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## Kavelin and Russian Liberalism

Konstantin Dmitrievich Kavelin has long been regarded as both a leader and archetype of nineteenth-century Russian liberalism. It is not clear, however, what “liberal” and “liberalism” mean with reference to nineteenth-century Russia. Russian liberals of the early twentieth century, seeking to create a tradition for their movement, put the most diverse figures from the past in the liberal pantheon. Soviet historians, with somewhat more justice but the same kind of zeal, have sharply demarcated mid-century radicals, with whom they sympathize, from the liberals. American historians of Russia tend to characterize as “liberal” almost anyone who tried to achieve social and political improvements by nonrevolutionary means. And almost all historians have resorted to the tautology whereby “liberalism” denotes the activities and doctrines of those public figures whom we know to be “liberals.”

These “liberals” and their contemporaries offer no help to our confusion. In 1855 Kavelin and B. N. Chicherin used the joint pseudonym “A Russian Liberal” for an article in Herzen’s *Golos iz Rossii*; in a few years, however, each renounced all association with the other two, so that it is hard to determine which of the three had the best claim to the name “liberal.” Certainly Chicherin was the only one of the three, and one of the very few mid-century Russians, who liked to apply this label to himself. Within the bureaucracy during the era of Alexander II’s reforms, “liberal” was used both as a pejorative synonym for “radical” and to characterize the government’s own activities. Outside the bureaucracy, “liberal” was often applied to hypocritical bureaucrats, self-seeking landowners, and others who mouthed modish slogans while pursuing selfish goals. Thus P. B. Annenkov, writing to Turgenev in 1859, complained that in Simbirsk Province, “liberalism is gushing out in ceaseless streams, through which one can see the most foul depths of the soul. . . . In all Europe, I am convinced, there is no more rotten spectacle than current Russian liberalism. It has reached such a point that, as soon as a stranger begins to expound freely, the word ‘swindler’ comes to mind at once.”<sup>1</sup> Yet Annenkov himself is often considered a liberal.

1. “Pis'ma P. B. Annenkova k I. S. Turgenevu,” *Trudy Publichnoi biblioteki SSSR im. Lenina*, 3 (1934): 82–83.

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The remedy would seem to be to construct a definition of “liberal” which would be applicable to Russia in the middle of the nineteenth century. We may say, then, that a “liberal” is one who favored civil equality and opposed caste privilege; who had faith in the workings of the market and opposed constraints on economic activity; who stood for legality and the security of the citizen’s rights; and who would constrain the autocrat and the bureaucracy while providing for some public participation in the work of government. This definition, derived from West European experience, does not seem unduly restrictive, yet there is scarcely any public figure of the era of reforms whom it fits. It does fit A. M. Unkovsky, marshal of the nobility in Tver Province in 1857–60; his removal from office and administrative exile, for which he blamed the “liberal” bureaucrats, highlight the confusion about Russian liberalism.<sup>2</sup>

These ambiguities were inseparable from the basic circumstances of Russian life—the persistence of autocracy and of serfdom, the deep gulf between the educated classes and the mass of the population, the stagnant economy and the entrenched bureaucracy. In these circumstances, doctrines naturally clustered together in Western Europe were in conflict in Russia. To constrain the autocrat seemed to mean discarding the major weapon against privilege and backwardness; the espousal of constitutionalism or laissez-faire economics was regarded, often correctly, as an attempt to perpetuate the dependence of the peasantry and the dominance of the nobility. Hence a bureaucratic reformer like Miliutin clung to the autocratic power and bureaucratic instruments in the name of legal order and the general welfare. He could not, nor could any Russian of his time, embrace the whole bundle of liberal doctrines. Different men, grasping different parts of the bundle, naturally came into conflict. The era of reforms is full of acrimonious struggles between so-called liberals. Yet these men did have something in common. They shared a regard for the state—both for the principle of statehood (*gosudarstvennost'*) and for the Russian state as an instrument of progress. This attitude set them apart both from their radical contemporaries, who were willing to assault the state, and from the first generation of Slavophiles, who disparaged both statehood and bureaucracy. Yet this attitude did not entail any cohesion among those who shared it or any coherence in doctrine or programs. And this veneration of the state also serves to distinguish its exponents from liberals, as the term is used for nineteenth-century Western Europe.

We might, then, simply abandon “liberal” as a term that, for Russia in the era of reforms, creates more difficulties than it resolves. But even if we abandon

2. See T. L. Emmons, *The Russian Landed Gentry and the Peasant Emancipation of 1861* (Cambridge, 1968), pp. 266–81 passim, and A. M. Unkovsky, “Zapiski,” *Russkaja mysl'*, 1906, no. 7, pp. 96, 115.

the term, we are left with the “liberals” themselves. What is the appropriate context and conceptual framework for an understanding of their activities? A reappraisal of the public career of Kavelin should provide some part of the answer to this question. The task is comparatively simple, because although Kavelin lived a long life and wrote voluminously on various subjects, his public activities were almost entirely limited to the first decade of the reign of Alexander II.

At the accession of Alexander II, Kavelin was thirty-six years old and held a minor government post in St. Petersburg.<sup>3</sup> His considerable contributions to Russian historiography and an interval as professor at Moscow University were already behind him. In his Moscow period, which ended in 1848, he had been prominent among the Westerners. His early writings (and his later ones still more) show many lines of affinity with the doctrine of the Slavophiles, and both Belinsky and Granovsky reproached Kavelin for heterodoxy.<sup>4</sup> Nonetheless, he rejected the idea of alignment with the Slavophiles on the grounds that he was bound to the Westerners by his loyalty to the memory of Granovsky and his affection for Herzen.<sup>5</sup>

It was characteristic of Kavelin throughout his life to fix his course on the basis of personal affinity rather than doctrine. He also manifested from the first those traits of character that would produce his eventual isolation. Granovsky paid tribute to his ardent generosity of spirit, and even Kavelin's antagonists acknowledged his kindness.<sup>6</sup> Yet Kavelin's youthful ardor was always accompanied by a childish sensitivity. He would break off all relations with a patron, an ally, or an intimate friend as soon as he felt affronted.<sup>7</sup>

Kavelin felt boundless hatred for Nicholas I and his regime, and at first was only guardedly optimistic about the possibility of improvement under

3. For Kavelin's biography see D. A. Korsakov's introduction to Kavelin's *Sobranie sochinenii*, 4 vols. (St. Petersburg, 1897–1900), 1:ix–xxx; also V. N. Rozental, “Peterburgskii kruzhok K. D. Kavelina v 1855–1857,” in M. V. Nechkina, ed., *Revolutsionnaia situatsiia v Rossii v 1859–1861 gg.*, fasc. 3 (Moscow, 1963), pp. 383–98, and the other studies by Rozental cited there; and Darrell P. Hammer, “Two Russian Liberals: The Political Thought of B. N. Chicherin and K. D. Kavelin” (Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, 1962). A judicious essay on Kavelin is V. A. Miakotin's “Publitsisticheskaia deiatel'nost' K. D. Kavelina,” *Russkoe bogatstvo*, September 1902, second pagination, pp. 70–97.

4. A. Stankevich, *T. N. Granovskii i ego perepiska* (Moscow, 1897), vol. 2, p. 457.

5. See D. A. Korsakov, ed., “Iz literaturnoi perepiski Kavelina,” *Russkaia mys'*, 1896, no. 2, second pagination, p. 33, and M. Dragomanov, ed., *Pis'ma K. D. Kavelina i Iv. S. Turgeneva k Al. Iv. Gertsenu* (Geneva, 1892), p. 11; cited hereafter as *Pis'ma k Gertsenu*.

6. See, for example, Chernyshevsky's remark quoted in S. A. Reiser, ed., *Dobroliubov v vospominaniakh sovremennikov* (Leningrad, 1961), p. 235.

7. See D. A. Korsakov, “Konstantin Dmitrievich Kavelin: Materialy dlia biografii, iz semeinoi perepiski i vospominanii,” *Vestnik Evropy*, October 1886, p. 751.

Alexander II.<sup>8</sup> Soon, however, he gave himself over to fervid hopes, and these hopes spurred him to sustained public activity. The thrust of this activity was an attempt to mobilize the disparate elements of educated society in behalf of reform, particularly the abolition of serfdom. Upon moving from Moscow to St. Petersburg in 1848, Kavelin had become a leading figure in an informal grouping of civil servants, a *kruzhok* from which N. A. Miliutin and other reformist bureaucrats emerged.<sup>9</sup> During the new reign Kavelin's associations became much broader, reaching even into the imperial family. Through the spectrum of his acquaintance, he sought to allay suspicions, minimize differences, reconcile, and unite.

These efforts were exemplified by a triumphal banquet he organized to celebrate the government's public commitment to the abolition of serfdom. This banquet, held December 28, 1857, was conceived as a "general Russian festival" which would bring together Moscow and St. Petersburg, Slavophiles and Westerners, bureaucrats and writers, merchants and nobles, to demonstrate the breadth of support for emancipation and encourage the government to hold fast to its purpose. The banquet received wide publicity, but Kavelin's triumph was less than complete. The Moscow Slavophiles could not be induced to sit down together with Kavelin and his Westerner friends. Moreover, the banquet aroused the ire of Governor-General Zakrevsky of Moscow, and he succeeded in having a much larger banquet, scheduled to celebrate the third anniversary of the accession of Alexander II, banned by the tsar's own order. It was ominous and anomalous that the government forbade a public celebration of its own activities.<sup>10</sup>

The impulses which prompted Kavelin to organize these banquets also encouraged him to re-establish his relationship with Herzen, with whom he had been intimate in the 1840s. In 1855 he joined with Chicherin in sending Herzen an open letter. Under the pseudonym "A Russian Liberal," the two called on Herzen to moderate the tone of his publications so that they would serve to close the artificial divide between the nation at large and the new tsar. Alexander was said to be isolated and deceived by the bureaucracy, so that he was in desperate need of information about his false servants and his faithful subjects. Herzen's Free Russian Press, unconstrained by censorship, could perform this essential service; however, the propaganda of socialism (as

8. See Kavelin to Granovsky, Mar. 4-10, 1855, in "K. D. Kavelin o smerti Nikolaia I," *Literaturnoe nasledstvo*, 67 (1959): 610-11.

9. See W. B. Lincoln, "The Circle of the Grand Duchess Yelena Pavlovna, 1847-61," *Slavonic Review*, 48 (1970): 380.

10. See A. Popel'nitsky, "Zapreshchenyi po vysochaisheму poveleniu banket v Moskve 19 fevralie 1858 g.," *Golos minulshogo*, 1914, no. 2, pp. 202-12.

Chicherin emphasized) would only discredit the Press and the cause of freedom and provide substance for the slanders.<sup>11</sup>

In his private letters to Herzen, Kavelin was more emotional and more insistent. Recalling their intimacy in the 1840s, he wrote, "You were my sustenance and my school; it seems that even now I can trace with my fingers the veins and nerves that were formed in my character under your influence. . . . I am bound to you with a bond that does not break, even when opinions differ." He went on to testify to the influence of Herzen's publications within Russia; corrupt and retrograde functionaries lived in terror of *Kolokol*, while the young idolized Herzen. But this authority, Kavelin argued, carried with it the obligation to be moderate and tactful: "Print all corruption, absurdities and villainies [of the bureaucracy], punish them mercilessly, naming names, and so on. But treat the imperial family *still more* cautiously . . . , and, be assured, you will have still more effect. Soon you will be able, without blushing, to shake hands with Alexander II and consider one another allies for the benefit and happiness of Russia."<sup>12</sup>

The alliance between Herzen and the tsar was not to be, for all Kavelin's efforts. But it was not the least plausible alliance Kavelin tried to arrange at this time. We find him defending Chernyshevsky to Katkov, courting a latter-day Slavophile like Koshelev,<sup>13</sup> and lavishing flattery on Pogodin. The rationale of these ventures emerges most clearly in Kavelin's letters to Pogodin. Outlining his views on the emancipation of the serfs and other reforms, he insisted, "All this is possible . . . if only there were good will and a devotion to the great cause of our dear Fatherland, and if people did not look down their noses so suspiciously at one another, as they do now."<sup>14</sup>

Kavelin's object was nothing less than to yoke together educated men (*obshchestvo*) to bring pressure upon the government in behalf of a minimum program of reform. If men of all persuasions, ranging from Chernyshevsky to Pogodin, could in fact be so mobilized, who then was the enemy? On this point, Kavelin had no doubt. The only force against reform was the court "camarilla," as he called it, the Nicholaevan dignitaries surrounding Alexander II. "Visit

11. "Russkii liberal" [K. D. Kavelin and B. N. Chicherin], "Pis'mo k izdateliu (v vide predisloviia)," *Golosa iz Rossi*, fasc. 1 (London, 1856), pp. 9–39. See also B. N. Chicherin, *Moskva sorokovykh godov* (Moscow, 1929), p. 172.

12. *Pis'ma k Gertsenu*, pp. 3–4. Kavelin to Herzen, early 1858, *Literaturnoe nasledstvo*, 62 (1955): 386.

13. Kavelin to Katkov, Oct. 20, 1858, in M. Kheifets, "Pis'ma K. D. Kavelina k M. N. Katkovu o Chernyshevskom," Lenin Library, Moscow, *Zapiski Otdela rukopisei*, 6 (1940): 62; letter to A. I. Koshelev, Mar. 2, 1858, in "Iz literaturnoi perepiski Kavelina," *Russkaia mysl'*, 1896, no. 2, p. 33.

14. N. Barsukov, *Zhizn' i trudy M. P. Pogodina*, vol. 14 (St. Petersburg, 1900), p. 203.

the kitchen where state policies and laws are prepared," he wrote to Pogodin, "listen to these gentlemen, and you will be seized with terror. No, better a peasant from behind the plow, better a huckster from the bazaar than these ---, who are worthless except for petty intrigue."<sup>15</sup>

Closer acquaintance with the camarilla did not change Kavelin's view. He became professor of jurisprudence at St. Petersburg University and tutor to the Grand Duke Nicholas, heir to the throne. In the latter capacity, he gained access to the imperial court. He had several long conversations with the empress (to whom he defended Herzen as a patriot) as well as less agreeable interviews with V. A. Dolgorukov, head of the political police, and other members of the camarilla. Their continued influence drove him to intermittent despair. After his first visit to the court, in the summer of 1857, he concluded that, as regards emancipation, "the game is lost."<sup>16</sup>

Optimism soon returned, however, in part because the dramatic improvement in his own fortunes seemed to indicate the regime was moving in the right direction. "More and more," he noted in his diary, "I am beginning to believe that secret voice which even from youth has predicted a political future for me. After all that has happened to me, nothing is impossible."<sup>17</sup> To Kavelin's literary friends, it was silly and a little ridiculous for Kavelin to attend upon the imperial court and the salon of the Grand Duchess Elena Pavlovna. Turgenev wondered aloud what Kavelin would look like in the uniform of a gentleman of the bedchamber.<sup>18</sup> Clearly, however, Kavelin did not regard himself as a courtier, but as a public man, and saw his dealings with the imperial family as one aspect of his concerted public activity.

The most important aspect of this public activity from 1855 on was writing, revising, and circulating a memorandum on the abolition of serfdom. This document, the "Zapiska ob osvobozhdenii krest'ian v Rossii,"<sup>19</sup> proceeds from a broad attack on governmental constraints on society to a careful review of the disadvantages of serfdom. Kavelin observed that because serf labor bore no money cost, serfdom served to conceal economic realities even from those peasants and proprietors who were deeply involved in the market economy; the growing impoverishment of both classes threatened the revenues of the state. Among the political dangers of serfdom, Kavelin included not only the much-bruited possibility of a peasant insurrection, but also the impossibility of reforming the military, the censorship, or any other branch of state activity

15. *Ibid.*, p. 211; the dashes represent a word omitted by Barsukov, presumably for propriety's sake.

16. Kavelin, "Iz dnevnika," *Sobranie sochinenii*, 2:1169.

17. *Ibid.*, p. 1179.

18. A. Ia. Panaeva, *Vospominaniia* (Moscow, 1956), p. 252.

19. Kavelin, *Sobranie sochinenii*, 2:5-87; the first section (pp. 5-23) was published anonymously in Herzen's *Golosa iz Rossii*, fasc. 3 (London, 1857), pp. 138-71.

as long as serfdom endured. The *pomeshchiki*, he maintained, quite rightly believed that any kind of reform would put their prerogatives as serfholders in jeopardy, so that they forestalled all reforms in order to preserve the institution of serfdom. He dwelt with particular force on the baneful moral effects of serfdom on both squire and peasant: "Coercion and cunning are complementary and therefore always go hand in hand."<sup>20</sup>

Given these and other arguments against serfdom, which were as familiar to most of Kavelin's readers as to himself, the question arose, why had serfdom survived so long? Kavelin was tactful enough to credit the good intentions of Alexander I and Nicholas I and laid the blame on the bureaucracy's love of secrecy and fear of "publicity" (*glasnost'*). He asserted that the government had "wanted the impossible: it wanted to introduce this most important reform secretly, without preparing public opinion or relying on rational persuasion or learning the opinion about the proposed reform of that class whose material interests were most sensitively involved."<sup>21</sup> The government's cherished interests would be served by firm and open action, for Kavelin rejected the commonplace analogy between serfdom and autocracy; the nobility's rights of property and the tsar's right of sovereignty had nothing in common.

The basis of Kavelin's positive proposals was the redemption by the peasants of the allotments they presently held. It would be necessary for the peasants to possess land in order to benefit from the civil and personal rights that would be granted to them. Yet Kavelin attached so much importance to landownership that he would sacrifice some of the peasants' rights in order to keep the land in their hands. Kavelin decided, after some hesitation, that the peasants must redeem their own persons as well as their allotments. This followed from his regard for the *pomeshchik's* property rights and from the principle of taking "the existing order of things as the point of departure."<sup>22</sup> He tried to strike a balance among the parties involved—the serfs, the serfholders, and the government—and to anticipate the objections that each might make. The second half of the "Zapiska" is directed against the arguments raised in discussions of the terms he proposed, and contains several concessions to the serfholders. Kavelin tried to accommodate their interests and also, as he explained, to "enter the thoughts of the muzhik and of the government."<sup>23</sup> He evidently penetrated deeply into the thoughts of the government, which then showed very little disposition to reform. Most notably, he urged that the reform should at first be limited to the western provinces where the serfholders were mostly Polish, perhaps even confined to one of the nine provinces;<sup>24</sup> elsewhere,

20. Kavelin, *Sobranie sochinenii*, 2:29.

21. *Ibid.*, p. 39.

22. *Ibid.*, p. 48.

23. Kavelin to Pogodin, Mar. 17, 1856, in *Zhizn' i trudy Pogodina*, 14:213.

24. The government considered making a beginning in the western provinces, because

the government should merely encourage manumission, gather information, and undertake a few other palliatives. This kind of caution could only be congenial to a regime which would cling to "gradualism" as a watchword even when the reform was in full career throughout the empire.

To be assessed, Kavelin's "Zapiska ob osvobozhdenii krest'ian" must be considered together with the other memoranda that circulated in Russian society between the accession of Alexander II and November of 1857, when the government formally committed itself to the abolition of serfdom.<sup>25</sup> Four of these memoranda—those by Iurii Samarin, V. A. Cherkassky, A. I. Koshelev, and B. N. Chicherin—rank with Kavelin's as regards their supposed influence.<sup>26</sup> All five insisted that the serfs must be emancipated with land, but they disagreed widely about the pace with which this principle could be implemented. Kavelin was in the middle of the spectrum on this point. Samarin's memorandum is rewarding reading even today, and far surpasses Kavelin's in the skill with which it analyzes serfdom. But Samarin's positive proposals were very moderate indeed. So were Prince Cherkassky's. Samarin and Cherkassky were subsequently summoned to play a major role in drafting the emancipation legislation, while Kavelin, Koshelev, and Chicherin were not. These three could console themselves, however, with the realization that their recommendations corresponded fairly closely with the reform as eventually enacted, in that each proposed that the peasants should redeem their allotments. While Koshelev was closely associated with the latter-day Slavophiles Cherkassky and Samarin, his memorandum is akin to Kavelin's, but much more abrasive and assertive; Koshelev did not offer any accommodation to official timidity such as Kavelin's territorial gradualism. On the other hand, he devoted much more attention to the fiscal and financial aspects of redemption, which would prove to be decisive. Koshelev's practicality sets him apart from Chicherin, whose memorandum was close to Kavelin's in its arguments and

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the marshals of the nobility from the area seemed more amenable to reform of serfdom; the fact that the rescript setting forth the government's first plan of reform was addressed to the governor-general at Vilna was a vestige of this line of policy. See A. I. Levshin, "Dostopamiatnye minuty v moei zhizni," *Russkii arkhiv*, 1885, no. 8, pp. 484, 509, and N. N. Ulashchik, "Iz istorii reskripta 20 noiabria 1857 g.," *Istoricheskie zapiski*, 28 (1949): 164-81.

25. For a survey see N. S. Bagramian, "Pomeshchich'i prokety osvobozhdeniia krest'ian, in M. V. Nechkina, ed., *Revoliutsionnaia situatsiia v Rossii v 1859-1861 gg.*, fasc. 2 (Moscow, 1962), pp. 20-27.

26. [B. N. Chicherin], "O krepostnom sostoianii," *Golosa iz Rossii*, fasc. 2 (London, 1856), pp. 139-250; A. I. Koshelev, "Zapiski po unichtozheniiu krepostnogo sostoianiia v Rossii," *Zapiski A. I. Kosheleva* (Berlin, 1884), appendix, pp. 57-92; Iu. F. Samarin, "O krepostnom sostoianii i o perekhode iz nego k grazhdanskoi svobode," *Sochineniia*, vol. 2 (Moscow, 1878), pp. 17-136; V. A. Cherkassky, "O luchshikh sredstvakh k postepennomu iskhodu iz krepostnogo sostoianiia," *Materialy k biografii kn. V. A. Cherkasskogo*, comp. O. N. Trubetskaia, fasc. 1 (Moscow, 1901), appendix, pp. 7-67.



recommendations, but did not display Kavelin's sensitivity to the difficulties and anxieties that emancipation entailed for the government and the squires.

All these memoranda have many points in common. Since they circulated in manuscript, and in some cases underwent regular revision, there may have been mutual influence. Kavelin's has a particular significance, since it was the first to be written and circulated. However, to credit Kavelin's "Zapiska" with any particular influence on government policy would be rash. The entire body of manuscript literature of which it was a part and the circles of officials and articulate *pomeshchiki* from which it emerged may have spurred the government to undertake reform; the memoranda did have a major influence on the provisions of the reform. But five years and mountains of legislative raw material stand between Kavelin's initial memorandum and the legislation of February 19, 1861. To find an affinity between an article of this legislation and a proposal advanced by Kavelin (or another private individual) is easy enough; to establish a line of descent is impossible.

It may be that Kavelin influenced the emancipation legislation most significantly, although indirectly, through his participation in a false start. In 1855 the tsar's aunt, the Grand Duchess Elena Pavlovna, decided to emancipate the serfs on her own immense estate, Karlovka, and invited Kavelin, N. A. Miliutin, and other landowners and officials to collaborate in drawing up a plan. By taking this initiative, she hoped to prod the government to action and to provide it with a model settlement. In the event, Elena Pavlovna was first rebuffed and then pre-empted by the tsar; the Karlovka plan was not ready until the government had already committed itself to the abolition of serfdom, and it was never put into effect. Yet for those involved the Karlovka project provided experience in working out an emancipation settlement from first principles to practical details; many of them, notably Miliutin, would avail themselves of this experience and play major roles in drafting the emancipation legislation of 1861. Although Kavelin was not given the chance to apply his experience, his role in this pilot project was second only to Miliutin's.<sup>27</sup>

The pragmatism that characterized Kavelin's "Zapiska" and the Karlovka project is also apparent in his "Mysli ob unichtozhenii krepostnogo sostoianiiia v Rossii." This memorandum was written in 1857, some two years after his original "Zapiska," and seems at first to constitute a retreat from it. Kavelin now proposed protracting the reform into a two-stage process, of which the first would entail only a regulation of the serf's obligations and a modest en-

27. See W. B. Lincoln, "The Karlovka Reform," *Slavic Review*, 28, no. 3 (September 1969): 463-70, and, for Kavelin's defense of the plan, his letter to Golovnin in *Russkaia starina*, 53 (February 1887): 443-44. Kavelin was so indiscreetly proud of his invitation to participate that these clandestine deliberations became common knowledge in St. Petersburg. See "R," "Na zare krepostnoi svobody," *Russkaia starina*, 92 (October 1892): 22-23.

hancement of his legal status. Kavelin still upheld the principle that the peasant should acquire all of his present allotment through redemption, but pushed its implementation into the remote future and dropped the idea of immediate demonstrative action in at least one province. Furthermore, having previously maintained that bureaucratic secrecy had forestalled all previous attempts at reform, Kavelin now forgot his appeal for “publicity” and would virtually emancipate the serfs behind their backs.<sup>28</sup>

Kavelin’s retreat was a product of his attempt to operate in the given institutional framework, and seen in this framework the “Mysli” is at least as bold as the original “Zapiska.” The document was written as a formal response to fourteen questions circulated by the recently established Secret Committee on the Peasant Question. The questions, in turn, were a by-product of the committee’s Journal of August 18, 1857, which was intended as a formal and conclusive (although secret) formulation of government policy on serfdom and had the endorsement of the tsar. This document held flatly, “it is not presently possible to undertake the general emancipation of the serfs among us,” and it authorized only a few palliative measures.<sup>29</sup> The policy of August 18 was overthrown and forgotten in little more than three months, but neither Kavelin nor men more conversant with high politics foresaw this reversal. Kavelin’s “Mysli,” then, represents an attempt to keep cherished principles alive until the regime was ready to adopt them.

When the government did commit itself to the abolition of serfdom, Kavelin was exhilarated. However, his own fall from favor and loss of influence followed closely upon that commitment, and were largely the product of the bureaucratic infighting that developed from it. The occasion for Kavelin’s troubles was the publication of extracts from his original “Zapiska” by Chernyshevsky in *Sovremennik*. It was characteristic of Kavelin that he should, by turning his manuscript over to Chernyshevsky,<sup>30</sup> have attempted to bridge the gap between his own statesmanlike position and the most radical periodical in Russia. In publishing the manuscript, Chernyshevsky acceded for the moment to Kavelin’s belief that men of diverse views must sink their differences and unite behind a common program of emancipation.<sup>31</sup> The published version,

28. Kavelin, *Sobranie sochinenii*, 2:88–102.

29. Arkhiv Gosudarstvennogo soveta, *Zhurnaly Sekret'nogo i glavnogo komitetov po krest'ianskomu delu* (Petrograd, 1915), vol. 1, p. 19.

30. Kavelin’s subsequent complaint that the “Zapiska” was published “without my consent or knowledge” is disingenuous in light of his earlier admission that he turned it over to Chernyshevsky as “literary property.” Compare his letters to M. I. Semevsky of Apr. 12, 1885, in *Russkaia starina*, 49, no. 1 (January 1886): 132, and to M. N. Katkov, of Mar. 10, 1858, in “Pis'ma K. D. Kavelina k M. N. Katkovu,” p. 62.

31. N. G. Chernyshevsky, “O novykh usloviakh sel'skogo byta (stat'ia vtoraiia),” *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, 16 vols. (Moscow, 1939–53), 5:108. This edition gives the whole text of the version of Kavelin’s memorandum as published in *Sovremennik*.

modified to accommodate the censorship<sup>32</sup> and the change in political circumstances, should have been unexceptionable, but it caused an uproar. The editors of *Sovremennik* received a reprimand, and Kavelin was removed from his post as tutor to the Grand Duke Nicholas.

This scandal was interpreted by Herzen<sup>33</sup> and others as a sign of the resurgence of reaction; others have given it different interpretations. According to one school, Kavelin was a casualty in a struggle concerning the education of the heir to the throne: an influential group of courtiers wanted the Grand Duke to have a more military and less liberal education than Kavelin and his sponsor, V. P. Titov, were providing.<sup>34</sup> A faction at court did exploit the occasion to remove both Kavelin and Titov, but this was a by-blow in a larger struggle, a struggle over the censorship and, ultimately, the terms of the emancipation settlement.

Policy concerning the emancipation was ostensibly the responsibility of the Secret Committee, now rebaptized the "Main Committee on the Peasant Question." This body of high officials had resisted the initial commitment to the abolition of serfdom and continued to resist attempts to broaden the terms of the reform.<sup>35</sup> In order to maintain control of policy, the committee had to subdue rival agencies within the government, as it was managing for the moment to do, and also to constrain public discussion of the reform. Bureaucratic techniques and forms of argument, at which the members of the committee were adept, were of little use in an open arena. Hence there was a very obvious relation between censorship and policy-making. In addition, there were widespread protests from provincial squires that the censorship was not giving their dignity and their interests proper protection.<sup>36</sup> The Secret Committee used the

32. To be sure, the editors of *Sovremennik* were culpable for failing to resubmit the article to the special censor for articles on the peasant question, at the Ministry of Internal Affairs, but it was cleared by the regular censorship; see V. Evgen'ev-Maksimov, "*Sovremennik*" *pri Chernyshevskom i Dobrolubove* (Leningrad, 1936), p. 231, and Chernyshevsky, "Uprek i opravdivanie," *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, 5:768, but also p. 776.

33. "Chernyi kabinet," in *Kolokol*, no. 20 (Aug. 1, 1858), pp. 161-63. P. P. Semenov-Tian-Shansky's claim that Kavelin was removed for supplying material for Herzen's *Kolokol* is not plausible; see his *Epokha osvobodnieniia krest'ian v Rossii . . .*, vol. 1 (St. Petersburg, 1911), p. 66; compare I. V. Porokh, ed., *Delo Chernyshevskogo* (Saratov, 1968), p. 642.

34. See F. O. Oom, "Vospominania," *Russkii arkhiv*, 1896, no. 6, pp. 248-50; P. V. Dolgorukov, *Peterburgskie ocherki* (Moscow, 1934), p. 122; Levshin, "Dostopamiatnye minuty," pp. 540-41; *Materialy dlia istorii uprazdneniia krepostnogo sostoianiiia pomeshchich'ikh krest'ian v Rossii v tsarstvovanie Aleksandra II*, vol. 1 (Berlin, 1860), pp. 231-44, and A. V. Nikitenko, *Dnevnik* (Leningrad, 1955), vol. 2, pp. 19-20.

35. See D. Field, "The End of Serfdom: Gentry and Bureaucracy in Russia, 1855-61" (Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 1969), pp. 245-88, for a discussion of the Main Committee in 1858.

36. See Levshin, "Dostopamiatnye minuty," p. 542, and for a protest specifically against Chernyshevsky's publication of Kavelin's "Zapiska" see "N. G. Chernyshevskii i

publication of Kavelin's "Zapiska" to circumvent the authorities immediately responsible for censorship and curtail press comment concerning the preparations for reform.

Such curtailment did not, ultimately, enable these traditionalist dignitaries to write the emancipation legislation to their taste, but their purpose is clear enough, particularly in light of the counts under which Kavelin and *Sovremennik* were accused. The published memorandum was found objectionable for advocating the redemption by the peasants of their present allotments (a policy which would, in a matter of months, become the cornerstone of the government's system), for contradicting the government's "Program of Activities" for the provincial committees (which was issued after the article was published), and, finally, for "troubling the minds of *pomeshchiki* and peasants"—an allusion to Kavelin's reiteration of the commonplace objections to serfdom.<sup>37</sup> Clearly, the article was made to serve as an object lesson in the struggle of government agencies and social forces. Once it had been used in this way, however, Kavelin was vulnerable to his antagonists at court and succumbed to their attacks.

The scandal ended Kavelin's participation in the peasant reform. Owing to his peculiar temperament, he fell further from his position of influence than was necessary. He came to believe that Ia. A. Rostovtsev, for whom he had worked in the military-education system, had connived to procure his fall, and that his patroness Elena Pavlovna had treacherously failed to defend him; in a characteristic spirit of pride and pique, he refused to have any further dealings with either.<sup>38</sup> Since Elena Pavlovna's salon was the rallying point of those actively involved in drawing up the reform, and since Rostovtsev soon became the tsar's plenipotentiary on the peasant question, Kavelin cut himself off from political influence and power. This was a bitter irony for one who had labored to reconcile hostile groups and accommodate the exigencies of high politics.

To be sure, it is not certain that in the best of circumstances Kavelin would have played a significant role in the work of emancipation. Once it settled on a coherent plan of reform and established a suitable agency for drafting the legislation (February 1859), the government became far less receptive to the kind of counsel from without that Kavelin offered, and less vulnerable to the kind

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tsarskaia tsenzura," I. Kovalev, ed., in *Shestidesiatye gody*, ed. N. K. Piskunov and O. V. Tsekhovitsker (Moscow and Leningrad, 1940), pp. 383–86.

37. These are the objections made in two circulars by the minister of education reproduced in *Kolokol*, no. 20 (Aug. 1, 1858), pp. 162–63.

38. On Kavelin's estrangement from Elena Pavlovna, see D. Korsakov, "Iz zhizni K. D. Kavelina vo Frantsii i Germanii . . .," *Russkaia mysl'*, May 1899, p. 31; on his recriminations against Rostovtsev see Semenov-Tian-Shansky, *Epokha osvobodheniia krest'ian*, 1:65; see also Kavelin's letter to Semevsky cited in note 30.

of public pressure he had tried to mobilize. Expertise became a major weapon. Kavelin was not schooled in the chancelleries, like N. A. Miliutin and Ia. A. Soloviev, nor was he an experienced *pomeshchik*, like Cherkassky and Samarin. They assumed a major role in the Editorial Commission, where the legislation was compiled. The commission was devised, paradoxically, in accord with a proposal of Kavelin's, but his accompanying suggestion that he be appointed to the commission was not followed.<sup>39</sup>

After his departure from the spheres of power, Kavelin continued to play the mediator, as when he intervened between Herzen and Chicherin. Chicherin attacked Herzen for bringing discredit on progressive causes by his inflammatory tone, and urged him to expose scandals in a calm and helpful way and to be patient with the government's efforts to abolish serfdom. Kavelin was in a dilemma, since this was a vigorous polemical expression of the view that he himself had been urging on Herzen in private letters. Kavelin resolved it with a joint letter to the two antagonists, in which he agreed with Chicherin but defended Herzen. The forces of obscurantism were reviving, he argued, citing his own recent history as a case in point; it was wrong for an avowed liberal like Chicherin to attack Herzen publicly at a time when all advocates of emancipation had to stand together.<sup>40</sup>

Shortly thereafter, Kavelin became alienated from Katkov. Katkov lost patience with Kavelin's heterodox views; thus the pages of his *Russkii vestnik*, the leading exponent of Westernizing doctrines, were closed to Kavelin for some time. It was an article of Kavelin's in favor of the peasant commune that provoked Katkov to break with him, but the article did not make for any rapprochement with the Slavophiles. Kavelin ventured into journalism in his own behalf by collaborating in the founding of *Vek*, a journal which was intended to "discard completely all the methods and traditions of our journalism" in order to bring intellectuals into touch with "the mass of middling men" (*massy srednei ruki*).<sup>41</sup> The venture collapsed in less than a year.

Within St. Petersburg University, by contrast, Kavelin's prestige and authority were increasing. Students admired him as a victim of the enemies of emancipation. The faculty initially rebuffed him with a "Chinese wall," but a series of opportune deaths and resignations carried off many professors of the

39. Kavelin, "Mnenie o luchshem sposobe razrabotki voprosa ob osvobozhdenii krest'ian," *Sobranie sochinenii*, 2:103-6.

40. Chicherin's "bill of indictment" and Herzen's rebuttal appeared in *Kolokol* in December 1858; this publication was the occasion of the three-cornered correspondence published in Lemke's edition of Herzen's *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii i pisem*, vol. 9 ("Petersburg," 1919), pp. 404-24; see also B. N. Chicherin, *Puteshestvie za granitsu* (Moscow, 1932), pp. 65-67, and S. S. Dmitriev, "Protest protiv 'Obvinatel'nogo akta' Chicherina," *Literaturnoe nasledstvo*, 63 (1956): 209-19.

41. *Pis'ma k A. V. Drushininu: Letopisi Gos. literaturnogo museia*, vol. 9 (Moscow, 1948), p. 137.

Nicholaevan era, and Kavelin was the “leader of the faculty” when the crisis of 1861 broke out.<sup>42</sup> The university crisis of 1861 flared up against the background of nascent student radicalism, on the one hand, and the onset of caution and anxiety within the government in the wake of the promulgation of the emancipation legislation, on the other. The immediate issues of university discipline and governance were played out on a field of conflict delimited by the restrictive university charter of 1835 and the student *skhodki*. These assemblies were not permitted under the charter. Since 1857, however, they had been at first sponsored and later tolerated by the government-appointed chancellor (*popechitel' uchebnogo okruga*) of the university. The *skhodki* had undertaken philanthropic and education projects, but they became vehicles for resistance to the university authorities and forums of political discussion. By the spring of 1861, it was clear that the central government would tolerate the *skhodki* no longer; indeed, the tsar had approved in principle a proposal to close the universities.<sup>43</sup>

The chancellor, I. D. Delianov, attempted to head off the crisis by having a committee of five professors, headed by Kavelin, draw up rules for student discipline and student organizations. This was an attempt to circumvent the university council, in which all professors sat, and secure bureaucratic secrecy. Kavelin's committee, however, outflanked Delianov by having student deputies elected to review its work. In its recommendations, the committee adopted Kavelin's views. Kavelin maintained that the *skhodki* and other student organizations met legitimate needs, particularly in providing aid to poor students. On the other hand, the government had a legitimate interest in maintaining order. These interests could be reconciled if the student organizations were given a regular status, with carefully limited spheres of activity and strict supervision by the faculty. Student organizations had gone out of control and drawn the wrath of the government, he argued, only because they had no official status and hence no supervision. Professors should assume responsibility for student discipline, as well, by taking the place of the discredited inspectorate, or university police; students were naturally unruly, but harmlessly so, and could best be restrained by the “moral authority” of those they respected.<sup>44</sup> Kavelin's conception of the professor's role was at odds with the charter of 1835, which would restrict him to his classroom activities, and corresponded with the role he tried to assume in 1861—the mediator between the authorities and the students, enjoying the confidence of both parties. In the spring of 1861, Kavelin did en-

42. L. V. Panteleev, *Vospominaniia* (Leningrad, 1958), pp. 189, 200.

43. Franco Venturi, *Roots of Revolution* (New York, 1960), chap. 8; T. J. Hegarty, “Student Movements in Russian Universities, 1855–61” (Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 1965), chaps. 2 and 3.

44. See [K. D. Kavelin], “Zapiska ob universitetskoi dele . . .,” *Kolokol*, no. 119/120 (Jan. 15, 1862), pp. 992, 995.

joy that confidence, but events soon showed that the government was not so benign, nor the students so innocuous, as Kavelin supposed.

In the spring and summer of 1861 Kavelin's official patrons—Chancellor Delianov and Minister of Education E. P. Kovalevsky—were replaced. New university rules were adopted, whereby the *skhodki* and other student organizations were first restricted and then forbidden altogether. This was in the spirit of the Nicholaevan charter, as was the considerable reduction in the number of students. When the students returned in the autumn, they responded to these rulings with a series of heated *skhodki* which developed into a street demonstration and a confrontation with the Preobrazhensky guards. The university was closed; when it reopened, the students went on strike rather than accept the new rules. The upshot was the imprisonment of large numbers of students and the closing of the university until August 1863.

In these events, Kavelin played a difficult game. He continually reassured the students that their needs would be satisfied, and “used all his powers of persuasion to restrain the students from any kind of demonstration.”<sup>45</sup> At the same time, he led the faculty in its attempt to soften the impact of the new rules, and then, when that failed, in passive resistance to their implementation. Consequently he was discredited on both sides. The government expected Kavelin to act like a functionary;<sup>46</sup> the students became convinced that he had. Although he was eventually able to resign his professorship in protest, he was made to understand that he would have been removed in any case. And his prestige among the students fell so low that it was difficult to secure a place for him in the free university which the students set up when St. Petersburg University was closed.<sup>47</sup> By his own admission, he was caught “between two fires . . . , the government, which looks at me suspiciously, and the students, who consider me a conservative.”<sup>48</sup>

Kavelin was rescued from his painful position by A. V. Golovnin, the new minister of education. A new university charter was to be drawn up, and Golovnin sent Kavelin to Western Europe to study universities and make recommendations concerning the new charter in light of his observations. Kavelin undertook the task with enthusiasm, regarding it, along with the appointment of his friend Golovnin, as the beginning of his own vindication.<sup>49</sup> In fact,

45. Panteleev, *Vospominaniia*, p. 201.

46. When Kavelin stated to the new chancellor that “it was awkward and impossible for the professors to distribute rules [for students] to which they had reason to object,” the latter replied, “State service has its demands; those who do not want to bear these obligations are free to retire.” V. D. Spasovich, *Sochineniia* (St. Petersburg, 1891), vol. 4, p. 41.

47. Panteleev, *Vospominaniia*, pp. 259–61.

48. *Pis'ma k Gertsenu*, p. 81.

49. Korsakov, “Materialy,” *Vestnik Evropy*, October 1886, p. 744.

Kavelin's mission represented diplomatic exile, as he soon acknowledged with deep bitterness.<sup>50</sup> The new charter was drafted without any regard for his views, and the ministry that sent him would not even publish his reports in its journal. The main consequence of this trip was to complete Kavelin's isolation.

The crucial event in the process of isolation was a final rupture with Herzen. With each disappointment in his public career, Kavelin became more intense in his professions of devotion to Herzen, and he now eagerly looked forward to a reunion with him. Before they could meet, Herzen discovered that Kavelin was the author of an anonymous pamphlet published in Berlin, *Dvorianstvo i osvobozhdenie krest'ian*. Herzen wrote Kavelin a letter of shocked surprise and called upon him to renounce the pamphlet.<sup>51</sup>

*Dvorianstvo i osvobozhdenie krest'ian* was prompted by the glimmerings of a constitutionalist movement among the nobility. Kavelin interpreted this tendency as an attempt to recover through the establishment of an oligarchic regime what had been lost through the abolition of serfdom. Since the common people were unenlightened, uneducated, and scarcely able to make use of the rights granted by the emancipation legislation, representative government in Russia would mean the hegemony of the landed nobility. The nobles must reject this temptation, he argued; although class distinctions were natural and inevitable, a hierarchy based on privilege was illegitimate and foredoomed. By the same token, nobles must not press for every advantage held out by the emancipation legislation, but "part affectionately" with their serfs in order to "inspire one's future neighbors to be well disposed."<sup>52</sup> This affectionate parting was one aspect of Kavelin's injunction to public service, self-renewal, and austerity; the nobility must win the right to leadership by laboring in its home districts for justice, enlightenment, and economic development. A solid constitutional system would be the remote end product of these modest and selfless efforts. In essence, then, Kavelin thought that the nobility could maintain its dominance only by renouncing the advantages of domination.

Kavelin's anticonstitutionalist stand was consistent with his other writings and his public activities. He had sought to use the autocracy as an instrument for reform, even though that might mean settling for the little that the autocrat would grant. And, like the new Russian radicals, he had not been willing to sacrifice economic well-being for the sake of personal and political rights. For the time being, he was content with the abolition of serfdom and the associated reforms of local government and the courts. "Many times," Spasovich recalled,

50. D. A. Korsakov, "Iz zhizni K. D. Kavelina vo Frantsii i Germanii v 1862–64 gg. (po ego perepiske za eto vremia)," *Russkaia mysl'*, 1899, no. 8, second pagination, p. 11.

51. For the best text of Herzen's letter, of which only a rough draft survives, see A. I. Gertsen, *Sobranie sochinenii v tridtsati tomakh*, vol. 27 (Moscow, 1963), pp. 226–27.

52. Kavelin, "Dvorianstvo i osvobozhdenie krest'ian," *Sobranie sochinenii*, 2:131.



“he repeated . . . that he considered the principal task of his generation of Russians to have been accomplished.”<sup>53</sup>

Although Herzen should not have been surprised by the pamphlet, it is true that Kavelin, because of his emotional attachment to this last friend of the forties, had minimized their differences. “No one,” he wrote to Herzen in 1859, “has stated my thoughts and feelings better than you have. In your ideas I have not seen a single lapse, a single false note. My heart pounded with joy when I read my own thoughts, which you expressed so radiantly and succinctly.”<sup>54</sup>

Now that the “principal problem” had been solved to Kavelin’s satisfaction—but scarcely to Herzen’s—their differences came vividly to light. Herzen put the matter squarely to Kavelin: “Your pamphlet has put a boundary between us; one step can cross it—your renunciation of it as a mistake.” In his long and poignant reply, Kavelin showed himself desperately anxious to avoid a break. He reminded Herzen that although he had not thought *Kolokol* was taking the right tack, he had never supposed “that on that account we had to turn our backs on one another.”<sup>55</sup> He insisted that his affection and regard for Herzen were as great as ever and pleaded for a chance to explain himself in person. But he could not bring himself to renounce his views. After another exchange of letters, there came a final break in relations.

The university troubles and the break with Herzen, coupled with the death of his only son, made for a moral crisis in Kavelin’s life. Another element was his renunciation of Chicherin. Kavelin had jeopardized his standing with the students by defending Chicherin, who, as a professor at Moscow University, advocated a ban on student corporations and stern repression of disorder.<sup>56</sup> A few months later, Kavelin gratuitously broke off relations with Chicherin and stood adamant in the face of pleas very like those he himself was shortly to address to Herzen.<sup>57</sup> Thus Herzen was mistaken when he remarked that Kavelin had joined Chicherin in the camp of the “doctrinaires.”<sup>58</sup> Three years after his attempt to mediate between them, Kavelin was estranged from both Herzen and Chicherin.

Kavelin now took the initiative in the issuing of anathemas and struck out at his friends to right and to left. He broke with Pogodin, S. M. Soloviev, Kostomarov, and even the loyal Spasovich.<sup>59</sup> He regarded Golovnin’s various

53. V. D. Spasovich, introduction to volume 2 of Kavelin’s *Sobranie sochinenii*, p. xxiii.

54. *Pis'ma k Gertsenu*, p. 9.

55. *Ibid.*, p. 61.

56. Panteleev, *Vospominaniia*, p. 265.

57. Their exchange of letters, dating from late 1861 or early 1862, is reproduced in B. N. Chicherin, *Moskovskii universitet* (Moscow, 1929), pp. 61–65.

58. Gertsen, *Sobranie sochinenii*, 27:226.

59. Korsakov, “Materialy,” *Vestnik Evropy*, February 1887, pp. 634–38; N. I. Kostomarov, *Avtobiografiia* (Moscow, 1922), pp. 319–20; Spasovich, introduction to vol. 2 of

attempts to provide for him, even though he was suspect in government circles, as so many affronts to his dignity.<sup>60</sup> And he responded to the arrest and exile of Chernyshevsky, whom he had “been very, very fond of,” with statesmanlike composure.<sup>61</sup>

The Polish rebellion of 1863 stimulated Kavelin’s patriotism, and he fused this sentiment with his general despair to produce a kind of cataclysmic optimism. He refused to return to Russia, maintaining, “I am too old and too physically broken down to sniff about in the rot that wafts to me from there.”<sup>62</sup> But he was pleased to discover “how much of the bad in us has been faithfully copied from the French. . . . It will be so much the easier to get rid of [it].”<sup>63</sup> While “the material for the future edifice is not here [in Europe] but with us,” the time for construction was still remote: “The filth will be washed off—it is impossible that it should not be—and then see what will emerge from this people. I am sorry I shall not be able to look upon them after fifty or a hundred years.”<sup>64</sup> Although Russia was too deeply infected to escape the general cataclysm that awaited Western civilization, the “tsardom of the muzhiks” would rise again to renew the world, like the barbarians after the fall of Rome.

*Muzhitskoe tsarstvo*, the catchword by which Kavelin expressed his renewed patriotism, might have been deliberately chosen to emphasize his isolation, for it set him apart both from Slavophiles and other nationalists and from the young radicals who claimed to speak for the muzhik. And it provided him with a rubric under which he could anathematize both bureaucrats and radicals: “the French muddleheadedness below exactly corresponds to the false French system on top.”<sup>65</sup> Certainly his antagonism for the radicals did not reconcile him to the government. The government, he explained, “imagined, because of some scandal-mongering, that I was a dangerous man . . . and didn’t miss a single opportunity to humiliate, offend, and antagonize me, just as if I had been trying to get something by insinuating myself and intriguing. Now they know that they were mistaken and expect that I, like a bureaucrat who has

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Kavelin’s *Sobranie sochinenii*, p. xxvii. Kavelin was something of a Polonophile until the Rebellion of 1863, which alienated him from Spasovich and other Poles.

60. “Pis'ma K. D. Kavelina k A. I. Skrebitskomu,” *Vestnik Evropy*, March 1917, p. 178 passim.

61. *Pis'ma Gertsenu*, p. 82. But later Kavelin did intercede with the government for the exiled Chernyshevsky; see his letters of Feb. 8, 1865, in *Literaturnoe nasledstvo*, 67:137–40.

62. Kavelin, *Sobranie sochinenii*, 2:xxvii.

63. “Iz pisem K. D. Kavelina k K. K. Grotu,” *Russkaia starina*, 97 (January 1899): 140.

64. Korsakov, “Iz zhizni,” *Russkaia mys'*, April 1900, second pagination, pp. 12–13, and December 1899, second pagination, pp. 4–5.

65. *Ibid.*, May 1899, second pagination, p. 40.

been caught stealing, am going meekly to ask forgiveness. This I will never, never do."<sup>66</sup>

Although Kavelin did not ask forgiveness, material necessity eventually compelled him to return to St. Petersburg in 1865 and take up a humble position in the Ministry of Finance. By his own account, it was a bleak existence: "I lead a very solitary life," he explained to his nephew, "go out rarely, and pay few calls."<sup>67</sup> In the last twenty years of his life, he devoted himself to the study of philosophy and psychology and to the affairs of learned societies. He did offer up to the tsar and later to Loris-Melikov unsolicited advice on the struggle with the revolutionary movement,<sup>68</sup> and in the 1870s he published a few more political pamphlets. His career in public affairs, however, had ended long before—perhaps with his departure from St. Petersburg University, perhaps with his anathemas in the period just after.

Kavelin's reputation as a liberal rests most solidly on his earnest efforts on behalf of the abolition of serfdom and on his willingness to seek his goals by legal means, without striking heroic poses. One might also cite his advocacy of university autonomy, although there is nothing specifically liberal about the institutional solutions he favored. He was scarcely a liberal in his economic and political doctrines. Unlike Chicherin, he was no partisan of Manchesterian economics, and his endorsement of autocracy and his opposition to representative government were not liberal, however generous in impulse. His endorsement of the persecution of Chernyshevsky casts doubt on his credentials as a liberal. So does the pattern of his associations. At first he sought to make common cause not only with Miliutin and Chicherin, but also with Herzen and Chernyshevsky, with the tsar and the tsaritsa, with Katkov and Pogodin. By the end of his career, he was estranged from all of them and from every notable liberal (however defined) of his time. The liberal label will not stick to Kavelin.

A better understanding of Kavelin's career, and of its failure, should begin with the realization that he carried the habits and practices of the 1840s onto the broader stage of the 1850s and 1860s. In Nicholaevan Russia, educated society was still one. The Decembrist revolt disturbed its cohesion, but the restrictive government of Nicholas made it draw in upon itself. This was a world in which political differences were subdued and personal relations were paramount. The major line of division—between Slavophiles and Westerners—was slow to be drawn, and when it was, it did not demarcate left from right. And both sides lived a common social life with bureaucrats. Herzen has vividly de-

66. *Ibid.*, April 1900, second pagination, p. 42.

67. Korsakov, "Materialy," *Vestnik Evropy*, October 1886, p. 727.

68. "Zapiska K. D. Kavelina o nigilizme," ed. P. A. Zaionchkovsky, *Istoricheskii arkhiv*, 1950, no. 5, pp. 323–41; "Pis'mo K. D. Kavelina k grafu M. T. Loris-Melikovu," *Russkaia mysl'*, May 1906, pp. 31–37.

scribed how Belinsky confronted the functionaries of the Third Section in the salons of St. Petersburg. When policemen chatted with Chernyshevsky, by contrast, it was in the line of duty, for he was a man of a different era.

Kavelin's public activities in this new era bespeak the persistence of old attitudes. If educated society was indeed a whole (except for a few self-seeking officials), then it should be possible to mobilize this whole in behalf of reforms which all educated men must favor. This was the rationale of Kavelin's promiscuous courtship of public figures. Insofar as the cohesion of society was insufficient, personal affinity and personal connections could supply the bond. On this basis, Kavelin minimized his differences with Herzen, but also sought to enroll Pogodin, the tsaritsa, and many another. The one division to which Kavelin was sensitive in this period was still that between Slavophiles and Westerners.

This distinction, however, was losing its significance; indeed, the latter-day Slavophiles split apart as did the Westerners Kavelin, Chicherin, and Herzen.<sup>69</sup> The old alignments and the overall unity of educated society were both rapidly effaced by the emergence of public issues into a more or less open forum and by the rise in political partisanship. The abolition of serfdom precipitated this process. So long as abolition was an overriding goal, it served to bring together enlightened men of various persuasions and loyalties; so long as it was a remote goal, these men could keep company with those who tolerated serfdom. When it became a practical matter, and still more when it was promulgated, it provided a new ground for dispute about its particular provisions and about the supplementary reforms that might lie beyond it. These disputes revealed and enhanced differences which the towering issue of serfdom as such had obscured, and these disputes served to reshape educated society into a spectrum which endured, in its broad outlines, until the revolutions of 1917. The splitting off of the radical intelligentsia from the rest of educated society was only the most dramatic and significant part of this process. Kavelin's attempt to unite and mobilize educated society, to apply the habits of the 1840s to the politics of the reform era, ran counter to this process of fragmentation and crystallization and served ultimately to estrange him from all those he had sought to reconcile.

69. Richard Wortman, "Koshelev, Samarin, and Cherkassky and the Fate of Liberal Slavophilism," *Slavic Review*, 21, no. 2 (June 1962): 261-79.