are almost no documents which throw light on the exact nature of this influence. The remainder of this essay will thus be confined to analyzing his written work.

The traditional description of Ivan Pnin as a "liberal" is both incomplete and misleading. More important are his attempts to integrate political notions usually regarded as incompatible into a unified and coherent program

about the society's character and purpose see Ramer, "Ivan Pnin," pp. 165–98. A recent survey of the historiography on the Free Society and of the kinds of writers who were members is contained in Marc Raeff, "Filling the Gap between Radishchev and the Decembrists," *Slavic Review*, 26 (September 1967): 395–413.

13. Orlov, *Russkie prosvetiteli*, p. 158.

14. See the poems by K. Batiushkov, N. Ostolopov, N. Radishchev, S. Glinka, A. Izmailov, A. Varentsov and A. Pisarev in Pnin, pp. 225–32. See also N. Brusilov's eulogy, *ibid.*, pp. 233–36.

of social and political reform. Most of these conceptions may be described for the purpose of analysis as either traditional or modern, provided the relative nature of such categories and their function here as ideal types are kept in mind. In the wake of the French Revolution, most political observers, including Pnin, perceived such a dichotomy and built much of their discussion around it.

Deprived of historical context, the terms "traditional" and "modern" indicate only a vague tendency toward the old or the new. Applied to the early nineteenth century, however, they connote certain generally understood (if still imprecise) attitudes toward society. "Traditional" is descriptive of certain characteristic principles of life under the *ancien régime*: the division of society into a hierarchy of unequally privileged estates, membership in which was almost exclusively determined by birth; the rule of an absolute monarch whose authority came from God and whose power was subject to few if any legal restrictions; and finally the predominant role of religion in man's perception of his place in the universe. By 1800, "traditional" for the nobility and educated classes in Russia itself implied belief in the historically beneficent role of the Russian autocracy and in the necessity of preserving Russia's (somewhat poorly defined) estate structure, including both the privileges of the nobility and the enslavement of the peasantry.

"Modern" refers in a general way to the welter of ideas which had developed since the Renaissance in opposition to these traditional concepts. These ideas received their most brilliant and sustained exposition during the Enlightenment, and the French Revolution (and its American predecessor) served notice that such ideas could in fact provide the ideological basis for a new kind of social existence. The traditional social hierarchy based on birth was challenged by the tenets of an egalitarian individualism which contained the ideological underpinnings of both bourgeois capitalism and its socialist critiques. A democratic political vision in which the people were the ultimate repository of political power denied the legitimacy of autocratic rule, no matter how benevolent. There was an increasing concern to limit the sovereign power itself by guaranteeing all citizens the protection of certain rights, particularly the security of person and property. Finally, in the modern spirit the pervasive religiosity and other-worldly orientation of medieval society were replaced by a militant secularism which was inspired by a growing awareness of the possibilities inherent in modern science. While this secularism was restricted to a small fraction of the educated elites of Europe, its impact was felt by all groups in society. Through possession of vital technical knowledge, those whose approach to the world was predominantly secular gradually gained access to political power and broke the monopoly that religion had

earlier enjoyed in shaping values and determining ultimate truth. In Russia these “modern” tendencies were most clearly expressed in the educated elite’s desire for a state based on law and not imperial caprice, and also in the increasing challenge to autocracy and serfdom, implicit in the writings of authors such as Radishchev.

The essence of the argument which informed most of Pnin’s political writing was that certain “modern” political ideals—the most inclusive of which was the demand for social justice—were achievable within the general framework of Russia’s “traditional” institutions, provided certain important, though essentially technical, changes were made in the way those institutions functioned. The fundamental problem for him was not that existing institutions were inherently unjust—he simply proposed their reform or abolition if he thought this so—but rather that the absence of sufficiently “enlightened” attitudes among the Russian people as a whole would frustrate the advancement of the public welfare no matter how institutional arrangements were perfected. Like most eighteenth-century Russian social thinkers Pnin tended to view political problems more as the result of individual shortcomings than of institutional deficiencies. He recognized that the relationship between values and institutions is a reciprocal one, but his main concern was with the development of the kinds of individual attitudes which would contribute to social justice in any institutional setting. “Enlightenment” accordingly came to occupy the central position in his political vision, and it was fitting that his most important political work, *An Essay on Enlightenment with Reference to Russia*, should have been devoted to the role that enlightenment might play in the transformation of social reality. Before turning to an analysis of this essay, it is useful to discuss two aspects of Russian life which Pnin found particularly abhorrent: the condition of the peasant population and the social mores of the Russian aristocracy.

Pnin is best known today for his opposition to serfdom, a “modern” theme that runs through all his works. Although his primary objection to serfdom was a moral one—he saw it as a violation of natural law—he was also convinced that it was an unprofitable institution which inhibited Russia’s social and economic development. His proposals for change are best discussed as an integral part of the plan to restructure Russian society which he elaborated in his *Essay on Enlightenment*. Here it is only necessary to emphasize two points concerning Pnin’s attitude toward serfdom.

First, it is clear that for Pnin serfdom was the most grievous of a number of social ills, all of which were symptomatic of a society whose sense of values had become skewed. His solutions for serfdom therefore included not only concrete suggestions for its amelioration but a more fundamental insistence that the kind of values which made it tolerable had to be eliminated. More-

over, Pnin was not the only Russian who expressed moral disquietude about serfdom. Although the passion of his writing is quite reminiscent of Radishchev, the concrete proposals he made were perfectly compatible with the general reform ideas suggested by Catherine the Great in her *Nakaz* to the Legislative Commission of 1767. (Like many reformers of the early nineteenth century, Pnin used Catherine's *Nakaz* to bolster and legitimize his own demands for change.) Thus without questioning the importance of Pnin's denunciation of serfdom, it must be noted that he was neither a revolutionary nor a voice crying in the wilderness. It was less the substantive character of his suggestions than their moral urgency that was and is striking.

Pnin was also well known in his own time for the way in which he denounced the sexual mores of the Russian aristocracy in his *Cry of Innocence*. In surveying contemporary attitudes toward marriage he concluded that "custom thinks nothing of the violation of the holy union. Adultery elicits no shame; luxury, philandering, and coquetry, having become elements of society, occupy men and women of every age and position. . . . Honorable love has become a rare thing."¹⁵ Such a degeneration of family life, he argued, was detrimental not only to the individuals concerned but to the very future of society, since, in turning to various forms of dissoluteness, spouses would neglect their children's upbringing. His objection to marriages which were "a joining of estates, and not a union of persons,"¹⁶ made no attempt to explain the practical reasons why such marriages were frequently arranged.

Pnin's lengthy description of the decline of the family is both cliché-ridden and exaggerated. Yet there is a wealth of eighteenth-century Russian literature which corroborates his perception of a crisis in private morality and portrays it in extreme fashion. The satires of Fonvizin, Novikov, and Krylov come immediately to mind, and the same emphasis on cultural decay and the need for moral renewal is prominent in the political writing of Nikolai Karamzin. Interestingly enough, however, Pnin's *Cry of Innocence* is most directly comparable to the description of the decline of the family in Prince M. M. Shcherbatov's *On the Corruption of Morals in Russia*,¹⁷ a work which Pnin could not have read, since its existence remained a secret until the mid-nineteenth century. Both Pnin and Shcherbatov adopted moralistic tones in the discussion of what each saw as the virtual disintegration of the institutions of marriage and the family. For both, the crisis they perceived in personal morality was symptomatic of a society which had lost its moral anchor, and

15. *Ibid.*, pp. 111–12.

16. *Ibid.*, p. 111.

17. *Trans.*, with an intro. and notes, by A. Lentin (London: Cambridge University Press, 1969).

it was thus a social and political problem as well. Both men argued—for different reasons—that one of the main causes of the collapse of traditional morality was the breakdown of a rigid estate order and the appearance of increasing opportunities for social mobility. Concentration upon social mobility, they felt, caused men to forget the need for real integrity in the effort to please those who might advance them.

Pnin and Shcherbatov applied predominantly ethical criteria in their evaluations of the exercise of political power. The emphasis on morality unites these otherwise dissimilar thinkers in a way that is important to our understanding of Russian political thought. For all the secular trappings of the age, their whole conception of the world, of man, and of society, was still remarkably Christian in nature. Both denied the inevitability of conflict and sought harmony instead. Both denied the importance of worldly striving and stressed the virtues of humility and acceptance. The dynamic elements of social development disappear in the writings of both men, and the result for both is a picture of the ideal society as just, balanced, and static. Such concentration on ethics and the secular justification of traditional Christian values was of course not unusual in Russian literature during the late eighteenth century. The Masonic movement in particular drew much of its strength from the educated elite's simultaneous disenchantment with traditional religion and growing interest in ethical problems. Pnin's writing owes much to this tradition, although there is no evidence that he was involved with Freemasonry.

In *An Essay on Enlightenment*, Pnin sought to describe an ideal society and suggest the kinds of political and educational institutions which would make it possible. The political and psychological assumptions which inform the essay are naïve and unrealistic, but the work is remarkable for its ambitious political goals and its total approach to social and political reform. Although Pnin himself considered his proposals to be practical suggestions for reform, when taken in their entirety they assume a utopian character of which he was not aware. They formed an audaciously comprehensive attempt to provide a final solution to Russia's social and political ills, and as such went much further than most of the reform proposals of the time.

Most of Pnin's institutional prescriptions for Russia derived from his belief that every man had a right to demand that society be just. His concept of justice owed much to the corporate traditions of an "enlightened" *ancien régime* in that it did not imply equality, absolute freedom, or a plethora of individual rights. In essence it called for the elimination of arbitrariness and oppression through the observance of fixed laws whose main purpose was the protection of person and property. Through a judicious though not neces-

sarily equal division of material rewards and the elements of prestige, Pnin thought that a society could provide all of its citizens with a reasonable chance to be happy.

Justice, Pnin argued, demanded stability above all else. Much of his *Essay on Enlightenment* was devoted to the problem of establishing and maintaining an equilibrium between the various groups in society, as well as between society and the state. His vision of an ideal society was a static one, in that once the equilibrium he sought had been achieved, major changes would be neither necessary nor desirable. This static condition was ultimately dependent on the values and attitudes of individual men. But attitudes supportive of stability demanded that all members of society receive at least a certain minimum amount of material and moral sustenance, and Pnin conceded that Russia needed institutional reforms in order to guarantee the material base without which any sort of general contentment was unthinkable.

It is only when these reforms are considered that it is possible to see just how "traditional" Pnin was in his political thinking. He supported the autocracy and was committed to the division of society into hereditary estates. He thought that society was inevitably hierarchical, with the rulers and the ruled possessing unequal privileges, unequal burdens, unequal wealth, and unequal power. He explicitly denounced the French concern with *égalité* as socially destructive and morally pernicious, having no basis in either history or natural law. In order to avoid disintegration, he argued, society had to preserve different levels of authority.¹⁸

His writing emphasized duty, order, and the importance of knowing one's station far more than it did abstract rights or freedoms. A comparable emphasis characterized much eighteenth-century political thought, particularly German cameralism which had so attracted Catherine the Great. The *Polizei-staat*, or ordered state, did not connote an exclusively repressive political order, but was rather seen by its advocates as a model of administrative progress. In echoing Catherine's own affinity for cameralism and the attitudes that went with it, Pnin's ideas were part of a prominent tradition made even more appealing when contrasted with the violence of the French Revolution.

In a more "modern" vein, Pnin's detailed attention to the subject of property suggests that he was heavily influenced by the economic and political thought of an emerging bourgeois age. He saw property as the basis for justice, the source of all civil laws, and even as the *raison d'être* of society itself.¹⁹ He insisted on its protection in law and emphasized in good eighteenth-

18. For Pnin's analysis of French events see Pnin, pp. 124–28; Shchipanov, 1:183–88; or Raeff, *Anthology*, pp. 128–31. References to Pnin's *Essay on Enlightenment* will direct the reader to these three volumes.

19. Pnin, p. 149; Shchipanov, 1:215; Raeff, *Anthology*, p. 149.

century fashion that arbitrariness in matters of property or personal security destroyed public confidence and discouraged private initiative. Much of what Pnin wrote about property rights only repeated what Catherine had written in the *Nakaz*, and he simply ignored the conflict between the individualism implicit in his ideas on property and the anti-individualistic, corporate ideal that informed the rest of his writing.

Pnin's concern with property extended to the more radical notion that everyone in society should own some. It gave one pride in one's work and, more important, it gave one a stake in the existing social order. Although ideas such as these were common in eighteenth-century Russia and had also been urged by Catherine, they nevertheless presented a challenge to the serf order as it actually existed. Pnin proposed that peasants be given full and immediate ownership of at least all their movable property, such as livestock and tools. They should be free as well to dispose of their crops as they wished and protected against any but fixed demands on the part of their landlords. This implied a relationship between landlord and serf in which mutual obligations would be both explicit and inviolable. Pnin argued that in acquiring property the peasant would necessarily possess the right to protect that property, and thus his suggestion, however mild it might seem, did involve the peasant's acquisition of a legal status which he did not then have.

There is no doubt that Pnin hoped that the Russian peasant would one day gain both land and freedom—his idealization of the peasants' free existence prior to enserfment and his condemnation of slavery are proof enough of that—but this remained a hope rather than a demand, and his insistence that everyone should own property referred only to movable property, and not to land. In essence, he recommended the reform of serfdom, not its abolition.

Pnin's discussion of Imperial Russia's social structure is a crucial aspect of his writing which has been largely ignored. He supported the division of Russian society into hereditary estates and advocated the elimination of all social mobility between these estates. It was the desire for mobility rather than mobility itself that Pnin most deplored. His objections were in part economic, inspired by his desire to develop Russia's merchant estate. He criticized the exclusive domination of Russian society by aristocratic values which denied merchants the prestige they had in other societies. The generally accepted superiority of noble status prevented Russia's merchants from appreciating the potential of their own calling.²⁰ In allowing and im-

20. It is difficult to estimate the extent to which a conscious desire for upward social mobility existed among the different estates. It is easily understandable that such a desire existed on some scale, and what is important here is Pnin's conviction that it was prevalent everywhere, his reasons for thinking it pernicious, and his plans for its eradication.

plicitly encouraging merchants to become nobles, he argued, the state frustrated the development of a real commercial elite and helped to perpetuate economic backwardness.²¹ His primary objection to social mobility, however, was not economic but political. He believed that the static society he sought to create could not survive if its members thought constantly of their own upward mobility. Concentration on advancement necessarily implied the persistent dissatisfaction of most men with their inferior positions in the social hierarchy.

Pnin's preference for a society of ordered hereditary estates is perhaps the most "traditional" aspect of his thought. Rejecting both the possibility of a classless society and the desirability of a modern class society, he sought instead to abolish the very concept of social inferiority. He suggested, in other words, the elimination not simply of the possibility of social mobility, but of the very desire to change one's social position. This would have required a complete restructuring of social attitudes, and Pnin proposed no less. He believed that what most men wanted, once their basic physical needs were satisfied, was acceptance and respect. He therefore sought to make the recognition of an individual's worth independent of social station. "One of the legislator's most important objects," he argued, "is to make each member of society enjoy the estate in which he finds himself; so that the merchant, the artisan, the farmer, and so on, by putting all their pride into the zealous performance of their duties, may be certain that there are no degrees of distinction in good behavior, good name, and virtue, and that they compel equal respect from everyone."²² In order to prevent dissatisfaction from arising within any social group, Pnin urged the ruler to maintain a flexible system of rewards. "If," he wrote as an example, "the distinctions now available to the merchant status are not sufficient, the legislator can establish others suitable to it."²³ The relation between the satisfaction of wants and social stability would ordinarily be too obvious to mention. It acquires importance here because of Pnin's insistence throughout the *Essay on Enlightenment* that, beyond the subsistence level, wants are subjective, and that a political system could actively shape them in such a way as to insure its own stability and provide that most subjective of all quantities—happiness.

Pnin's prescriptions for Russian society, whether for changes in its institutions or in the values cherished by its members, were closely tied to his traditional view of the autocracy as the appropriate initiator and supervisor of all change. Although he was aware of the injustice and oppression which

21. Pnin, pp. 144–45; Shchipanov, 1:210; Raeff, *Anthology*, p. 145.

22. Pnin, p. 145; Shchipanov, 1:210; Raeff, *Anthology*, p. 145.

23. Pnin, p. 145; Shchipanov, 1:210; Raeff, *Anthology*, p. 145.

had at times characterized autocratic rule in Russia, he nevertheless emphasized its beneficial aspects. Aside from its putative efficiency and ability to stand above the conflicts of interested factions, the autocracy in Russia had a definite historical appeal: it had been the most dynamic and progressive force in Russian political life throughout the eighteenth century, and there was still no powerful group in Russian society which seemed more promising in the matter of reform. But the unlimited authority Pnin approved for the autocracy introduced a contradiction into the balanced society he envisioned. It was true, as he said, that a concentration of power might facilitate reform. It was also possible that a ruler might voluntarily limit his own actions in order to preserve political equilibrium. But Pnin never attempted to devise institutional controls for the ruler who chose to ignore established procedures. The ruler in Pnin's society remained an entity above the law, and for a people confronted with a despotic ruler he could counsel only the tactics of exhortation, patience, and faith.

Like most advocates of enlightened absolutism, Pnin emphasized the importance of the ruler's moral leadership. "The example of virtue shining from the throne," he argued, "creates an impression that is stronger than law itself; for the law comes into operation only when circumstances require it, while an ever-present example serves as a permanent object lesson and stirs us to emulation. Men always eagerly imitate those whom they deem essential for their happiness. But can anyone exercise greater influence on the general well-being than the sovereign? And that is why the safest and surest way of guiding men to virtue is, without doubt, through the example set by the sovereign power."²⁴ By this logic an example of depravity on the throne would be disastrous, but Pnin ignored the possibility. (He was, after all, writing for Alexander.)

Since the static society Pnin sought was ultimately dependent upon supportive public attitudes, he was understandably concerned about the way in which the latter were formed. He thought education played the greatest role in the formation of values, and it was for this reason that the subject of enlightenment dominated writings that were more concerned with politics than pedagogy.

It is worthwhile to consider briefly what Pnin meant by "enlightenment." He used the word in a general way as a synonym for education, or the acquisition of certain intellectual and manual skills through formal training. In this connection he offered curriculum proposals for an expanded school system. In his writing, as in that of most eighteenth-century social critics and educational reformers, the term also implied an emphasis on moral as opposed to

24. Pnin, pp. 131–32; Shchipanov, 1:192–93; Raeff, *Anthology*, p. 134.

purely technical aspects of education. Pnin's use of the word further connoted the spirit of free inquiry which had been so characteristic of the West European Enlightenment as an intellectual movement, a spirit admirably exemplified for Pnin in the works of Radishchev. Most important for Pnin, "enlightenment" referred to the development of a range of distinctly political attitudes. Chief among these was a consciousness of duty and station that would lend stability to the existing political and social structure. When the authorities and the "people of lower rank" maintained the proper balance in their relationship, he wrote, "then enlightenment has attained its goal."²⁵

The educational system Pnin proposed was stratified by social estate. Granting his assumption that social mobility should be eliminated rather than encouraged, a stratified system was only logical. In his words, "every member of society should have an education corresponding to the station he occupies."²⁶ Each estate would need to develop its own technical skills, its own social and political values, and, in Pnin's view, even its own distinctive "virtues."²⁷ Each estate, he thought, could absorb the appropriate political attitudes by repeatedly studying a stock list of questions. Among the questions which the peasants, or farmers, were to study he included the following:

3. What is a farmer (*zemledelets*)?
4. How many types of farmers are there?
5. What is their significance in the state?
6. What is the state?
7. What is it called?
8. What kind of government does it have?
9. Having shown that it is a monarchy or an autocracy, one has to determine:
10. What is a monarch or a sovereign?
11. What does the sovereign power consist in?
12. What established powers or authorities are there in Russia?
13. What are their means of action?

25. Pnin, pp. 123–24; Shchipanov, 1:182–83; Raeff, *Anthology*, p. 128.

26. Pnin, p. 148; Shchipanov, 1:213; Raeff, *Anthology*, pp. 147–48.

27. For Pnin's actual curriculum proposals see Pnin, pp. 147–59; Shchipanov, 1:213–28; Raeff, *Anthology*, pp. 147–56. In developing his own ideas about the need to establish a socially stratified educational system with a correspondingly differentiated curriculum, Pnin seems to have relied heavily on the work of J. A. Chaptal (whom he quotes in an epigraph to the essay itself). Excerpts from Chaptal's *Rapport et Projet de Loi sur l'Instruction Publique* were included in nos. 11 and 12 of the Ministry of Internal Affairs' *Sankt-Peterburgskii zhurnal* for 1805. Orlov thinks it likely that Pnin himself translated Chaptal for the journal. See Orlov, *Russkie prosvetiteli*, pp. 191 and 520, n.

14. Knowledge of these authorities is essential to farmers, as they are always in relations with them; the former give orders, the latter execute them.
15. Hence arise mutual obligations: the *obligations of authority* and the *obligations of subordination*.
16. What does each consist in?
17. Anyone who has public obligations must also have his own rights.
18. Consequently, the farmer must not be deprived of the rights belonging to him.²⁸

It is clear that these questions were not designed to spark extended debate. Instead, together with the concise answers that Pnin obviously assumed for them they formed a political catechism which was to be memorized and ultimately internalized as part of the peasant's general world view. Although peasant rights are mentioned, most of the questions seek to define the peasant's place in society and the duties inherent in it. This emphasis characterized his treatment of other estates as well, and the static society he envisioned depended on this kind of political indoctrination for its stability.

In the course of his curriculum proposals, which in themselves need no elaboration here, Pnin touched upon three subjects which further illustrate the mixture of traditional and modern themes in his writing. The first is that of religion. In a fashion not uncommon among educated thinkers all over Europe during the eighteenth century, Pnin had abandoned the traditional Orthodox conception of God in favor of belief in a "watchmaker God" who had withdrawn from active interference in human affairs. He considered efforts to explain the nature of God both futile and presumptuous²⁹ and thus ignored formal theology in his writing. Religion, however, had a social as well as a personal dimension. Its teachings, he thought, acted as a social bond and were indispensable to the very idea of morality. He thus continued to support the church, sought to upgrade the clergy, and in his political essays encouraged—for quite pragmatic reasons—the teaching of "a clear idea of God and of the faith and duties of a Christian."³⁰

28. Pnin, pp. 148–49; Shchipanov, 1:214–15; Raeff, *Anthology*, p. 148. Emphasis Pnin's. The questions have been selected from a slightly longer list.

29. See his poem *On the Question: What is God? (Na vopros: chto est' Bog?)*, first printed in the *Sankt-Peterburgskii zhurnal* in 1798 and later reprinted in Pnin, p. 99, and Shchipanov, 1:168:

This essence we cannot define
 But we will contemplate it in silence
 All minds are powerless to penetrate its mystery.
 One would have to be a god oneself to say what it is.

See also Pnin's longer poem *God (Bog)*, published posthumously, in which he espoused common deistic beliefs about an impersonal creator who, having made an initially perfect world, does not subsequently intervene in it. Pnin, pp. 75–78.

30. Pnin, p. 149; Shchipanov, 1:215; Raeff, *Anthology*, p. 149.

Pnin's insistence on a total approach to education is another modern theme in his writing. In addition to the important role of the church, he stressed the educational potential of theater, viewing it as "nothing else than a school of manners [*nравы*]." ³¹ Theater had been an important Westernizing force in Russia throughout the eighteenth century, ³² and Pnin sought to expand its role. "Under wise direction," he wrote, "theaters will have no less influence on the success of universal education than the schools established to this end." ³³ For this reason he insisted that theaters should be subject to the Ministry of Public Education, which would then exercise strict control over the choice of plays to be shown.

State control over theatrical productions implied a censorship Pnin was unwilling to countenance in other areas. Although he believed that the ruler should—in a way traditional in Russia—play an active positive role in cultural affairs by subsidizing worthy literary endeavors, he consistently maintained that the press should be unrestricted by any form of censorship. His basic view, like that of Radishchev, was that public taste is a better arbiter in literary matters than any form of official censorship. ³⁴ Perhaps the most interesting point about his attitude toward censorship is the fact that he never considered the possibility that the static social system he proposed might not be compatible with complete freedom of expression.

A final aspect of Pnin's educational curriculum which should be discussed is the modern emphasis he placed on the cultivation of nationalistic feeling. He defined his own notion of patriotism clearly when he wrote that "every single minute of the life of a Russian ought to be a contribution to the well-being of Russia, to the happiness of the country," ³⁵ and he insisted that an educational system should "prepare Russians, not foreigners, for Russia; prepare sons useful to their homeland and not individuals who scorn all that is native and despise their own tongue." ³⁶ In addition to the nationalism reflected in these statements (which ignore the non-Russian population of the empire), one should note their statist orientation. The individual's devotion to the fatherland would necessarily be expressed not only in feelings of

31. Pnin, p. 161; Shchipanov, 1:231; Raeff, *Anthology*, p. 158.

32. See P. N. Miliukov, *Ocherki po istorii russkoi kul'tury*, vol. 3, 4th ed. (St. Petersburg, 1901), pp. 232–38.

33. Pnin, p. 160; Shchipanov, 1:230; Raeff, *Anthology*, p. 157.

34. Pnin, p. 180. The attention scholars have focused on the similarity between Pnin's criticism of censorship and that of Radishchev is much exaggerated. The most obvious reason to oppose it at any time is that it limits the development of the human spirit. It is interesting, however, that Pnin viewed it as a violation of his property rights as well.

35. Pnin, p. 143; Shchipanov, 1:207; Raeff, *Anthology*, p. 144.

36. Pnin, p. 142; Shchipanov, 1:206; Raeff, *Anthology*, p. 143.

pride or in scorn for things foreign—both attitudes almost traditional after nearly a century's growth of what Rogger has termed national consciousness³⁷—but also in support of the fatherland's abstract embodiment, the state. Such a modern devotion to the state was a necessary political component of the static society he proposed, although he did not explicitly say so. While he insisted that institutional changes would have to be made before the state in Russia would merit unreserved devotion, his *Essay on Enlightenment* was nevertheless addressed primarily to the ways in which the state might inculcate attitudes of loyalty and support, and not to the state's own transformation.

The traditional character of much of Pnin's writings invites comparison with the ideas of Nikolai Karamzin, who was the most articulate spokesman for conservative thought during Alexander I's reign.³⁸ Like most of their contemporaries, both men supported the autocracy and thought it should lead in all matters of reform. Both emphasized the difference between true autocracy, an instrument through which they believed the Russian people's welfare could best be achieved, and arbitrary despotism. Both believed in the necessity of preserving the stratification of Russian society by estates and of providing different kinds of education for each estate. Pnin was a more "modern" thinker than Karamzin primarily in his concern for the peasantry (whose emancipation in any foreseeable future Karamzin viewed with horror) and in his refusal to admit that the nobility's privileges were the cornerstone of Russia's welfare. Pnin, Karamzin, and Shcherbatov were united in their ethical and cultural approach to politics and in their desire to transform the body politic slowly by "enlightening" the individual.

Another similarity between Pnin and Karamzin was an emphasis on the need to protect property and personal security in law. The importance of law for all Russian political thinkers had been enhanced by Paul's reign, but it had also been an important part of Catherine's plans to reform Russia's legal and administrative order. It is important to understand that the operation of the rule of law as understood by Pnin and Karamzin, and by Catherine, did not imply limitation of the autocracy. Neither did it involve any radical notion of equal privilege for all groups. It was instead a continued expression of the

37. Hans Rogger, *National Consciousness in Eighteenth-Century Russia* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1960).

38. The following discussion is based primarily upon Karamzin's *Memoir on Ancient and Modern Russia*, trans., with an intro. by Richard Pipes (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1959), a document written six years after Pnin's death. There is no evidence that the two men knew one another, although Pnin was undoubtedly acquainted with Karamzin's published writings. I am indebted to Professor Pipes's excellent analysis of Karamzin's ideas.

desire of a number of eighteenth-century reformers, including Catherine, to establish a *Rechtsstaat*, or administrative order based on fixed and predictable rules, in Russia. The hierarchical nature of the *Rechtsstaat* was assumed, so that in urging the preservation and strengthening of an estate order which neither really understood, Pnin and Karamzin displayed an anti-egalitarian world view which had been characteristic not only of conservatives but of most reformers in Russia. Both viewed the French Revolution as an example of the disastrous results to which egalitarian ideas could lead. They agreed further that in a country such as Russia, where the mass of the people were plunged in ignorance, the establishment of a well-regulated, hierarchical state order seemed the best one could hope to achieve.

Pnin's *Essay on Enlightenment*, however, added several new elements to this older *Rechtsstaat* vision. Most important was his concern to eliminate all social mobility. The nobility had of course sought at various times to block further access to its ranks in order to solidify its own corporate privileges and status. But Pnin's motivation, as we have seen, was quite different. His basic argument was not so much that social mobility should not be allowed, but that the very desire to achieve it could be eliminated. Given certain minimum reforms that would guarantee the necessities of life, the educational process could instill in every citizen the belief that his place in society was not simply the best he could hope to attain, but, indeed, was as good as any other. The value system he proposed would have endowed all citizens with a feeling of equal worth and contentment, even for those who enjoyed a relatively small share in society's benefits. The resulting social order would be what Sir Isaiah Berlin has so felicitously termed a "well-ordered, painless, contented, self-perpetuating equilibrium."³⁹

With little exaggeration it might be argued that the core of Pnin's educational philosophy was to teach men to want only what they already have. Certainly he did not understand the relative nature of social injustice, and his programs were as much concerned with obliterating the subjective perception of injustice as they were with removing the objective circumstances which gave rise to such perception. In this respect he was a thoroughly modern thinker, and his ideas foreshadow systems of thought control whose proportions he could not have imagined and whose purposes he would not have countenanced.

For Pnin, a fixed, hereditary social hierarchy did not imply either repression or exploitation. Yet in an egalitarian age this inference could easily have been drawn, and it is curious that nobody did. Contemporaries and

39. Isaiah Berlin, *Four Essays on Liberty* (London: Oxford University Press, 1969), p. 25.

historians alike have paid little attention to the static elements of Pnin's thought. Orlov, for instance, outlined his stratified school system but ignored its implications and dismissed it as a matter of "considerably less historical interest"⁴⁰ than his social criticism. What he and others have failed to see is that the school system and the curriculum Pnin designed reflect an emphasis on hierarchy which is at the heart of his political thought. At the beginning of the *Essay on Enlightenment* he insisted that "it is the part of the legislator in his wisdom to instill in each estate the need for interdependence, to set for each the limits it would be too horrible to overstep, to define the rights of each estate, prescribe its duties, and devise the means for preventing abuses arising out of disloyalty and selfishness." Having argued that the inequality of estates was a social necessity, he asked, "is it requisite that all estates should have the same degree of enlightenment?"⁴¹ His essay, which gives a negative answer to this question, illustrates his somewhat naïve belief in the power of education to transform the moral and civic values of a whole society and thereby to introduce an entirely new pattern of social and political relationships within the framework of older forms.

This goal and the means Pnin elaborated to achieve it are of sufficient intrinsic interest that a final historiographical question necessarily presents itself: Why has no one sought to evaluate Pnin's ideas on their own terms, instead of emphasizing almost exclusively his affinities with Radishchev? There are a number of possible answers, some of which reveal more about the writing of Russian history than they do about Pnin.

One practical point is that Pnin was best known during his own time for his poetry, which was notable for the civic ideals it advanced and the social ills it deplored. His poetry, however, did not contain the traditional ideas about social structure and political authority which were so prominent in his *Essay on Enlightenment*. The latter was an extremely rare document after its confiscation by the censorship, an act which contributed to an exaggerated public impression of its political opposition. Even those who read the essay tended to focus on the criticism it contained rather than to analyze the positive program it offered. What both contemporaries and historians have found most important about Pnin is not a system of ideas, but his proposed amelioration of serfdom, his commitment to a rule of law that would guarantee at least some rights to all, and his general opposition to "social evil."⁴² In his poetry, in particular, he appeared as a "free-thinker"⁴³ and

40. Orlov, *Russkie prosvetiteli*, p. 189.

41. Pnin, p. 128; Shchipanov, 1:188–89; Raeff, *Anthology*, p. 132.

42. N. Prytkov, "I. P. Pnin i ego literaturnaia deiatel'nost'," *Drevniaia i novaia Rossiia*, 3 (September–December 1878): 19.

43. P. A. Radishchev, p. 426.

exponent of moral renewal. His organizational activities and his writing reflected his conviction that the Russian educated elite should achieve moral autonomy from the state which had created it, if only better to serve both society and the state. In these respects and in his criticism of serfdom and censorship he was in fact a continuator of Radishchev, a modern thinker, and a forerunner of the intelligentsia of the later nineteenth century.

Members of that intelligentsia discovered Pnin while in search of their own ancestors, and they saw in him distorted reflections of themselves. The prominent liberal historian A. A. Kizevetter, for example, believed Pnin's activity to be "characteristic and interesting as one of the moments in the development of Russian liberal doctrine."⁴⁴ He was impressed by Pnin's insistence on the security of person and property, and by what he saw as the individualist emphasis in Pnin's thought. Other prerevolutionary scholars stressed Pnin's concern for the peasantry and his opposition to the excesses of serfdom. Soviet historians, while conceding the general moderation of his work, have emphasized his philosophical materialism⁴⁵ and the change for which he stood, whatever his "enlightenment limitations."⁴⁶

In almost every case we find that Pnin has been studied primarily as a "connecting link" between Radishchev and the age of the Decembrists. In an understandable effort to establish what elements were common to all three generations, historians have failed to consider the unique aspects of Pnin's thought, and in so doing have uprooted him from the context of his own time. His ideas were in many ways original, and certainly the thrust of his political program departed radically from the egalitarianism of Radishchev on the one hand, and the Decembrists' eventual commitment to independent action against the autocracy on the other. Pnin's writings are an example of the struggle that Russian thinkers experienced during a revolutionary age in their effort to reconcile social justice and social stability, and they illustrate both the variety of reformist thought that appeared during Alexander I's reign and the hesitancy with which political thinkers of the time abandoned traditional views in favor of those we call modern.

44. A. A. Kizevetter, "Iz istorii russkogo liberalizma (I. P. Pnin)," *Istoricheskie ocherki* (Moscow, 1912), p. 59.

45. I. K. Luppol, "Russkii gol'bakhianets kontsa XVIII v.," *Pod znamenem marksizma*, March 1925, pp. 75-102.

46. Orlov, *Russkie prosvetiteli*, p. 86.