

HÉLÈNE CARRÈRE D'ENCAUSSE

LENIN

REVOLUTION
AND
POWER



A HISTORY OF THE SOVIET UNION 1917–1953
Volume one

LENIN

Revolution and power

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INTRODUCTION

In the history of Russia and of the peoples who share her destiny, 1917 represents a radical break, a break with all that had been inherited from the past – structures of society, political system, intellectual approaches – as well as an entry into a world which the revolutionaries thought fundamentally different. The argument about what the *ancien regime* was is still going on. A regime which in every respect was moribund and turned despairingly towards the past? A regime making such rapid progress that had it not been for the war, the cataclysmic upheaval would have been avoided? The answers are matters of opinion rather than of scientific analysis: but the very fact that the question exists means that we cannot ignore the pre-revolutionary world. To understand the Revolution, to understand the problems by which the Bolsheviks were confronted after 1917, one must first look at the society which they destroyed and the elements with which they were to build a new world.

THE STRUCTURE OF SOCIETY

Space and diversity are perhaps the characteristics most suited to describe the Russian Empire. Fanning out from the small territory of Muscovy at the end of the Middle Ages, the Russian princes down the centuries continually pushed back the frontiers of their possessions, so that, by the middle of the nineteenth century, these extended over Europe, Asia and America. The transfer of Alaska in 1867 reduced their dominion to Europe and Asia alone, but this curtailment helped to increase the cohesion of the Empire, which from then onwards stretched over unbroken continuous territory, which, with the exception of the mountainous barriers of the Urals and the Caucasus, was formed of a succession of plains and rivers. Astride Europe and Asia, without any natural barrier to mark the

end of the metropolis and the beginning of the conquered lands, the Russian Empire always tried to assert its claim to belong to Europe and was always torn between its leaders' desire to be part of Western Europe, symbolised by the transfer of the capital from Moscow to St Petersburg, and the weight of the non-European territories and peoples, including the Russian peasants who also bore the imprint of Tartar domination. The Russia of the cities and the Russia of the plains barely impinged upon each other until 1917, in spite of the constant efforts of the rulers.

The peoples of this vast empire were themselves very diverse. According to the 1897 census, they numbered 123 million, in that of 1913, 159 million. Russia was thus the most densely populated country in the Western world (68 million inhabitants in Germany, 95 million in the United States), but it was sparsely populated in relation to its surface area: seven inhabitants to the square kilometre, very unequally distributed. The demographic growth was due to an exceptionally high birth-rate (45.5 per cent in 1913) with an equally high mortality, 29.4 per cent, many of the deaths being those of children. The demographic structure of the Empire on the eve of the First World War was still that of a backward people.

The population was varied, reflecting the growth of the Russian State to the scale of a continent. The census of 1897 on the basis of the mother tongue and not of nationality (the census of 1913 being incomplete, it was not until 1926 that the relationship between language and nationality was ascertained) indicated that 55.7 per cent of the population of the Empire was non-Russian. The population was divided at the time, according to the table below.

Most of the inhabitants lived in the rich zones in which the cli-

Distribution of the population of the Russian Empire according to language, taken from the census of 1897

<i>Nationalities</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Nationalities</i>	<i>%</i>
Russians	44.32	Lithuanians and Latvians	2.46
Ukrainians	17.81	Germans	1.42
Poles	6.71	Hillfolk from the Caucasus	1.34
Slavs, Byelorussians	4.68	Georgians	1.07
Turks	10.82	Iranians	0.62
Jews	4.03	Mongols	0.28
Finns	2.78	Various	0.73

mate fostered human habitation, around the capital cities, in the 'black earth' of the Ukraine or, again, in the Caucasus. Beyond the Urals and the Caspian Sea, uninhabited tracts of land surrounded isolated settlements.

Moreover, at the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries, the movement of population towards the virgin lands accelerated. The building of the Trans-Siberian railway and governmental encouragement helped, before 1914, to bring more than 5 million settlers to Siberia in search of land. The mobility of the Russian peasants was one of the characteristics of those years. Another was the growth of the towns. For centuries, the towns had been mainly market-places and their population varied according to the importance and the volume of trade centred on them. On the eve of the First World War, urbanisation had developed considerably and the movement of population into the cities was due rather to industrialisation and the inconveniences of rural life than to traditional commerce. Moscow and St Petersburg contained nearly 2 million inhabitants, Kiev 500,000, Kharkov and Baku nearly 300,000 and twenty or so towns had over 100,000 inhabitants. Between 1897 and 1913, the urban population had increased by 70 per cent. It still represented only 18 per cent of the total population, but the process of urbanisation seemed to be irreversible.

At the turn of the century, the great problem of the Russian Empire was land. The peasants represented 80 per cent of the population, and the land on which they lived could not produce enough to feed them. In 1861, the agrarian reform had abolished serfdom and given the peasants the right to buy land. Many of them, too poor to avail themselves of this opportunity, passed their right on; while others burdened themselves with permanent debt. The countryside contained landless peasants, owners of tiny plots of land, richer peasants, great landowners. The reform maintained cultivation in common – the *Mir* – which regrouped the peasants and redistributed the land between the families every five or six years. Preserved because the autocracy thought that it was a stabilising factor in the countryside, the *Mir*, however, paralysed the activity of the most dynamic peasants and hampered the progress of agriculture, without fulfilling its political role. Stolypin, the President of the Council from 1906 to 1911, tried by various methods to remedy this: in 1906, the peasant who was the sole tenant of his land was allowed to leave the *Mir*; in 1910, individual, and not family, ownership became the basis of Russian agriculture; finally, a law was passed in 1913 permitting the *Mir* to be dissolved, at

the request of half the members. At the time of the Revolution, less than half the peasants remained in the communal environment, the rest having opted for private ownership. Unrest in the countryside had been the argument that weighed most heavily in favour of the Stolypin reforms. Since 1891, the Russian countryside had been the scene of sporadic outbursts of violence. Eternally in revolt, the Russian peasant sometimes killed his landlord – this was how Dostoyevsky's father died in 1838 – and sometimes took part in risings which since Razin and Pugachev have become *chansons de geste*, the stuff of epic poetry. The land-hunger which haunted the peasantry led sometimes to the setting up of organised movements, demanding that the land be distributed, and sometimes to huge migrations: Siberia at that time appeared to be the promised land. But neither the prospects offered by Siberia nor the technical advances achieved on the eve of the First World War brought any general solution to the land problem and the peasants' determination to acquire it continued unabated.

Compared with the overwhelming number of peasants, the working class was still very small in 1914 and very difficult to estimate, because the number of genuine workers, which was about 3 million, was increased by an almost equal number of seasonal workers, driven to the towns by lack of land, who yet never succeeded in severing their link with the countryside. Although few in number, the workers formed a social group with which the autocracy was forced to reckon. They were concentrated in a few great industrial centres, in large enterprises, and their working and living conditions had developed in them an acute class consciousness. This consciousness was increased by the fact that many of the improvements won from the 1880s onwards (1897: 11-hour day and a weekly rest day; 1906: 10-hour day and the right of association; 1912: establishment of sickness benefit) were won through their own pressure. Badly administered as these laws might be, the working class had realised that it could sometimes impose its own will. Derisory wages and deplorable living conditions helped to isolate the workers and to bind them closely to their own organisations, even though the trades unions were infiltrated by police agents; the autocracy approved of trades unionism *a la* Zubatov. This, however, did not prevent the working class after 1905 from demonstrating its solidarity in strikes involving 2 million workers in 1905, then after a lull, 500,000 in 1912 and 1 million in 1914. The government could not ignore the activities of this social class.

At the other end of the scale, the aristocracy and the body of the

privileged classes formed a small group. A rich mercantile middle class, enterprising and often very open, constituted, together with the aristocracy, a narrow social stratum, cut off from the masses and unable to act as a bridge as did the bourgeoisie in Western societies. As capitalism developed, prospects of enrichment and of action opened up before them.

Between the well-to-do and the masses, there yawned a gulf which the artisans, and especially the intelligentsia which was emerging at the beginning of the twentieth century, could not fill. Yet its importance should not be underestimated. The middle classes formed rapidly, composed of teachers, doctors, midwives, employees of the *Zemstvos* (local councils), all of whom were to guide and educate the masses. But the middle classes, who were just beginning to take shape in 1913 and whom Lenin analysed, arrived too late and remained still too small to play a decisive part in transforming Russian society.

The great changes at the end of the nineteenth century were the technical advances and the rapid development of capitalism. The technical advances were to be seen in the countryside and in the railways. Stolypin's agrarian reforms brought a visible improvement in agriculture, which affected the daily life of the Russians. Even though the production for 1913 cannot be taken as a basis for reference, because it was a year of exceptional harvests, the figures testify to a far higher general production than any Russia had known at the end of the nineteenth century. Techniques were modernised, the harvests were better, the advance of the railways enabled the crops to be moved more quickly. The great famines seemed to be things of the past. One has only to read the youthful memoirs of one of the great Soviet writers, Papustovsky, to realise that the condition of the people was gradually changing; yet the advances could not conceal the two great weaknesses in Russian agriculture – the discrepancy between the regions (the rich Ukraine compared with the poor and badly managed lands in the north of Russia) and between the men themselves, the rich peasants who were trying to modernise the techniques and tools of production and who were confronted by the great mass of small peasants, attached to their ancestral methods, whose only concern was to eke out a bare living. In spite of the advances – due to special regions and to a special class of peasants – Russian agriculture was still very backward.

In this immense country, communications were a problem which was just beginning to be solved by the end of the nineteenth cen-

ture. Thanks to the persistence of Witte, the Minister of Finance, the network of railway lines had doubled between 1892 and 1903; in 1910, Russia had 63,000 kilometres of track. The great success was the Trans-Siberian railway which was finished in 1905 and through which the potential of Siberia could be realised. The extension of the Empire southwards was confirmed by the construction of the Trans-Caucasian and the Trans-Caspian railways. The rise of capitalism and the rapid industrialisation of Russia made the development of railway communications indispensable. Capitalism in Russia was of a special kind. There was little family capital so that the funds came essentially from the State and from appeals for foreign capital. The Russian Government, before the Revolution, drew the funds needed to develop the economy from taxes, which in a rural country hit the peasants particularly hard (like the Bolsheviks, the Finance Ministers of the Russian Empire realised that the accumulation of capital must be made at the expense of the peasantry), and from borrowing. In the years preceding the Revolution, the State debt constantly increased. Here foreign capital played a decisive part; it dominated the mining industry and owned half that of metallurgy and chemicals. French capital represented 80 per cent of the State borrowing from abroad, plus 30 per cent of the private investments; other capital came from Britain, Germany and Belgium. The great foreign captains of industry, like the Nobels, who exploited the oil from the Caucasus, or Schneider, were present in Russia. The industry which developed, thanks to the support of foreign capital and technicians, was in a few years to make Russia the fifth largest industrial country in the world. The production of iron ore multiplied by five from 1890 to 1913 (9.3 million tons in 1913); that of coal by eight (29.1 million tons); that of steel by 5 (4.2 million tons). Industry was dispersed throughout several regions; the Ukraine, the regions of Moscow and St Petersburg, the Urals and Baku, where the prosperity was built upon oil. It was composed of very large enterprises; more than half the proletariat worked in factories with more than 500 workers. The capitalist development of Russia was one of the fundamental factors in the pre-revolutionary years; at the same time, the considerable intervention of foreign capital gave to the rapidly expanding economy a relatively colonial character.

ABSOLUTE POWER

The political system had on the whole changed very little up to the

beginning of the twentieth century. It was dominated by the Tsar who governed by decree, supported by a fairly large bureaucracy, of which the hereditary and official aristocracy formed the backbone. This absolute power had been to some extent reinforced by the abolition of serfdom, which had weakened the nobility. The Orthodox Church, the national Church, consecrated the absolute power, giving it its blessing. For centuries, the Church had been dominated by the State and those of its leaders who had tried to oppose the temporal power had been forced to withdraw.

However, the Revolution of 1905 had badly affected the absolutist State. The popular revolt forced the sovereign to accept concessions. This revolt affected simultaneously, but not in one co-ordinated movement, both the cities and the countryside. The delegates of the *zemstvos* put forward a liberal programme, the peasants seized land, and the workers went on strike. The State was at first without any troops as the army was blocked in the Far East by the war with Japan and could not react. It was not until August 1905, after the peace, that the repatriated troops made it possible for repressive action to be taken. Concessions and repression were used to restore order. It was necessary to fight, not only against a people in revolt, but one which possessed, in the St Petersburg Soviet over which Trotsky presided, a political weapon. Witte, once again in the government from which he had been ejected because of his liberalism, forced the Tsar in the manifesto of 30 October 1905 to grant a constitutional change in the system. The individual liberties of the citizens, which were demanded in all the programmes, were recognised; the nation received the right to elect a representative Assembly, the Duma.

However, the concessions were soon curtailed in practice. The electoral law of December 1905 established a method of indirect and differentiated suffrage, making provision for various categories of citizens; landowners, the middle classes, peasants and workers. In May 1906, the Tsar, having got rid of Witte, corrected the reforms by the 'fundamental laws' which created, alongside the Duma, a second Assembly, the Council of the Empire, the members of which were appointed (under the organic law of 24 April/7 May 1906 they were divided into two groups – 98 per cent were elected through various methods of voting by social bodies – clergy, nobility, the merchants, etc. and a fairly equal number were appointed by the Tsar), and this Council through its powers acted as a counterweight to the elected Assembly.

The Duma, however, was promptly dissolved after it had fought

for the establishment of universal suffrage and the adoption of agrarian reform. The second Duma, elected in 1907, was even more short-lived because of the great number of socialists who sat in it. Next, many adjustments to the electoral system were made, permitting the reduction of the representation of the parties and of the nationalities. The last two Dumas – 1907–12 and 1912–17 – ratified the retreat from constitutionalism and the return to absolutism. At the time of the third Duma, Stolypin became Prime Minister. He was a remarkably intelligent man who saw clearly how quickly the revolutionary thrust was accelerating. He tried to avert the growing danger by a policy of reforms, aimed at stabilising the society, without jeopardising the supreme authority. He thought that the peasantry would decide the country's future; this is why he directed his policy towards it, modified the system of the *Mir* and tried to strengthen in the countryside a layer of small landed proprietors who, through their own initiative, could advance the progress of peasant society and production. The Bolsheviks, realising that his analyses were correct, watched closely the policy of their most formidable adversary. His assassination in 1911 put an end to a policy which was consciously directed towards a gradual transformation of the society and encouraged all those who believed in authority, pure and simple.

After 1911, the spirit of the reform begun in 1905 and maintained by the desire to save the Russian political system which inspired Stolypin, no longer existed. His successors, haunted by his tragic end, had only one idea – to crush the rising tide of revolution – and not to compete with it. The growing authoritarianism of the political system was to be the surest ally of the revolutionary forces. The disappointed peasantry and the working classes retired. After a period of calm, the peasants resumed their sporadic risings and the workers their strikes. The emerging bourgeoisie, who had for a moment thought that they could take part in the political life of a transformed State, was alienated from the autocracy and no longer thought of reforms, but of radical changes.

Lastly, there remained a problem which had not even been broached after 1905, and yet which contained profound grievances, that of the subject peoples of the Empire. The indifference shown by the imperial government towards them was all the more dangerous, because they based their hopes, not only on the Revolution of 1905, but also on an external event which had affected the Empire, that is the Russo-Japanese War. Conquering, expansionist Russia had suffered an exceptional humiliation: she was the first colonising

State in the modern world to be defeated in war by an Asiatic people – this seemed for a time to call into question her real power. Among the conquered people of the Empire, the event aroused national aspirations which were sometimes explicit, and which were at the root of the growing agitation after 1907. What these people wanted before 1913 was equality for the nations, and to pass out of the status of non-Russian second-class citizens (*inorodsky*) to that of citizens with full rights in the Empire. Their demands, still muted, did not as yet threaten the unity of the Empire, but they weighed heavily at the hour of its fall.

The system of absolute power was challenged at the beginning of the twentieth century, not only by the social forces which were developing but, before these forces had even appeared, by powerful movements of ideas, the evolution of which coincided with the modern history of Russia.

THE INTELLECTUAL CRISIS

This history is rooted in the break which Peter the Great introduced into the life of his country by the reforms which were meant to uproot it from the East and the past and to carry it forward into the West and the future. The nineteenth century was the century of Russia's intellectual awakening. This took place against the background of innumerable problems inherited from the past. Peter the Great had wanted to create a powerful centralised State; in the nineteenth century, the essential characteristics of his creation were perpetuated, but the weaknesses inherent in his work then assumed new dimensions.

The Russian State had no unity; it juxtaposed authority and the masses, without any real communication between the two. The autocracy and the nobility were dominated by a spirit of scepticism and rationalism which had come from the West, while the masses drew their essential strength from their religious faith. Although they continued to respect the person of the sovereign (most Christian king and temporal father of the people, earthly projection of the Heavenly Father), they watched with amazement and indignation the moral dissolution of the nobility and because of it condemned the governing class. To the problem of the growing division between the people and the autocracy, another must be added, that of the change which had taken place in Russia's situation in the world which was revealed by the intellectual elite. In their time, in an absolutist Europe, Peter the Great and Catherine in spite of their

authoritarianism, had been enlightened sovereigns. They had a clear idea of progress, of the need to develop their country and to change it. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, the situation of Russia had completely altered. While Europe as a result of the French Revolution had seen the advance of liberal ideas, Russia had rejected liberalism and had retreated into an autocracy which was tempered by the ideas of progress of the enlightened sovereigns of the past. Suddenly Russia was lagging behind Europe in which she had become the embodiment of obscurantism and reaction. In the nineteenth century, this State, which Peter the Great had so wanted to be part of Europe, seemed to return to Asia, not only through its territorial expansion but, above all, through the ideology of the autocracy. Until the Napoleonic era, this change in Russia and the growing isolation of the autocracy had only been faintly visible because the country was comparatively closed to the outside world. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, a narrow layer of individuals, the intelligentsia, which during those decades was to be enlarged, suddenly became aware of the problems of their country and decided to deal with them.

The Russian intelligentsia is a phenomenon which is probably unique in European history, both because of its composition, its evolution and the role which it played in the development of the revolutionary movement.

It is a unique phenomenon, first of all, because it cannot be defined sociologically. The intelligentsia was numerically a very small layer, situated between the autocracy and the nobility on the one hand, and the masses on the other; it was, above all, an ideological layer. It was defined by the awareness of the problems of the country and the 'revolutionary spirit'. At the social level, it was a conglomeration of men of various social origins which itself changed during the various epochs of the intellectual history of modern Russia.

Emerging from different backgrounds, the intelligentsia generally broke away and organised itself alone, without foundations, without stable material resources in a situation of voluntary precariousness. Although Russia did not yet have a proletariat, the intelligentsia, because of its chosen way of life, formed the first proletariat of its country.

The political history of the intelligentsia can, by and large, be divided into two periods: before 1870, it felt that it was indeed an instrument of history; after 1870, it did its best to serve the social class which it considered to be the driving power of change. This

was to be, first, the peasantry and then the proletariat. Its political evolution took place together with a more complex intellectual evolution which corresponded to the successive moments in the formation of the intelligentsia. Its history is characterised by an extraordinary acceleration. The characters, the components, the aims of the Russian intelligentsia constantly changed and its rich diversity contrasted with the intellectual aridity of the ruling class.

The history of Russia before 1917 is, when all is said and done, less the history of the organised revolutionary movement than that of an intellectual renaissance, based on revolutionary ideas which, starting from the apex of Russian society, in a few decades reached ever-widening circles.

The first crisis was provoked by the contact of Russia, enclosed in its political and intellectual system, with the outside world in 1825. The Russian officers, whom the war had taken to France, became aware of the stagnation in their country and the movement of ideas elsewhere, and brought back with them the ideology of the French Revolution. At the same time, other currents of thought also penetrated the Russian aristocracy, the only social class to be in contact with the outside world and which could thus measure the gulf which existed between Russia and the rest of Europe. These currents were mainly freemasonry (the influence of the freemasons spread rapidly in Russia during the nineteenth century) and the Quakers, whose liberal ideas impressed even Alexander I.

The Decembrist movement embodied this first contact with liberal ideas; however, its only influence upon Russian history was as an example. Its weakness lay in its complete lack of sociological foundations. The Decembrists were, in fact, aristocratic conspirators who, believing that the source of all the evils in Russia was the autocracy and the lack of freedom, threw themselves into an ill-managed *coup* against the whole regime, which they believed that they could overthrow by destroying the Tsar. This ill-fated movement had no contact either with society or with reality. With the exception of a few liberals, no social class felt any concern about the sacrifice of the Decembrists nor did anyone identify with them. In addition, the Decembrists had not included the people's conscience in their calculations, and this oversight was the reason for their isolation. In 1825, the Russian people were attached to the Tsar, by tradition, but also through the Church/State link, and they saw the assassination of the Tsar as both a crime and a sacrilege. The spirit which inspired the Decembrists was not the idea of changing society, but of spreading liberty. The society could

understand an appeal to its immediate difficulties, but not the idea of liberty which remained an abstraction to them. Thus, between the first opponents of the autocracy and the rest of society there was an absolute gulf. However, the unique aspirations of this abortive attempt must be remembered. In the whole history of the Russian revolutionary movement the idea of liberty only appeared once: in 1825. After the Decembrists, the men and the movements which questioned the autocracy did so in the name of the transformation of a society, in the name of an ideal of social justice. Only the aristocrats of 1825, influenced by the French ideology, invoked the idea of liberty, which the Russian society neither understood nor retained.

The second revolutionary wave which started shortly after the execution of the Decembrists profoundly differed from them because of its sociological character and aspirations. After the discovery of the plot of 1825 and the subsequent repression, the government, already authoritarian, froze into a rejection of all change. But at the same time, the sovereigns, constantly under different influences, had vague impulses towards reform. These swings between authoritarianism and reformism sapped any hope of reform from above and helped to implant in the intelligentsia the idea that the changes had to be made without the autocracy and against it. The whole intelligentsia – and no longer a handful of individuals – felt that they were called upon to prepare these fundamental changes and an intellectual debate of an amplitude hitherto unknown divided them on the question of Russia's future. The intelligentsia had changed in character. As well as the aristocrats and often replacing them, there appeared men whose influence was derived from their education: professors, writers, lawyers. The debate, too, had changed its nature. For the general idea of liberty, they had substituted the more concrete one of a fundamental change in the structures of Russian society to drag it out of its backwardness.

What divided them was the old question which Peter the Great had solved, that of what road to take. For some, like Byelinsky, a *Westerniser* like Peter the Great, there was only one way, that taken by the advanced societies of Europe which passed through the development of capitalism and rejected the Russian specificity. Against the *Westernisers*, the *Slavophiles* examined Russia, her past and her originality and contrasted it with the corruption of the Western world. Russian spirituality, the generosity of the people should not be given up, but on the contrary, should be used to support a general rebirth. Slavophiles like Khomiakov and

Chaadayev were not content simply to challenge the Western way; they assigned to the Russian genius a messianic role. This was what would save the world by its transformation and its example.

In this debate, Herzen occupied a unique position. Starting as a Westerniser, he came gradually to share the beliefs of the Slavophiles. Beginning by utterly rejecting the idea of a purely Russian destiny, he came to denounce Western 'mercantilism' and its bourgeois spirit. He came to the conclusion that despite its great weaknesses, Russia must be protected above all from the two flaws which he saw in capitalism. Thus, this convinced Westerniser maintained at the end of his life that Russia must be spared from capitalism and develop at home the communal socio-economic structure in which her originality lay and which would be for her the way of progress. This may be seen as the gradual emergence of two very important strands of Russian thought. In the first place, the instinctive horror of the bourgeoisie, stigmatised by all Russian writers and presented as a symbol of decadence and corruption. This attitude, very widespread in Russia, was totally contrary to that of Marx, who emphasised the native qualities of the bourgeoisie, its spirit of enterprise and the historical task which had devolved upon it. In Russia, on the contrary, the bourgeoisie as a class would have found it difficult to develop, so great was the opprobrium attached to the concept. The other idea which can be found in Herzen, and which Marx only accepted very late and then only partially, was that of the diversity of historical processes, linked to the diversity of historical conditions. The possibility of bypassing capitalism, widely accepted at the end of the twentieth century, was then very new. In putting forward this hypothesis, Herzen had already opened the way to the *populists*.

The Decembrist movement and the quarrel between the Slavophiles and the Westernisers lay until 1860 at the heart of the political debate in Russia. After 1860, the movements of ideas succeeded each other very much more rapidly and the range of ideas tended to broaden.

Towards 1860 the *nihilists* appeared. These, unlike the majority of their predecessors, owed nothing to external influences and were the embodiment of a specifically Russian movement with no equivalent anywhere else. With Pisarev, Dobrolybov, Chernichevsky, the intellectual history of Russia underwent a very remarkable intellectual shift. Their predecessors, faithful to the cultural ideas of their time, adopted a militant conception of literature, philosophy and the arts – they held that the intellect should not be free,