Work and Society in the Orthodox East: Byzantium and Russia, AD 450–1861

49

Bradley Bowden

Contents

Abstract

Often overlooked by Western scholars, the Orthodox East has provided some of the most important societies in the human experience. For a thousand years, Byzantium provided a living link to the world of antiquity. Over the last 300 years, Russia, in a variety of guises (Muscovy, Imperial Russia, Soviet Russia, the Russian Federation), has always been a major world power. Despite the success of these societies, however, many of the attributes that we have associated with "modern management" – competition, legal protection of person and property, and guaranteed freedom of movement for labor – have often been absent. In exploring the reasons for such outcomes, we argue that blame should not be ascribed to a Byzantine cultural heritage supposedly hostile to individual identity. Nor is it the case that Orthodox societies such as Russia are hostile to concepts such as freedom and individualism. The resonance of the works of Tolstoy, Dostoyevsky, and Solzhenitsyn indicates that such values are deeply ingrained. Rather than being the result of cultural attributes, this chapter argues that the absence (or weak presence) of societal protections for person and

B. Bowden (✉)
Griffith Business School, Griffith University, Nathan, QLD, Australia
e-mail: b.bowden@griffith.edu.au

B. Bowden et al. (eds.), *The Palgrave Handbook of Management History*,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-62114-2_47

property reflects peculiar historic experiences. Located at Europe's eastern periphery, the security of these societies was always precarious. In both Byzantium and Russia, the state feared that personal and economic freedoms would weaken its capacity to defend the frontiers. However, by denying freedom of movement, and protection of property, to its citizens, imperial Russia – like Muscovy and Byzantium before it – curtailed the entrepreneurship essential to its long-term success.

Keywords

Russia · Byzantium · Moscow · Freedom · Serfdom · Dostoyevsky · Orthodox Christianity

Introduction

Is Russia profoundly different to the societies of Western Europe? Did it experience the managerial revolution of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in ways that bear comparison with Britain, France, the United States, and other nations in the West, and if not, why not? This chapter speaks to these questions.

On the eve of World War I, the Czech historian and political theorist, Thomas Masaryk, reflected on the unique "Spirit of Russia." A longtime advocate of a separate Slav identity, Masaryk arguably had a better understanding of Eastern European affairs than most. In 1919, he was elected as Czechoslovakia's first President. Yet, even Masaryk found prerevolutionary Russia mystifying. "Slav as I am," Masaryk (1913/1955: 5) recorded, "a visit to Russia has involved many more surprises than a visit to any other land." In Masaryk opinion, what made Russia different was the cultural and religious heritage of Byzantium, the Greek Orthodox society that emerged from the breakup of the Roman Empire in the fifth century AD. As Masaryk (1913/1955: 24–25) expressed it, "the decisive centralizing force" in Russian society stemmed from "the dependence of the grand princes upon the church. . . princely absolutism received a religious sanction." The view that Russia's peculiarity stemmed from its Byzantine and Orthodox heritage was one shared by the great Belgium historian, Henri Pirenne. It was from Byzantium, Pirenne (1925/1952: 51) recorded that Russians "received Christianity . . .it was from her that they borrowed their art, their writing, the use of money and a good part of their administration organization." The French historian, Fernand Braudel (1987/1993), and the American political theorists, Samuel Huntington (1996/2003) and Carroll Quigley (1979), have also argued that Russia's uniqueness is a product of its Byzantine heritage, a heritage that supposedly emphasizes communal and state solidarity at the expense of individual identity. As "a society and a culture," Huntington (1996/2003: 140) noted, early modern Russia bore "little resemblance" to the geographical adjacent West. In consequence, "distinctive feature of Western civilization" that did much to explain the West's historical success – "separation of church and state, rule of law, social pluralism, representative bodies, individualism" – "were almost totally absent from the Russian experience."

For Masaryk, Pirenne, Braudel, Quigley, and Huntington, the historical uniqueness of Russia – which typically manifested itself in an all-powerful state that retarded the emergence of free-market capitalism and associated managerial endeavor – was more a curse than a benefit. "At the end of the seventeenth century," Huntington (1996/2003: 140) explained, "Russia was not only different from Europe it was also backward compared to Europe." For others, however, the unique features of Russia – supposedly built around communal and social solidarity – brought peculiar benefits to both the workplace and the wider society. In articulating this view, the nineteenth-century Russian novelist, Alexander Herzen, suggested that an excessive Western focus on politics and government caused a profound misunderstanding of Russian society. Yes, it was true, Herzen (1855/1956: 13) conceded, that in Russia "the individual has always been crushed . . .engulfed by the state." The modern, centralized state was, however, in Herzen's opinion, an alien Western import. Despite the best efforts of bureaucratic oppression, true Russian values survived in "the principle of community," in "the village commune" (Herzen 1855/1956: 15; Herzen 1851/1956: 183). Rather than adopt the rampant and destructive individualism of the West, the Russian commune shared wealth according to need in a form of "rural communism" (Herzen 1851/1956: 189). In consequence, so Herzen (1851/1956: 189) argued, Russian communalism offered Western societies – torn apart by the economic and social tensions of industrialization – a beacon in the darkness, "an actual instance of an attempt . . . in the direction of the division of the land amongst those who work it." The view that Russian communal values offered Europe a pathway to "prosperity and contentment," built around "harmony and unity," was one Herzen shared with Leo Tolstoy (see Tolstoy 1876/1978: 369). In Tolstoy's (1876/1978: 367) *Anna Karenina*, for example, the central character – the high-minded aristocratic reformer, Kostya Levin – only makes a success of his rural estate when he comes to the realization that the ideas of John Stuart Mill and classical economics do "not apply in Russia." For, "where capital was expended in the European fashion," thereby coming into conflict with "the spirit of the [Russian] people," so it was that "little was produced." In short, any managerial activity in Russia could only succeed when it operated on Russian rather than Western principles.

Whether one views Russian uniqueness positively or negatively, there is no gainsaying the fact that not only Russian but also the Orthodox East as a whole followed a different *historical* trajectory to the Latin West from the mid-fifth century AD onward. Whereas the West retreated into rural barbarism after the great Germanic *Volkerwanderung* of the fifth century, Byzantium maintained a physical connection with the world of classical antiquity for another millennium. The splendors of Constantinople and Byzantium, and its profound impact on early Russian societies, are well recorded in the so-called Russian Primary Chronicle, our main source of evidence on the formative experiences of the Russian and Ukrainian people. In reporting on their visit to Constantinople's *Hagia Sophia* (the Church of Holy Wisdom) in AD 987, a delegation from Kiev is recording as saying:

> . . . the Greeks led us up to the edifices where they worship their God, and we knew not whether we were in heaven or on earth. For on earth there is no such splendour or such beauty, and we were at a loss to describe it . . . God dwells there among men. (Russian Primary Chronicle 1337/1953: 111)

So impressed were the Kievan Rus, the most significant of the early Russian societies, that in the ensuing year they converted to the Orthodox faith. Subsequent to his momentous decision, which set Russia on a different *cultural* path to the West, Kiev's Prince Vladimir, so it is reported (Russian Primary Chronicle 1337/1953: 117), "began to found churches and to assign priests throughout the cities . . .He took the children of the best families, and sent them for instruction in book learning." At a time when the peasantry of medieval Europe suffered the indignity of serfdom, the ordinary Russian enjoyed social freedom, pursuing "slash-and-burn" agriculture in the forest of conifers and deciduous trees that lay to the north of Kiev. In the ninth and tenth centuries, the various Russian principalities also enjoyed a flourishing commerce with both Byzantium and the Muslim Caliphate of Baghdad, Pirenne (1925/1952: 54) observing that "Russia was living by trade at an era when the Carolingian Empire [of Western Europe] knew only the demesnial regime." From the eleventh century, however, these outwardly benign circumstances took a turn for the worse. First, a nomadic people, the Pechenegs, occupied the Ukrainian steppe, destroying trade with the Muslim South and Byzantine. Then, in the thirteenth century, invading Mongol hordes destroyed Kiev, occupying both the Volga basin and the Ukrainian steppe. In 1453, the fall of Constantinople to the Ottoman Turks cut Russia's physical ties to its Byzantium roots. The collective effect of these experiences was to isolate Russia from the wider world, even as Western Europe enjoyed a commercial and cultural Renaissance.

As the "West" looked outward, Russia suffered economic isolation, becoming a "self-contained" society, living "by and upon itself" (Braudel 1977: 83). With the emergence of a new Russian state in the fifteenth century, centered on Moscow rather than Kiev, the society also witnessed a process of gradual enserfment that culminated in the Legal Code (*Sobornoe Ulozhenie*) of 1649, a document described as "the most important written document in all of Russian history before the nineteenth century" (Hellie 2006a: 551). Under its terms, Russian society was subject to a serfdom that was more restrictive and onerous than the earlier Western European variety. Whereas in the medieval West, a peasant who found city employment effectively escaped serfdom, Russian serfs were legally denied the possibility of an urban existence after 1649, becoming instead a closed rural caste. In Russia's towns, the code of 1649 also bound urban dwellers to their existing occupation and place of residence, denying merchants the capacity "to move elsewhere, even if superior commercial opportunities seemed to warrant it" (Shaw 2006a: 587).

The consequences of the *Ulozhenie* of 1649, and Russia's belated embrace of serfdom, were profound. Rural activities and values were emphasized at the expense of commerce, industry, and entrepreneurship. Such problems remained even after the "Westernizing" reforms of Peter the Great (1682–172), which were premised on the assumption that Western technology and military methods could be grafted on to

Russian society without the need for far-reaching social or managerial changes. In consequence, even after the emancipation of Russia's serfs in 1861, Russia lagged other European societies in a host of business-related areas. In describing post-emancipation circumstances, Roger Portal (1966: 803) observed that "Russia was a country where commercial capitalism was scarcely developed, credit economy weak, and banking organization almost non-existent." Although Herzen, Tolstoy, and Ivan Turgenev penned romanticized accounts of peasant life – Herzen (1855/1956: 190) declaring that the "future of Russia rested with the *moujik*" [peasant] – the lived experience of the ordinary Russian was abysmal. In describing life inside the typical peasant abode, which normally housed three generations of a single family, Hellie (2006b: 289–290) records how "The smoke was so dense that it left a line around the wall about shoulder height, where the bottom of the smoke cloud hung. The air was so toxic that it disinfected the hut to the extent that not even cockroaches could survive." The industrial backwardness of Russia is perhaps best indicated by its inability to exploit the nation's abundant coal resources. For without coal for heating and cooking, Russia's urban population was restricted to wood fueled fires with accompanying risk of fire, Turgenev (1862/2009: 52) recording in his classic novel, *Fathers and Sons*, that "It's a well-known fact that our provincial towns burn down every five years or so." Without coal, the large-scale production of steel was also impossible, curtailing the growth of heavy machinery, railroads, and shipping. Theoretically, the vast deposits of the Donbas basis should have ensured comparative Russian advantage. Such, however, was not the case. In 1830, the Russian production of 300,000 tons was only 50% above the output that Britain managed in 1560 (Pollard 1980: 216; Portal 1966: 817). In 1890, as Fig. 1 indicates, Russian coal production was still a tiny fraction of that obtained by the industrializing societies of Britain and the United States.

If Fig. 1 points to economic and managerial backwardness, then Fig. 2 – which compares population growth in Muscovy/Russia with the United States – suggests the reverse: a growing and dynamic society. Whereas prior to 1700 the Russian homelands were geographically vast but sparsely populated, a transformation occurred around 1700 (i.e., the era of the Petrine reforms). By 1800, Russia's population (35 million) exceeded that of France (25–26 million), making it Europe's most numerous society. In the course of the nineteenth century, despite the social burdens of serfdom, population growth accelerated, surpassing even that of the United States with its large immigrant populations. Such gains would have been impossible unless the society possessed the wherewithal to feed tens of millions of extra mouths. The much-maligned backwardness of tsarist Russia was also belied by its battlefield performances, where time and again Russian armies shattered those of the West.

What explains the dynamic expansion of Russia's population during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, a growth that was to make Russia one of the world's preeminent powers? The most obvious answer is geographical. Like the United States, Russia in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was a frontier society, availing itself of the Ukrainian and Kuban steppes as well as the great Siberian wilderness. Agriculturally, the steppes of the Ukraine and the Kuban and, more

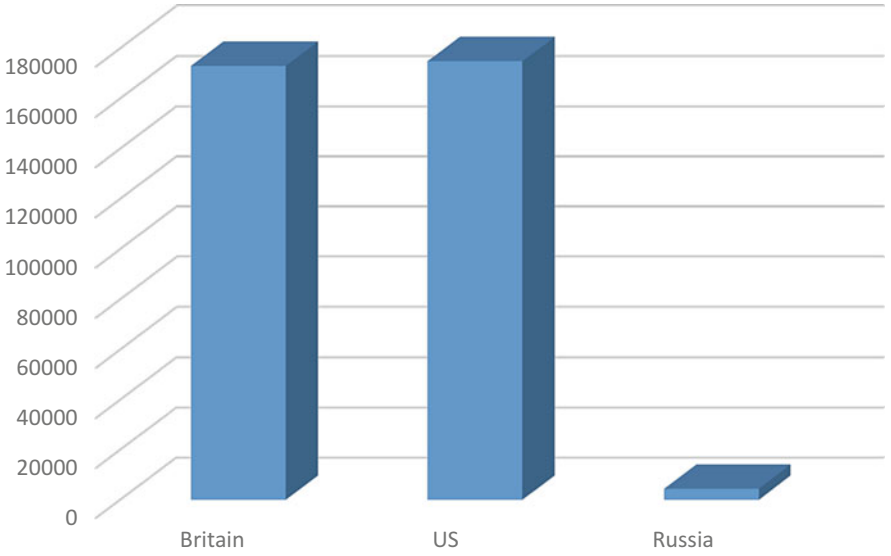

Fig. 1 British, the United States, and Russia coal output, 1890 (in thousands of tons). (Sources: UK Department of Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy, *British Coal Data 1853–2018*; U.S. Department of Commerce, *Historical Statistics of the United States*, Series M 93–103 and Series M 123–137; Portal, "The Industrialization of Russia," 817)

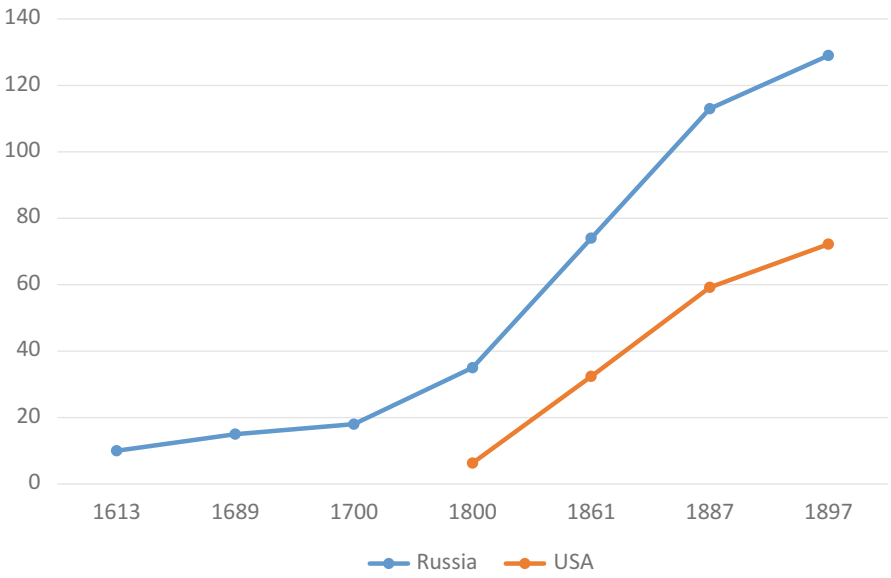

Fig. 2 Population of Russia and the United States, 1613–1897 (in millions)∗. (Sources: Cipolla, *Before the Industrial Revolution*, Table 1.1; Portal, "The Industrialization of Russia," 817; U.S. Department of Commerce, *Historical Statistics of the United States*, Series A 9–22)

particularly, the Central Black Earth region that lay between the Ukrainian steppe and the forested Russian heartlands offered almost unlimited potential. Whereas previously a number of nomadic warrior people had largely confined Russian settlement to the forests north of the Oka River, the victories of Peter the Great opened the southern expanses to agriculture. By 1719, an estimated 43% of the Russian population farmed the Central Black Earth region, a 250–500 kilometer strip of land to the north of the Ukrainian steppe that arguably boasts the world's most fertile soils (Shaw 2006b: 27–28).

As with the opening up of the American frontier, however, the Russian pioneering efforts of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries could not have occurred in a population devoid of curiosity, inventiveness, and individuality. Certainly, the view that Russia is a society alien to ideas of liberty and freedom is a misnomer, contradicted by the deep resonance that the works of Alexander Pushkin, Tolstoy, and, above all, Fyodor Dostoyevsky obtained in Russian society. Indeed, among the canon of "Western literature," none arguably speaks to the importance of individual conscience and liberty more poignantly than Dostoyevsky does. Sentenced to 10 years in tsarist Russia's "Gulag" during his youth, Dostoyevsky understood that liberty and freedom were threatened not only by the educated agents of Russia's absolutist state but also by its revolutionary foes. As Dostoyevsky (1864/1972: 31–32) expressed it in his *Notes from Underground*, it is "the most civilized," those most prone to "abstract" political theorizing, who are the greatest "shedders of blood," an observation that prefigured Albert Camus's (1951/1978: 297) maxim that the most "homicidal" individuals are those who claim to act in the interest of "pure and unadulterated virtue." The Russian quest for political and economic liberty was reflected in not only poetry and literature. It also found expression in scientifically informed managerial ideas and practices. In 1765, the year before Adam Smith published *The Wealth of Nations*, the newly established Liberal Economic Society began publication of its annual conference proceedings, a work directed toward the formulation of "progressive" ideas for "household management" and the economic development of "the state" (cited, Marshev 2019: 288). By the mid-nineteenth century, interest in new managerial concepts, whether indigenous or imported, was widespread. "If we look at the studies . . . in the areas of history, law, management, sociology, political economy and politics," Vadim Marshev (2019: 286) observes, we find "chapters and whole sections containing historical analysis of the development of management thought."

If Russian society by the mid-nineteenth century was one characterized by profound contradictions – in which works of towering literary genius and the pioneering settlement of new lands existed alongside authoritarian rule and primitive living conditions – how then can we effectively gauge its managerial achievements? As is the case in every other society, it comes down to what we mean by the term "management." If we go by the standard textbook definition – that "management" amounts to "planning, organizing, leading and controlling" – then we must conclude that Russia possessed effective systems of "management" capable of feeding its many citizens. However, from the very first chapter in this *Palgrave Handbook* (▶ Chap. 2, "What Is Management?"), I have argued in favor of a broader definition, associating "management" with attention to costs, competitive markets, legal

protections of person and property, and the need to motivate legally free workforces. By this definition, the answer as to whether or not the world of mid-nineteenth century Russia can be regarded as a society where the norms and practices of "modern management" were commonplace must be "no." As the central figure in Ivan Turgenev's (1862/2009: 10–11) *Fathers and Sons* observed, Russian society in the late 1850s was one characterized "neither by its prosperity nor by its industriousness," a world where the peasantry "were all in rags" and the "shaggy cows" that they farmed with care were "mere bags of bones." It is difficult to attribute these unfortunate circumstances – as Masaryk, Pirenne, Huntington, and others have done – to Russia's Byzantine cultural and religious heritage. In essence, Greek and Russian Orthodoxy differs only in degree from Roman Catholicism. Both Orthodoxy and Catholicism emphasized individual worth and protection for the poor even as they preached acceptance of the secular power. In the West, Hapsburg and Bourbon Spain exhibited authoritarian tendencies, and a suspicion of capitalism and market forces, that shared much in common with tsarist Russia. Nor is it possible to attribute all the blame to serfdom. In France, Italy, England, and the Low Countries, the historical experience of serfdom led to a diffusion rather than a concentration of power. The same tendencies were evident in Poland, Lithuania, and Hungary in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. In all of these societies, a government-mandated enserfment of the rural population led to a weaker rather than a stronger state as magnates accumulated wealth and power at the expense of officialdom. In the case of Poland, the state was so enfeebled that it disintegrated, partitioned among its more powerful neighbors (one of which was Russia).

In the final analysis, Russia's problems, like that of Byzantium before it, were a product of geography and historical experience rather than of religion or culture. Like Byzantium before it, Russia found itself at the eastern edge of Europe, exposed to assault from societies (Arab, Turkish, Mongol, Tartar) that both Latin and Orthodox Christians regarded as mortal foes. Given the historic and geographic circumstances in which they found themselves, the emphasis on security at the expense of personal and economic freedom was understandable, even if the suppression of economic and political freedom came at a long-term cost. Similarly, the xenophobia and paranoia that often characterized Byzantium and Russia reflected more than Eurocentric racism. In 1453, the Ottoman Turks destroyed Byzantium. On repeated occasions, Muslim Tartars drawn from the southern steppes sacked and burned Moscow, the final outrage occurring in 1571. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Russia also suffered from the depredations of Polish and Swedish invaders. Accordingly, it was not only the peasantry who accepted subjugation at the hands of the state. So too did Russia's aristocrats, Kleimola (1979: 210) accurately noting that it was "the top levels of Russia [which] were the first to suffer subjugation to the service of the state." Unfortunately, the assumption that authoritarian states are better than market economies at allocating resources, thereby ensuring economic growth and greater military and political power, is not one supported by the historical evidence. For, in curtailing markets and individual liberty, authoritarian regimes invariably prove to be inefficient rather than efficient economic mentors. As Stephen Kotkin (2017: 417) notes in reflecting upon the Russian experiences under Joseph Stalin:

Dictatorial power is never efficient, all-knowing, and all-controlling: it shows its strength by violently suppressing any hint of alternatives but is otherwise brutally inefficient.

The Byzantine Experience and Heritage

There is an overwhelming tendency among both historians and the population at large to associate the Roman Empire almost solely with the Latin-speaking West rather than with the Greek-speaking East. In truth, the eastern sections of the Empire were always far more prosperous and populace than the western provinces. In the Late Empire, the population of Egypt (7.5 million), the wealthiest eastern province, far exceeded that of Gaul (2.5 million), the bedrock of imperial power in the West (Jones 1964: 1040–1041). By the sixth century AD, the most populace cities of the Mediterranean basin (Constantinople, Antioch, Alexandria) were all in the east, Constantinople perhaps boasting 750,000 by AD 500. In contrast, Rome, the papal headquarters of the Latin Church, became a shadow of its former self, described by Pope Gregory the Great (c. AD 593/1959: 81) as "buried in its own ruin … its dilapidated buildings surrounded by their own debris." Across the Late Empire, every region confronted the same basic problem: how to defend the frontiers with the limited (and diminishing) resources of a society that was overwhelmingly rural. This produced an inevitable tension between a desire to maximize the taxes and other imposts required to fund armies and bureaucracies and the need to maintain a viable soldier-peasantry.

In the Latin-speaking West, where large slave-operated *latifundia* had long prevailed, the soldier-peasantry that once provided the backbone for imperial armies was a distant memory by the fourth century AD, forcing Western generals to recruit Germanic barbarians from beyond the frontiers. Even in the East, however, taxes and other imposts became unbearable. During the reign of the Roman Emperor, Diocletian (AD 284 – AD 305), taxes were not only increased but tied to what the state *believed* a given plot of land *should* produce – rather what it *actually* produced. In AD 332, to mitigate the ensuing flight of destitute peasants from the land, the Code of Constantine made the peasant's tillage of their plot a hereditary obligation. In the cities and towns, the craft worker was also denied the possibility of social mobility as their trade was also made a hereditary responsibility (Koerner 1941/1966: 25–26). In addition, taxes were increasingly made a collective responsibility of the village or commune, an outcome that caused neighbor to oversee neighbor in the knowledge that they would have to make up tax shortfalls caused by either peasant flight or subterfuge. The unintended consequence of this extension of state power was the so-called *patrocinium* movement, which saw peasants surrender both their families and their land to a wealthy local patron. In commenting upon the *patrocinium* movement, Ostrogorsky (1941/1966: 206) observed that "it was the government itself, driven by financial and military needs, which … handed over the peasants to the landowners." Unfortunately for the state, the large landholder who came to dominate much of the East revealed a greater propensity for tax evasion than did

the peasant proprietor, leaving the imperial armies and bureaucracies in a perilous state. To remedy this state of affairs, the Byzantine Emperor, Heraclius, who ruled the East from AD 610 to AD 641, came up with a solution that led to the recreation of an independent soldier-peasantry within Byzantium. This entailed the settlement of Slavonic immigrants on abandoned land, where they gained freehold possession and exemption from taxation in return for military service (Ostrogorsky 1941/1966: 207–208). Without Heraclius' reforms, it is probable that Byzantium would not have survived the Arab conquests of the seventh century, a time when Arab military success swept Egypt and much of the Middle East from imperial sovereignty. As the frontiers were stabilized within a shrunken state, however, few Byzantine emperors proved capable of resisting the temptation to increase the tax base at the expense of the soldier-peasant. The result was a cyclical process of renewed tax demands, peasant flight, and a further extension of aristocratic estates at the expense of the peasantry, followed by belated attempts at imperial reform directed toward the reinvigoration of a soldier-peasantry. In the end, it is arguable, the greatest threat to Byzantine survival came not from the Muslim Arabs and Turks beyond the frontier but rather from the semifeudal aristocrats within the borders, who "continually absorbed the land of the peasants and solders and made the owners their serfs" (Ostrogorsky 1941/1966: 221). Put another way, the centralizing tendencies of Byzantium were undermined not only by the excessive burdens placed on the peasantry but also by the state's inability to curtail the growth of aristocratic power at its own expense.

As the power of the Byzantine state slowly disintegrated, the Orthodox Church became an increasingly important buttress for imperial power, both within the frontiers and without. Within the frontiers, imperial oversight of ecclesiastical circumstances dates from AD 325 and the Council of Nicaea. Not only was the Council called at the Emperor Constantine's bequest, the articles of faith that emerged from it – the Nicaean Creed – also owed much to Constantine, who made rejection of the Creed a criminal matter (Davis 1970: 19). As the Church expanded in the East, the appointment of "Metropolitans" (i.e., bishops) occurred under imperial auspices. So extensive was imperial control of the eastern Church that Emperor Constantius II is reporting as saying, "My will is law for the church" (cited, Masaryk 1913/1955: 37). For their part, the Orthodox Patriarchs in Constantinople were anxious to draw on imperial authority to ward off challenges to ecclesiastical supremacy from rival claimants, most particularly those put forward by Rome's bishops and popes. In Orthodox opinion, Constantinople was the "second Rome," eclipsing the authority of the original imperial capital. As one Patriarch asserted in the late fifth century AD, "I hold that the most holy Church of the old and the new Rome to be one" (cited, Davis 1970: 71). From the point of view of the Byzantine state, there was also much benefit in having not only a loyal and faithful Orthodox population within the borders of Byzantium but also a wide circle of Orthodox believers beyond the frontier. Byzantium's most successful missionary efforts were among the Bulgarian and Slavic populations to its north. In the Russian Primary Chronicle (1337/1953: 62), for example, it is recorded how in the ninth century the Byzantine Emperor,

Michael III, sent missionaries (Cyril and Methodius) among the Moravians (Czechs) and that "When they arrived, they undertook to compose a Slavic alphabet." Within a century, the resultant "Cyrillic" script gained wide acceptance among the Slavic populations of Eastern Europe, permanently demarking the literary traditions of this region from the Latin West.

Enthusiasm for Orthodoxy was most pronounced in the Rus (Russian) lands where, as we noted the introduction, the Kievan Prince, Vladimir, converted to the faith in AD 988. Under his successor, Prince Yaroslav, the Russian Primary Chronicle (1337/1953: 137) reports how "new monasteries came into being. Yaroslav loved religious establishments and was devoted to priests, especially to monks . . . He assembled many [religious] scribes, and translated from Greek into Slavic." Despite the indigenization of Greek Orthodox faith under Vladimir and Yaroslav, the Byzantine influence remained profound. Of the 23 individuals who served as Metropolitan of Kiev between the ninth and thirteenth centuries, only 3 were Russian with another 3 arriving from Slav lands to the West. All the rest were Greeks (Masaryk 1913/1955:36). So extensive was Byzantine influence on the first, Kiev-based Russian state that Masaryk (1913/1955: 36) declared it, with some degree of exaggeration, to be "no more than a dependency of Byzantium." Russian ecclesiastical subservience to Byzantium continued even the destruction of Kievan Rus by the Mongols in the thirteenth century. Only in the dying days of Byzantium, when Constantinople began making overtures for reconciliation with Rome, did the now Moscow-based Metropolitan assert independence from the Greek Orthodox Patriarch.

In declaring its independence from Constantinople, the Russian Church adopted two beliefs or ideologies that were to have incalculable consequences. First and most importantly, it assumed Byzantium's sense of historic destiny, the belief that Orthodoxy and Russia were predestined for world leadership. For, on hearing of Constantinople's fall to the Turks in 1453, a Russian priest is supposed to have declared:

> Two Romes have fallen and have passed away, the western and the eastern; destiny has prescribed Moscow the position of the third Rome; there will never be a fourth. (cited Masaryk 1913/1955: 41)

This ideology of the "Third Rome," which caused Orthodox Russians to perceive themselves as culturally unique, was combined with what Masaryk (1913/1955: 37) referred to as Byzantine "caesaropapism," whereby the perceived interests of church and state become inextricably intertwined. This church-state partnership culminated in the coronation of Ivan Grozny (the Terrible) as Tsar or Emperor of all Russia in 1547. In taking this step, Moscow's Metropolitan, Iosif Volotskii, articulated a Russian version of the "divine right of kings," declaring that "though an emperor [tsar] in body be like all other men, yet in power he is like God" (cited Flier 2006: 389). This proclamation had profound significance for the future. As Richard Hellie (2006c: 364) observes, "This Russian version of the divine right of kings underpinned Russian law and the monarchy down to its fall in 1917."

If the ties between the Orthodox Church and secular authority were typically closer than was the norm in the Latin West, it is nevertheless a mistake to see Orthodoxy as a mere agent of princely authority. From the outset, the Orthodox Church, like its Latin counterpart, articulated beliefs and practices that set it apart – and often at odds – with prevailing state norms. Nowhere was this more obvious than in attitudes to wealth, poverty, and almsgiving, domains where the preachings of St John Chrysostom were most influential. Serving as Archbishop of his native Antioch from AD 386 to AD 397, Chrysostom became the Metropolitan or Archbishop of Constantinople in AD 397, advocating viewpoints that were to leave an enduring legacy in the Orthodox world. In St John Chrysostom's opinion (c.AD 398/1848: 282), wealth was nothing more than a "vain shadow, dissolving smoke" that delivered little benefit to the human spirit. "True honor," Chrysostom (c.AD 398/1848: 282) argued, lay not in the acquisition of wealth but rather in its surrender through "almsdoing." As Archbishop of Antioch, Chrysostom practiced what he preached. Acquired Church wealth was constantly redistributed, the Antioch diocese providing for the support of 3000 widows and other women in need on a daily basis (Mayer 2009: 91).

This emphasis on almsgiving, of giving to those who had fallen upon hard times, was to become deeply entrenched in the Russian Orthodox psyche. Dostoyevsky (1862/1911: 22), for example, in his account of his long years of convict servitude, criticizes the "upper classes of our Russian society" for not understanding "to what extent merchants, shopkeepers, and our people generally, commiserate the unfortunate. Alms were always forthcoming." The Russian Orthodox emphasis on protection of the poor, or those devoid of normal means of support, is also found in its insistence that "Church people" come under its jurisdiction, rather than that of the state. Included among such "Church people" were not only priests and monks but also "society's helpless . . .widows, beggars, wanderers" (Hellie 2006c: 362). Like the Catholic Church in the West, Russian Orthodoxy also accumulated immense wealth and resources held in its own name. By 1600, it is estimated (Miller 2006: 347) that Orthodox monasteries held at least 20 percent of Russia's arable land. One monastery located close to Moscow, the Simonovskii, owned 50 villages, along with the serfs who resided within them. The Church was, in short, a state within a state, an ally of tsarism but distinct from it.

If we are to summarize the importance of Byzantium's Orthodox heritage in Russian history, we can conclude in the first instance that it was sufficiently similar to other varieties of Christianity for Russians to feel a common religious bond with their Western neighbors, yet sufficiently different in that it caused Russians to feel a unique sense of cultural identity. Above all, Orthodoxy – and the belief that Moscow was the "Third Rome" – conveyed to Russian society a sense of historic destiny, pretentions to world leadership that was shared by wealthy and poor alike. Easily overlooked in the Byzantine experience, however, is a cautionary tale as to the dangers of state power. For in seeking to extend the power of the state so as to better defend itself, Byzantium ultimately destroyed itself.

From Freedom to Serfdom: The Muscovite Experience

In the mid-fifteenth century, despite the ongoing construction of new Italian-built walls around the Kremlin, Muscovy was but one of many insignificant principalities located within the central forests of Russia. While Italy and Flanders experienced the glories of the Renaissance, the peasants of Russia continued a time-honored existence. Although most were legally free, life was nevertheless hard and precarious. Long, cold winters restricted agriculture to the growing of oats and, more particularly, rye, along with a few hardy vegetables such as turnips. Planted in autumn and harvested in summer, rye was prone to a fungus (ergot) that caused hallucinations among sufferers. Although fields crops were supplemented by the bounty of the forests during summer (mushrooms, berries, honey, game), the monotonous Russian diet was associated with a variety of health conditions. By late winter, most Russians were suffering from deficiencies in vitamin A, vitamin D, vitamin C, niacin, and calcium (Hellie 2006b: 291). Thin soils, long winters, and a lack of pastures made the draft animals that were commonplace in Western agriculture (oxen, horses) a comparative rarity in Russia. Even in the late nineteenth century, when Russian occupancy of the Ukrainian and Kuban steppes made horse raising a comparatively easy exercises, only 44.1% of peasant households in European Russia owned more than one horse. The horseless households comprised 27.3% of the total (Lenin 1898/1964: 143). Where peasants did own a farm animal (typically a small dairy cow), the long winters required indoor stalling for 6 months of the year. By spring, chronically underfed cows were normally so weak that they had to be carried to the spring pastures (Hellie 2006b: 290). A shortage of farm animals meant there was little manure for fertilizing the thin *podzol* soils of Russian forest heartlands. In consequence, Russian grain yields in the fifteenth century were comparable to those of Western Europe in the eighth century (Hellie 2006b: 287). The Russian forests also boasted few coal, iron, copper, or silver deposits. Accordingly, few Russian peasants owned a metal-tipped plow, most making do with a primitive wooden instrument that did little more than create a "two-pronged scratch in the soil" (Hellie 2006b: 291). In such conditions, food shortages and famine were regular occurrences. In describing one of medieval Russia's all-too-common famines, a chronicler from Novgorod, a prosperous northern town, recorded how "the people ate limes, leaves, birch bark, pounded wood pulp mixed with husks and straw . . .their corpses were in the streets, in the market place, and on the roads, and everywhere" (cited, Engel and Martin 2015: 12).

In many ways, the transformation of Muscovy from an inconsequential backwater into a preeminent European power under imperial Tsarist rule remains almost inexplicable. Muscovy, and the other historic Russian principalities (Pskov, Novgorod, Vladimir), possessed few resources other than wood, grain, and people, of which only the former was plentiful. As the American economist, Jeremy Sachs (2005: 147) has observed, "during most of Russian history" cities and towns "were few and far between. The division of labor that depends on urban life and international trade were never dominant features of social life." Because land was plentiful, Russian society in the fifteenth century had little understanding of private property,

peasants typically moving to new fields when the soil on one plot was exhausted (Dennison 2011: 132). The "fundamental law" of medieval and early modern Russia, the *Russkaya Pravda*, gave ownership to those who tilled the soil after 4 to 5 years. Conversely, those who failed to work the land surrendered the title after 10 years (Hellie 2006c: 366). Even where land was sold, the owner (or their heirs) could repurchase it at the original sale price at any time over the ensuing 40 years, a right that discouraged any would-be buyers (Hellie 2006c: 384). Until the twentieth century, comparatively few Russians could read or write, Dostoyevsky (1862/1911: 12) reporting with amazement that "half" the convicts he was imprisoned with during the 1850s "knew how to read and write." Nowhere else in Russia, "in no matter what population," Dostoyevsky (1862/1911: 12) continued, would you find such a high level of literacy.

To escape from the predicament in which it found itself, Muscovy had only one realistic option: to import technology, people, and material from the West. As was to remain the case in subsequent periods of Russian history – most notably under Peter the Great in the eighteenth century, Joseph Stalin in the twentieth century, and Vladimir Putin in the twenty-first century – Western imports were only purchasable with income derived from primary commodities. Russian eagerness to trade staples for Western manufactured goods, it must be noted, was hardly unique in the sixteenth and seventeenth century. By 1500, the rise of nascent forms of capitalism in Western Europe was creating an insatiable desire for imported grain and timber, driving Eastern Europe toward what Braudel (1979/1982: 267) refers to as "a *colonial* destiny as a producer of raw materials" [emphasis in the original]. In return for imported (largely Dutch) luxury goods, the aristocracy of Central and Eastern Europe organized the felling of vast forest reserves and the growing of huge quantities of grain (principally rye) on new, commercialized estates. Polish rivers became chocked with immense rafts of wood destined for the Baltic ports (Braudel 1979/1982: 269). In Poland, Lithuania, Hungary, and Romania, the society witnessed what Braudel (1979/1982: 267) called "the second serfdom," in which previously free peasants were enserfed with the assistance of state and sent to work on the new commercialized estates. In Poland, where compulsory labor for the local lord rarely occurred in 1500, a century later the peasant was required to work for 6 days per week. Things were little better in Hungary, where peasants were forced to work at the "pleasure of the lord" (Braudel 1979/1982: 267).

Although Russian experienced the "second serfdom" (i.e., the second *European* era of serfdom) at the same time as other Eastern European societies, the dynamic that drove it was fundamentally different. In Poland, Lithuania, and Hungary, an aristocracy desirous of entering into new commercial relationships with the West underpinned the process of enserfment. While the state collaborated in this process, it was also weakened by it, as the local aristocracy strengthened its position vis-à-vis *both* the peasantry *and* the state. In Russia, however, international commerce – freely undertaken by either producers or traders – was insignificant in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. A number of hostile states – most notably Poland, Sweden, and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania – blocked Russia's access to the Baltic. To the south, the Crimean Tartars barred the way to the Black Sea. Even during the reign of Ivan

Grozny (1533–1584), when Russian armies reclaimed the Volga basin from the Tartars, the only trade route to the West went via the White Sea and Archangel, and even this was only open for a few summer months.

Rather than reflecting commercial dynamics, both Moscow's relationship with the West *and* the process of Russian enserfment were *both* driven by the state, acting in the interests of the state. For, under the last three representatives of the Rurik dynasty – Ivan III (1662–1505), Vasilii III (1505–1533), and Ivan IV (Grozny) – all sections of Russian society, with the partial exception of the Church, found themselves subject to the power of an increasingly authoritarian regime. This process of state subjugation arguably began with Muscovy's annexation of the commercial center of Novgorod in 1478. Deporting the local aristocracy, Ivan III initiated the first so-called service-class revolution, distributing land in return for service in either the military or the bureaucracy. Unlike the holders of hereditary estates (the *votchinniks*), this new aristocracy of "servitors" (the *pomeschiks*) only occupied their properties while they remained in state service. Finding this system much to their liking, Ivan III and his heirs then proved remarkably successful, as Kleimola (1979: 213) observed, "in developing a system of rewards and punishments that bound servitors every more tightly to the ruler." In the first instance, the system of service estates (*pomest'e*) was extended at the expense of hereditary properties. Under Ivan III and his son, Vasilii, members of high-ranking families were packed off to monasteries so that their estates would pass to the state on their death (Kleimola 1979: 214). At the local level, military governors assumed control of civil administration. Under Ivan Grozny, the campaign to make the aristocracy an agency of the state reached a new level of intensity, Russia entering into one of the darkest periods in its history. The wives and children of aristocrats and officials were held hostage to guarantee allegiance. Whole families were massacred for the supposed transgressions of a single individual. Between 1565 and 1572, Russia entered into a state-driven bloodbath, the *Oprichnina*, which saw some 6000 black-clad *oprichniks* arrest, torture, and massacre any suspected of disloyalty. During the *Oprichnina*, Kleimola (1979: 219) notes, "Almost no elite family was left untouched." In 1570, Novgorod, Russia's gateway to the West, was sacked. Among those massacred, according to one contemporary account, were "2770 Novgorod nobles and wealthy merchants" (Graham 1987: 181). As with the purges of Joseph Stalin in the 1930s, the irrationality and violence of the *Oprichnina* produced a ruthless concentration of power in the hands of the state, the *oprichniks* collecting more tax in 1 year than had previously been raised in 7 (Hellie 2006b: 393).

If the Russian aristocracy suffered grievously at the hands of the state, it also benefited, as the nation's once free peasantry were transformed into serfs. In this retrograde endeavor, the Muscovite autocracy was assisted by all levels of elite society: the aristocracy, the bureaucracy, and the Church. As had been the case in both Byzantium and Western Europe, serfdom in Russia arose through a series of restrictions rather than a single event. From the 1450s, the peasant's right to move freely from place to place was restricted to a single day: St George's Day (26 November). In 1592, even this freedom was denied. At the same time, the period

in which a lord could reclaim a runaway serf became longer and longer, extended from 3 years in 1497 to 15 years in 1641. Eventually, under the Code (*Ulozhenie*) of 1649, the statute of limitations was abolished altogether (Dennison 2011; Hellie 2006c). Significantly, the passage to serfdom advanced hand-in-hand with the "service-class revolution," which saw bureaucrats, military officers, and cavalrymen allocated *pomest'e* (estates) in return for state service. By the late sixteenth century, most arable land was under the management of *pomeschiks*, state servants who benefited from the labor of the peasant households allocated to them by the Muscovite state. This peasant workforce not only worked the *pomeschik's* land; it was also obliged to pay "quit-rents" for the plots of land upon which they grew their own meager crops (Hellie 2006c: 382–383). Under the so-called obedience charter (*poslushnaia gramota)* of 1607, serfs were also required "to obey their landholder in everything" (cited, Hellie 2006b: 297).

To add to peasant misery, they also assumed the great bulk of the tax burden, a liability to which the new service aristocracy was exempt. As was the practice in Byzantium, rural taxes were imposed on a collective basis, an outcome that left remaining members of the village or commune with a larger bill in instances of peasant flight. Even the rents and labor obligations imposed by the local lord were collective in nature, the job of collecting rent and taxes falling to the village commune. Because the commune was responsible for collecting feudal dues, it also assumed the tasks of allocating land – including the strips to be worked for the lord as well as those exploited for household use. Because the commune was mindful of meeting its imposed state and feudal financial obligations, there was a universal tendency to allocate land to the most capable and "wealthy" peasant households (i.e., those most likely to meet the imposed demands), rather than to those most in need (Dennison 2011: 133). Herein we find the explanation for the supposed "communal" nature of Russian society. Rather than it being the case, as Herzen (1851/1956: 189) believed, that the Russian commune was an exemplar of "rural communism," it was in truth the agent of the absolutist state and the feudal lord. It was not only the peasantry, however, that found itself subject to the collectively imposed demands of the state. The same circumstances prevailed in Russia's towns, where merchants and traders were confined to special suburbs (*posads*). Such people were declared "black" by the Muscovite state. This meant that they were required to pay a tax, the *tiaglo*, imposed on the entire *posad*. *Posad* members were also liable for a host of other state-imposed obligations: acting as city guards, customs-collectors, and general agents of the state (Shaw 2006c: 305). This put them at a commercial disadvantage to those urban dwellers allowed to trade while remaining "white," i.e., they did not have to pay taxes. Unsurprisingly, the most significant group of tax-exempt competitors were state "servitors," most particularly musketeers and cavalrymen, who supplemented their meager pay through small-scale commerce (Shaw 2006c: 306).

The inevitable result of the extension of state power, as described above, was a replication of many of the same unintended consequences that afflicted the Byzantine state between the fifth and twelfth centuries. Imitating the Byzantine *patrocinium* movement, many peasants fled to the estates of "strong people" (*sil'nye*

liudi), where living conditions were generally better than on smallholdings (Hellie 2006b: 296). As was the case in Byzantium, mass flight from the land also occurred, many taking off for a life beyond the frontiers in the Volga basin, Siberia, and the Ukrainian steppe. Others risked their lives by settling in the Central Black Earth region to the south of the Russian forests, even though Tartar raids carried off thousands each year to the slave markets of the Crimea. In commenting upon the lives of these rural fugitives, Robert Smith (1977/2010: 31) observed that although their lives were "hard, at times brutal . . . they evidently felt that it was not as hard as the exactions and injustices imposed on them by the state." The most significant manifestation of this process of mass flight was the emergence of a new class of seminomadic cavalrymen along the Dnieper and Don rivers, the "Cossacks." Inevitably, the end result of the Muscovite attempt to create a highly ordered body politic was – in many areas – the reverse of what was intended: the emergence of "a disordered and sometimes chaotic society" (Shaw 2006b: 41). In the regions around Moscow and Novgorod, where state control was most exacting, it is estimated that 85% of the rural population had fled the land by the latter stages of Ivan Grozny's reign (Hellie 2006b: 294). Mass flight also characterized the towns, where the number of taxpaying households fell by 35% between 1550 and the late 1580s. In describing the resultant urban landscape in 1588–1589, an English visitor, Giles Fletcher, recorded how Russia's towns boasted nothing "memorable save many ruins . . . which showeth (sic) the decrease of the Russe people under this government." Of the smaller villages, Fletcher observed that many stood "vacant and desolate without an inhabitant" (cited, Shaw 2006a: 303–304).

As is the case with most authoritarian societies, the response of the Muscovite state to the social chaos engendered by its own policies was not social and economic liberalism but the reverse: an ever-tighter battening down of the hatches. Following the Time of Troubles (1598–1613), when the Muscovite state virtually collapsed in the face of popular revolt and foreign invasion, the new Romanov dynasty responded by enacting the Code (*Ulozhenie*) of 1649, entrenching a system of oppression that was to last to 1861 and beyond. To halt the Russian equivalent of the *patrocinium* movement, penalties were imposed on aristocrats who allowed fugitive serfs to work on their estates. Eventually, under this provision, the state confiscated four serfs for each fugitive retrieved from a given property. Under the Code, peasants without a nominal feudal lord became state serfs. Those who worked in cities and towns were forced to return to their home estate, selling up any business venture they had undertaken (Hellie 2006c). Merchants and traders, who belonged to the various urban *posads*, were legally bound to the town in which they resided. "Henceforth," Shaw (2006c: 587) records, "the *posad* dweller was to stay put and share the burden of taxation and service laid upon the *posad* community as a whole." In essence, the Code of 1649 did far more than simply entrench serfdom. It created a rigid caste system that restricted social mobility, individual initiative, and creativity.

If we look to the managerial practices of the Muscovite state, we can ascertain two distinct domains: a higher level associated with the state and its various agents, and a lower level of predominately serf-based production. In the higher domain, associated with the state, we witness management as subjugation, management as secret police,

and management as state-sponsored terror. As Marshall Poe (2006: 454) has observed, "the Muscovite elite focused nearly all its energy in ruling others . . .Domination was their *raison d'être*." Although, in theory, the Muscovite bureaucracy operated according to principles of aristocratic precedence (*mestnichestvo*) that favored old-established families, in practice the demand for literate and capable people provided one of the few avenues for social advancement. Accordingly, an overwhelming majority of the 3000 officials who staffed the central bureaucracy in the late seventeenth century were people of comparatively humble means (Poe 2006: 454). For this group the *Oprichnina*, which devastated the ranks of the old aristocracy, provided more benefit than threat. Away from the Kremlin, the lives of the middle-level "servitors" – who served as provincial governors and the like – were more precarious. Subject to constant transfers that kept them away from their home estates, the main concern of this group was to transfer their *pomest'e* (service estate) into a hereditary property, a feat which was achieved in practice if not in law by the early eighteenth century (Hellie 2006c: 383). Even more precarious were the lives of those at the bottom of the state hierarchy, the semiprofessional soldiers (the *streltsy)* and cavalrymen who typically commanded a miserable estate worked by half a dozen peasant households. Seldom able to survive on their government-derived income, most were forced to rely on small-scale trading as well as the produce garnered from working land adjacent to their barracks (Hellie 2006a: 549; Shaw 2006c: 587–588).

Among the peoples of Europe, arguably none experienced a worse fate than that of the Russian serf after 1649. Serfs, male and female, young and old, could be sold off at any time, either individually or as a family. Males were regularly packed off for military service, where serfs came to make up the great bulk of Russia's infantry force (Gerschenkron 1965: 714). The greatest failing of the Russian version of serfdom, however, was the attribute that Herzen and Tolstoy hailed as its greatest strength: its emphasis on communalism rather than individualism. This had many unfortunate effects. Because collective taxes were calculated on a household basis between the 1640s and the 1720s, the Russian serf crowded as many people as possible into the one smoke-filled hut so as to minimize their tax liability. Once normalized, this practice continued even after the tsarist state circumvented the ploy by calculating the collective tax liability on the basis of individual "souls" (Dennison 2011). Even more problematic was the communal practice of redistributing land between peasant households on a regular basis. This was unlike the situation that prevailed in the Western version of serfdom, where peasants enjoyed de facto occupation of the same plot of land generation after generation. By custom and practice, the Western peasant family was also guaranteed a fixed share of their crop. Both of these factors incentivized productivity as a bigger crop added to household wealth. The Russian serf, by contrast, had no reason to invest in agricultural improvements. A plot of land allocated to one household for 1 year could be given to another the next. In the Russian commune, any indication of personal wealth was also unwise, typically causing the commune to allot a bigger share of the village's tax burden to the household concerned.

By comparison with the Byzantine state, with which the Muscovite/Russian state shared many similarities, the latter succeeded in one key area that caused

constant grief to the former: it subjugated its aristocrats as well as its peasants. The benefits of this achievement – which delivered Muscovy a highly centralized and cohesive state – can be ascertained by the state's military successes in the Volga basin, which secured its access to the Caspian Sea for the first time. By the mid-seventeenth century, the agricultural bounty of the Central Black Earth region was also under the control of the Russian state. In the first half of the seventeenth century, the vast expanse of Siberia was won by force of arms. In 1649, Russian settlements were even appearing along Siberia's Pacific coast, providing bases from which Russian fur traders and explorers pushed on to claim the Alaskan territories of North America. When the Muscovite state turned west, however, its many economic and social frailties were exposed. Despite marshaling all available resources, a long and brutal campaign to gain access to the Baltic ended in a costly Russian defeat in the so-called Livonian war (1558–1583). Yes, it is true, that the Muscovite state boasted state-owned cannon foundries, gunpowder works, brick-works, and even two state-owned paper mills (Shaw 2006a: 59). There was, however, little in the way of private sector entrepreneurship. Muscovy, and the Russia of the early Romanovs, also lacked the deep capital markets, and the class of middling merchants and producers, that allowed Western states a capacity to raise money through the issuance of government bonds. Such circumstances meant that Russia was always reliant on Western imports to make up for its own deficiencies. With regard to "major technology transfer after 1613," Hellie (2006a: 544) observes that "nothing happened without government intervention." A similar comment could be made with regard to almost every other area of economic activity.

In summary, it is evident that the Muscovite state set Russian society upon a path of state intervention and control that suppressed individualism while emphasizing state and communal solidarity. Once set upon this path, it became difficult to move in a fundamentally different direction in ways that emphasized individual initiative and entrepreneurship. This is *not* to say that the Russian *people* lack these qualities. Evidence to the contrary is all too apparent in the settlement of the Russian frontier, a task largely undertaken by runaway serfs and Cossacks acting under their own volition. The individual quest for free-dom, however, constantly ran up against the logic of the state; a contest that rarely ended in the victory of individualism over collectivism. The question is, however, could the Muscovite state have chosen a different path and survived, given the geopolitical circumstances in which it operated? The answer is, probably not. As Dominic Lieven (2006: 17) has observed, "On Europe's periphery one paid a high price for both power and powerlessness." If one failed to mobilize the resources of a powerful state, as occurred in Poland, then the partition and destruction of the society was more than probable. If, as occurred in Byzantium, one allowed the resources of a centralized state to dissipate, then a similar outcome was also likely. To create a strong, militarized society in the vast continental areas of Central and Eastern Europe – regions characterized by endless forests and steppes – was also difficult. Muscovy achieved this feat but at great social cost.

The Limits to Modernization: Russia, 1682–1861

As we have previously observed in this *Palgrave Handbook on Management History*, the bedrock of every civilization is located in its command of metals: copper, bronze, and iron. The primacy of metals in the production process is particularly apparent in what we think of as the Industrial Revolution. For, although in the popular imagination, the Industrial Revolution is typically associated with the mechanization of textile production, its success really hinged on the availability of cast iron: iron for steam engines, factory machines, railroad locomotives, railroad running rails, and iron-hulled ships. In reflecting upon the central importance of iron to the human experience, the American historian, Lewis Morgan (1878: 43), had cause to observe:

> The production of iron was the event of events in human experience, without a parallel, and without an equal . . . Out of it came the metallic hammer and anvil, the axe and the chisel, the plough with the iron point, the iron sword; in fine, the basis of civilization.

Backward in many areas of economic and managerial endeavor, the production of cast iron was an area where tsarist Russia appeared to excel during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. In the late eighteenth century, iron was one of Russia's principal exports, the society exporting 4.64 million kilograms of iron in 1762. As late as the 1820s, Russian production, which drew of the rich iron deposits of the Ural Mountains, far exceeded that of most Western European nations. In most years across the decade, Russia's production of pig iron was 50% higher than that of France. It was also three times higher than that of Belgium, a long-term leader in new industrial techniques (Lenin 1898/1964: 485). Yet, as Fig. 3 indicates, by the end of the nineteenth century, the Russian lead had evaporated. By comparison with the Britain, the United States, France, Germany, and Belgium, Russia remained a primarily agricultural society. Wood, grain, and people were plentiful. Iron, steel, and steam engines remained scarce. In the early 1830s, the total motive power of all Russia's steam engines amounted to the feeble equivalent of 2,200 horses. Prior to the mid-1870s, virtually all of the locomotives that operated on Russia's railroads were imported (Portal 1966: 810). Writing of the situation that prevailed at the end of the nineteenth century, the revolutionary Marxist, Vladimir Lenin (1898/1964: 431), lamented the fact that manufactured goods remained largely the preserve of "hand production," carried out in a "mass of small establishments." Where advanced forms of management and production existed, it typically owed much to Western European firms who opted to establish factories behind Russia's wall of protective tariffs. Writing of the situation that prevailed on the eve of World War I, the Russian anarchist and social theorist, Prince Kropotkin (1912/1968: 41), noted with considerable pride how "English engineers and foreman, have planted within Russia the improved cotton manufacturers . . . they are busy now in improving the woollen industries and the production of machinery." At the same time, Kropotkin (1912/1968: 41) continued, "Belgians have rapidly created a great iron industry in South Russia."

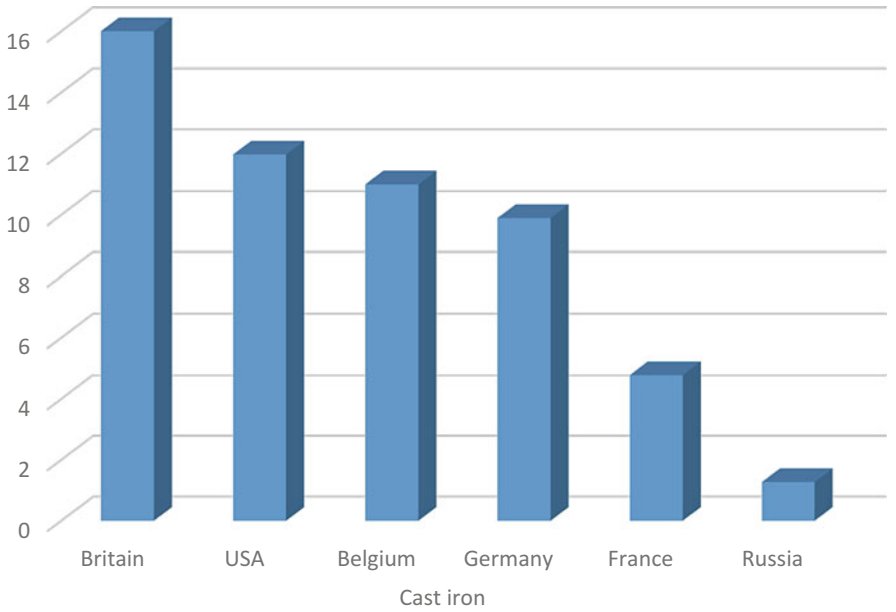

Fig. 3 Per capita cast iron production, 1898: Britain, the United States, Belgium, Germany, France, and Russia (in kilograms). (Source: Calculated from Ananich, "The Russian Economy and Banking System," p. 415)

To understand the success and failure of not only the Russian iron industry but also of Russian management more generally, we need to remind ourselves that, in the wake of the Legal Code (*Ulozhenie*) of 1649, the work activities that one could undertake were largely determined by the social class into which one was born. Accordingly, if one was to undertake any sort of industrial or mining activity, there was only two ways in which this could be legally done. First, one could hire serfs on a wage-labor basis, a feat that could only be undertaken *if* the serf had their lord's permission *and* the serf acquitted their feudal dues by paying a "quit-rent" to their lord. The problems with this "solution" are manifest. Not only was labor supplied at the whim of the feudal lord, the resultant wage had to be high enough to make the exchange attractive to both the serf *and* the lord (Gerschenkron 1965: 715). The second and more reliable method – and the one which was most typically pursued – involved the purchase of a landed estate (serfs included) adjacent to the would-be factory or mine. Such individuals, legally referred to as "possessional serfs," then worked in the mine or factory in return for the right to farm a plot of land (Pipes 1974: 210–211). It was this latter approach that was universally pursued by the iron miners and smelters of the Urals, Lenin (1898/1964: 485) observing how, "serfdom was the basis of the greatest prosperity of the Urals and its dominant position, not only in Russia, but partly also in Europe." Not only were money wages close to zero under this system, the close ties that existed between peasant and land also assured the industrialist a more reliable worker than was normally the case under a system of

waged labor. As a certain V.D. Belov testified to an imperial commission of inquiry in 1887:

> Workers in other factories . . . have not the interests of their factory at heart: they are here today and gone tomorrow . . . They and their employers are permanent enemies . . . The position is entirely different in the case of the Ural workers. They are natives of the place; and in the vicinity of the works they have their own land, their farms and their families . . . to leave means to wreck their whole world, to abandon the land, farm and family . . . And so they are ready to hang on for years, to work at half pay . . . they are ready to accept any terms the employers offer, so long as they are allowed to remain. (cited, Lenin 1898/1964: 487)

The situation described by Belov, it should be noted, existed long after Russia's serfs were legally freed in 1861. At the end of the nineteenth century, as at the beginning, the ironworkers of the Urals worked in the knowledge that any complaint could see them evicted not only from their job but also from their farm.

In the mines and furnaces of the Urals, we witness the difference between premodern forms of management and what we have consistently defined as "modern management." For while the semifeudal industrialists of the Urals could not have survived unless they fulfilled the basic activities of management (planning, organizing, leading, and controlling), conspicuous by their absence are other attributes that are essential to dynamic and innovative forms of "modern management": individual freedom, secure property rights, and a legally free workforce that is motivated to work efficiently. Lacking these latter attributes – which *were* a defining characteristic of Western mines and smelters in the nineteenth century – the iron producers of Russia steadily fell behind their competitors. For, with low wage costs and plentiful supplies of wood, the producers of the Urals had little obvious reason to innovate. Whereas English producers began switching to coal-based coke in the eighteenth century, Russian smelters in the Urals still used charcoal well into the nineteenth century. In turn, the use of charcoal constrained furnace size, denying Russian smelters the economies of scale enjoyed in the West. Inevitably, charcoal-based smelters stripped the forests in the areas adjacent to their workings. Confronted with this problem, Russian producers were unable to respond – as their medieval counterparts in Western Europe had done – by relocating to virgin forest reserves. To do so would require the abandonment of their serf labor force. Tied to the spot, Ural producers suffered the expense of transporting wood and charcoal from ever more distant locales. Prior to the 1880s, the Russian iron industry also suffered from the lack of a well-developed railroad system, the construction of which was curtained by a lack of iron and steel. Although it was possible to ship iron to Moscow and the new capital of St Petersburg via a complicated system of rivers and canals, the transport process was slow and labor-intensive. With rivers and canals freezing in winter, it typically took 18 months to ship a barge load of iron from the Urals to St Petersburg, most barges wintering in Tver at the junction of the Volga and Tvertsa rivers (Baykov 1954: 141–142). As the nineteenth century progressed, many businesses found that it was quicker and cheaper to import iron from abroad rather than from the Urals. Accordingly, by the 1870s some 59% of Russia's iron and steel was imported (Baykov 1954: 143).

Russia's long embrace of serfdom not only delayed the adoption of "modern management" practices; it also curtailed the emergence of an economic middle class comprised of entrepreneurs and factory owners. For, in pre-1861 Russia the only way one could operate an industrial undertaking was with serf labor, a workforce that Russia's merchant class was typically prohibited from owning. Given the right to own serfs by Peter the Great in 1721 – who was intent on facilitating Western-style commerce and industry – urban merchants promptly lost this benefit in 1762 under Peter III (Pipes 1974: 210–211). Indeed, rather than Russia witnessing increasing levels of labor mobility under Peter the Great's reforms, labor suffered new restrictions due to the introduction of a system of internal passport controls. This linked serf movement to the express, written approval of their lord (Riasanovsky 1993: 235). In such circumstances, the only viable way in which most merchants could secure their own manufactured products was through the practice of "putting out," whereby the merchant and their agents purchased raw materials and then outsourced processing and assembly to a mass of handicraft workers. For both serf and lord, this system had numerous benefits. In the case of the peasant, commercialized handicraft work provided additional income without a commensurate need to leave the land. Increased cash income also allowed the peasant to substitute labor service on the lord's estate with "quit-rents" that allowed more time for the cultivation of the serf's "home" plot. For the lord, larger "quit-rents" provided an additional (and much sought after) source of cash. As was the case in the iron industry, however, the persistence of the "putting out" system delayed the emergence of "modern management" across broad swatches of the economy. As a result, innovation was typically conspicuous by its absence as peasant handicraft workers continued to work according to time-honored traditions even after the abolishment of serfdom. In 1894–1895, for example, a census of manufacturing workers in the province of Perm – one of Russia's most industrialized regions – found that 80.9% of "artisans" combined industrial activities with traditional agricultural pursuits (Lenin 1898/1964: 333). The feeble advance of mechanized production is also indicated by trends in the woolen industry, historically a dominant sector in Russian textile production. As late 1875–1979, official factory statistics indicated the presence of only 209 steam engines in this sector across the whole of European Russia (Lenin 1898/1964: 470). The association of merchants with "putting out," and backward forms of production, also demeaned their social standing. In his massive study, *The Development of Capitalism in Russia*, Lenin (1898/1964: 383), for example, declared merchants engaged in "putting out" to be "leeches," "usurers," and "kulaks." After the communist seizure of power in 1917, such designations entailed fatal consequences.

If the "managerial revolution" of the nineteenth century made little headway in Russia prior to the century's closing decades, this failing was long disguised by the dynamism that was evident in civil administration, the military, and territorial and demographic expansion. As is the norm in Russian history, the most significant developments related to the state, where the reforms of Peter the Great (reigned 1682–1725), Catherine the Great (1762–1796), and Alexander I (1801–1825) laid the foundations for "an effective military and fiscal state apparatus" (Lieven 2006: 11).

Under Peter, as most readers would be aware, a frantic process of "Westernization" occurred, conducted at a pace that caused Nikolai Karamzin, a leading eighteenth-century writer, to lament how "We became citizens of the world, but ceased in certain respects to be citizens [of Russia]" (cited, Hughes 2006: 88). The key to Peter's reforms involved a social pact with Russia's nobility, whereby they were guaranteed control of their serfs in return for state service. This pact manifested itself in Peter's promulgation in 1722 of the Table of Ranks, which required members of the aristocracy to enter either the bureaucracy or the army at age 16 and to continue in service for the rest of their lives. Although this universal obligation was relaxed in 1762, it continued as an informal social expectation. Unless one had some pressing excuse, the norms of aristocratic service required a lifetime of service at the state's behest (Hartley 2006: 456). Social prestige, in short, was *primarily* associated with where one stood in the state bureaucracy or the army, *rather* than with wealth acquired through entrepreneurial endeavor. This association of social prestige with service was also manifest at the local level. Under Catherine the Great, two new legal codes – the *Statute of Provincial Administration 1755* and the *Charter to the Nobles 1785* – provided for triennial aristocratic assemblies entrusted with the election of local officials. Meanwhile, central administration was coordinated through various "Colleges" (Foreign Affairs, War, Navy, Mining, etc.), reorganized as "Ministries" in 1810 (Shakiba 2006). A determined effort was also made to raise the educational level of Russia's aristocratic "servitors." In 1755, Russia's first university, the Imperial Moscow University (now called Moscow State University), was established under the direction of the scientist philosopher, Mikhail Lomonosov. To facilitate literacy and the spread of Western ideas, Peter also created a simplified Cyrillic script that differed from Slavonic in having fewer letters. In 1710, Russia witnessed the first printed books in the new script (Hughes 2006: 75). The growth of the bureaucracy also provided jobs for ambitious non-aristocrats. Legally designed the *raznochintsy* (literally, "people of diverse origins"), this group of what were effectively lower-level aristocrats was eventually expanded to include university graduates not born into the nobility (Wirschafter 2006: 248–249).

As with most successful reforms, the organizational and social transformations initiated by Peter the Great and Catherine the Great produced positive effects that reinforced the initial benefits. By better marshaling the resources of the state, the Russia of the Romanovs proved a more formidable military foe than its Muscovite predecessor. Following Peter the Great's historic victory against the Swedes at Poltava in 1709, Russia secured access to the Baltic through the annexation of Livonia (modern-day Estonia and Latvia). Under Catherine the Great, Russia also gained access to the Black Sea, occupying the entire northern coastline of this inland waterway. The military weight of imperial Russia also allowed it to participate in the partition of Poland in the closing decades of the eighteenth century. In addition to their strategic benefits, each of these military advances brought with it a basket of human, economic, and organizational resources. Arguably, no ethnic minority provided a greater service to imperial Russia than did the Baltic Germans, an educated elite who were to subsequently make up a disproportionate proportion of the Russian officer corps and senior bureaucracy. So significant was the role of this German elite

in the mid-nineteenth century that Herzen (1851/1956: 165, 174, 183–185) complained at length as to the "German" composition of the Russian "government," an administration in which he perceived the swallowing up of the "Slav world" by "the German element." In Poland, the presence of a large Jewish minority also provided Russia with millions of literate, commercially oriented citizens; a group designated as "townspeople" (*meschchane*) so as to fit them within Russia's complex system of social caste. Unlike the highly regarded German population, however, the Russian state always regarded its Jewish members with suspicion. Under a statute enacted in 1804, Russian Jews were confined to the infamous "Pale of Settlement," an area comprising Poland and the Western Ukraine but excluding areas dominated by ethnic Russians (Weeks 2006: 31).

Of all the territorial additions secured by the reformed tsarist state, none was of greater economic and social importance than the Southern Ukraine and the neighboring Kuban steppe, areas that had long acted as the frontier of settlement. As was the case with the American and Canadian frontier, the Ukrainian and Kuban steppes acted as a social safety valve, providing a refuge and a new start as Cossacks for generations of runaway serfs. The closing of Russia's southern frontier, and the "Trans-Volga" frontier to the east of the Volga River, thus entailed immense dangers as well as almost limitless opportunities for imperial Russia. Initially, dangers were more apparent than opportunities as a series of Cossack-led rebellions resisted the enforcement of tsarist control. Of these revolts, the Kondraty Bulavin-led uprising of the Don Cossacks in 1707–1708 and the Pugachev rebellion of 1773–1774 were the most significant, the latter shaking the imperial regime to its core. In the end, tsarist Russia solved its Cossack problem by offering them special status as peasant soldiers, a solution that saw the Cossacks gain free use of their land in return for military service. More problematic for the long-term future of Russia was the incorporation of large numbers of Ukrainians, Byelorussians, Jews, Tartars, and other ethnic groups into the empire as imperial Russia's population rose from 18 million in 1700 to 74 million in 1861. By the late nineteenth century, ethnic Russians (Great Russians) found themselves in a minority, comprising only 44% of the total (Lieven 2006: 22). As security was enforced across the Ukrainian and Kuban steppes, however, the agricultural potential of these regions was realized. Unburdened by the historic legacy of serfdom and its associated agricultural practices, the Ukraine witnessed the emergence of large, commercial estates in the wake of the Napoleonic wars. In his study, *The Development of Capitalism in Russia*, Lenin (1898/1964: 259) records how this "Novorossiya" (New Russia) differed from old Russia in its possession of "huge farms," operating on an "unprecedented" scale and utilizing the most recent forms of agricultural machinery. Increasingly, these new estates were directing toward the growing of wheat for export rather than rye, the traditional Russian staple. Such developments underpinned a doubling of Russia's foreign trade between 1820 and 1840 with agricultural products comprising around three-quarters of Russian exports by value. In this export trade, the most dynamic region was Odessa and the Black Sea littoral rather than St Petersburg and the Baltic, the Black Sea ports being responsible for two-thirds of Russia's grain exports (Ananich 2006: 400).

If the agricultural successes of "Novorossiya" during the nineteenth century were self-evident, it nevertheless remained the case that farm-based exports played the same economic role under the Romanovs as in past periods of Russian history, a role that was to be replicated with devastating and transformative effects in Stalinist Russia. In essence, the agricultural sector was squeezed to fund the lifestyles of a small elite as well as the imported accouterments of a modern state: railroad locomotives, rolling stock, machinery, weapons, etc. The brutal dynamic that lay at the heart of the tsarist economy was revealed in the terrible famine of 1891–1892, when an estimated 500,000 people died even as the port cities of the Black Sea filled foreign freight ships with grain. In describing this tragedy, historians invariably use terms such as "great, disastrous, devastating, and catastrophic" (Simms 1982: 64). In addition to the 500,000 peasants who died, the Russian countryside also witnessed the loss of 3.1 million horses, 6 million sheep, 1.6 million cattle, and 700,000 pigs (Simms 1982: 69). In reflecting upon this tragedy, Sidney Harcave (1968: 275) makes the pertinent point that Russia's peasants always operated "at the margin of existence," without "any reserve of supplies." Despite the immensity of the tragedy, the tsarist state behaved in ways similar to that followed by the Stalinist state in the catastrophic famine of the early 1930s, Simms (1982: 67) observing that "the export of cereals for 1891 was almost as great as that of the previous year." For the tsarist state, the need to import Western machinery and technology, which could only be paid with primary commodities, was more important than peasant lives, Russia's foreign minister infamously declaring that "We will not eat our fill, but we will export" (cited Kotkin 2017: 127).

The famine of the early 1890s points to profound failings in Russian management. Everywhere, the short- and medium-term interests of the state came at the expense of innovation and private sector managerial endeavor. As we have already noted, the Russian state placed heavy demands on its aristocracy in terms of military and governmental service. Even heavier demands were placed on the peasantry. Under the Petrine reforms, annual levies typically took 1.25% of the adult male service for military service. Although the term of military service was reduced to 25 years in 1793 in lieu of the original lifetime requirement, it is likely that few of these conscripts ever returned home (Moon 1999: 87–88; Moon 2006: 371–372). Those most likely to be picked for service were free-spirited and rebellious souls, their removal reinforcing the inherently conservative nature of Russian peasant life (Moon 2006: 385). It is also estimated that collectively imposed taxes and feudal dues typically stripped the peasant household of "around half of the product of their labor" (Moon 2006: 372). Legally enforced restrictions on movement made the transport of goods and people a difficult feat, a problem compounded by the vastness of the Russian landscape and the paucity of transport. The result was a series of disconnected local markets, in which producers in one region remained blissfully ignorant of innovations occurring in an adjacent area. In commenting upon the practices of the peasant artisan and the small, landlord operated factory, Lenin (1898/1964: 382) insightfully observed how:

> Their interests do not transcend the bounds of the small area of surrounding villages. . . . they are in mortal terror of 'competition', which ruthlessly destroys the patriarchal paradise of the small handicraftsmen and industrialists, who live lives of stagnant routine undisturbed by anybody or anything.

Tragically, the legal emancipation of Russia's serfs in 1861 failed to alter the working and living conditions of rural peasants and artisans, a failing that had profound consequences for the future of Russian society. For not only did the *Emancipation Act* fail to deliver the peasant ownership of the land they worked, a number of provisions rigged the process of land settlement in favor of the aristocracy. First, only the landlord – not the peasant – could insist on the sale of the plot that the peasant had historically worked. This favored both the landlord who operated in agriculturally fertile areas (e.g., the Black Earth region) who did *not* want to sell, as well as the proprietor of a derelict estate working poor soil who *did* want to sell. In other words, the law forced peasants to buy poor land while denying them a commensurate right to acquire good land. A related provision also denied the peasant the right to concentrate multiple plots into a single, continuous property. Once more, a right denied to the peasant was given to the landlord, who was given the right to concentrate his holdings at the peasant's expense. Where land was sold to the peasant, the estimations as to an appropriate sale price invariably favored the landlord at the peasant's expense. In the Black Earth region, where few landlords were interested in selling, sale prices were set 20% above prevailing market rates. In the Russian forest heartlands, however, where landlords typically did want to sell, prices were set 90% above normal market prices (Gerschenkron 1965: 743, 738). Moreover, although the Russian state did offer the peasants loans to buy land, it did so by charging interest rates that were 25% to 50% above normal bank rates (Gerschenkron 1965: 736–737).

While the *Emancipation Act* did facilitate the growth of large, commercial estates worked by waged labor in "Novorossiya" (i.e., the Ukraine, the Kuban, the Trans-Volga), elsewhere it had two principal effects, both of which were retrograde. In regions where the peasants proved incapable of acquiring land – whether due to the opposition of the gentry or financial reasons – it left a mass of resentful, poverty-stricken, and largely landless peasants. Where land was acquired, it was typically obtained at exorbitant prices, leaving little money for productive investment in machinery or farm animals. The peasant's capacity to move into a new occupation or line of work also remained severely restricted. Whereas before 1861 the peasant needed to obtain the landlord's permission to move elsewhere, after 1861 peasants required approval from the head of the *mir* or village commune. If approval for permanent departure was allowed, it invariably required the express surrender of all land claims as well as the discharge of all central and local taxes (Gerschenkron 1965: 752). Collectively, such outcomes worked to retard progress in not only agriculture but also the wider economy. Across the 1880s and the 1890s, per capita output of wheat and rye – the two principal grain crops – was lower than it had been in the early 1870s (Gerschenkron 1965: 778). Growth in per capita income also lagged that obtained in the industrializing societies of Northwest Europe, barely

improving in 20 years between 1860 and 1880. Indeed, according to the estimates of Paul Gregory (1972: 423), the *comparative* situation of the average Russian was worse in 1913 than it had been in 1860 when measured in constant US dollars. Whereas in 1860, Russia's per capita income was 50% of the British-French-German average, by 1913 it had fallen to around one-third of the Western average. In the final analysis, such failings must be attributed to what Marc Raeff (1983: 206) refers to as an "interventionist and coercive state" that "always assumed that it had the power and the obligation to govern all aspects of the lives of citizens." By seeking to control everything, the tsarist state ended up curtailing the innovation and creativity that characterized "modern management" elsewhere, an outcome that worked to its own long-term disadvantage.

Ideas, Management, and Russian Reality

In his *Fathers and Sons*, Turgenev provides an account of how his central character, Arkady Kirsanov, returns home to the family estate in southern Russia during the summer of 1859, i.e., on the eve of emancipation. What Arkady finds is a semi-derelict property, in which the grand living conditions of his own family stands in sharp contrast to the abysmal circumstances of the serfs whom he finds living in "low peasant huts under dark roofs often missing half their thatch." Distraught, Arkady declares to himself, "it's impossible, impossible for it to stay like this; reforms are essential . . . but how to implement them, where to begin?" (Turgenev 1862/2009: 10–11).

In Arkady Kirsanov's mix of enthusiasm and confusion, Turgenev arguably captures the sentiments of his age, in which wide sections of Russian society agreed as to the need for far-reaching economic and managerial reform while disagreeing as to proposed solutions. Thus, we find in the pages of Turgenev, Herzen, Tolstoy, and Dostoyevsky – as well as in the treatises of revolutionary figures such as Kropotkin and Lenin – a profound and constant interest in rational principles of management. In Tolstoy's (1876/1978: 357) *Anna Karenina*, for example, we read how a leading noble (Sviazhsky) engages "a German expert from Moscow" and pays "him 500 roubles to investigate the management of their property," only to find "that they were losing 3000 roubles odd per year." Similarly, in Turgenev's (1862/2009: 9) *Fathers and Sons,* Arkady's father, Nikolai, employs "a steward who's a townsman," paying "him a salary of two hundred and fifty roubles a year" in the vain hope of returning a profit from his estate. Constantly, however, we read how such reform efforts were obstructed by a peasantry resistant to change. Writing at the end of the nineteenth century, Lenin (1898/1964: 315) lamented how in Russia, "the production of agricultural produce was always carried out in an unchanging, wretchedly small way." Similarly, in *Anna Karenina*, the reform-minded Kostya Levin "struggled with all his might for many years" against the peasant's "everlasting slovenliness" (Tolstoy 1876/1978: 170). Similarly, in *Fathers and Sons*, the revolutionary nihilist, Yevgeny Bazarov, doubts whether "emancipation" would "do any good because our

peasants are happy to steal from themselves, as long as they can get stinking drunk at the tavern" (Turgenev 1862/2009: 42).

Concerns as Russia's managerial backwardness, most particularly in the agricultural sector, evoked three main intellectual responses. The first involved doing what most Russian reformers had done across the generations: turn to the West for theoretical and practical guidance. According to Marshev (2019: 286–287), the study of "management" as an intellectual discipline can be effectively dated from 1832 and the publication in Russian of Charles Babbage's *On the Economy of Machinery and Manufactures*. "This treatise," Marshev (2019: 287) observes, "soon became well-known to various professors of Russian universities, as well as statesmen and nineteenth-century entrepreneurs." By the 1840s, the Law Faculties of all four imperial universities were offering courses in public sector management. In the 1860s, German theories of management also gained a following after the publication (in German) of Lorenz von Stein's *Die Verwaltungslehre* (*The Administration*). In this work, von Stein argued that once a student becomes "thoroughly engaged in management" they soon realize "that there is no science that would equal this one in its richness and value" (cited, Marshev 2019: 287). Significantly, von Stein differed from classical economics, with its emphasis on self-interest and markets, in placing the state at the center of effective systems of management. According to von Stein, the state was the personification or "organism of the general will" (cited Mengelberg 1961: 269). Only through the benevolent guidance of the state, von Stein continued, could meaningful social reform occur in ways that avoided destructive conflict (Mengelberg 1961: 272). This emphasis on the state's supposed capacity to foster socially progressive models of management gained wide academic acceptance following the publication of Viktor Goltsev's *The Doctrine of Management* in 1880. The head of the Law School at the Imperial Moscow University, Goltsev had previously studied under von Stein at the University of Vienna. "Like von Stein," Marshev (2019: 287) observes, Goltsev "emphasized the role of the state in fostering an 'improvement of the individual'."

If Western ideas of management – emphasizing alternatively the free-market approach of British classical economics and von Stein's concept of state mentorship – gained an academic following, the idea that Russia should seek solution for its problems by looking to the West was resolutely opposed by "Slavophiles" such as Herzen and Tolstoy and the so-called Narodnik or populist movement. For Tolstoy, the idea that estate managers should be profit-oriented, "fighting for every farthing," was not only an impracticable goal in Russia; it was also "a most unworthy one" (see Tolstoy 1876/1978: 344). Rather than blindly adopting "the European way," the central character in *Anna Karenina* argues, managerial models in Russia only succeed when they accepted "the Russian peasant" as they are, organizing systems of work around them (Tolstoy 1876/1978: 363). For Herzen (1851/1956: 190, 189), as we have previously noted, "the future of Russia" was also identified with "the *moujik*" or peasant, with their supposed aversion to "private ownership." In short, according to Slavophile opinion, the best model for management was one located in Russia's rural and peasant past, rather than in an urban and industrial future.

The view that Russian managerial and work practices should be based on the ethics of the Russian peasant drew criticism from many directions, from both advocates of Western-style liberal democracy such as Turgenev and proponents of far-reaching revolution such as Kropotkin and Lenin. Declaring himself "an inveterate and incorrigible Westerner," Turgenev (1869/2009: 169, 173) accused the Slavophiles – most particularly Tolstoy – of never removing their "rose-tinted glasses even for a moment." Rather than perceiving in the Russian village an idyllic world living in harmony with nature, Turgenev saw a rural society sunk in ignorance, illiteracy, and intellectual backwardness. For Turgenev (1869/2009: 169, 173), no gains were possible without an extension of education and learning to the mass of the Russian population, arguing that "Nothing liberates . . . as much as learning." The view that Slavophiles such as Herzen and Tolstoy perceived the world through "rose-tinted glasses" was one that won Lenin's endorsement, Lenin (1898/1964: 211) accusing the Slavophiles and their "Narodnik" allies of "monstrous idealism." For Lenin (1898/1964: 211), as with Turgenev, Russian peasant life was one characterized by "technical and social stagnation" that led to mass misery rather than enlightenment. Along with most modern scholars, Lenin (1898/1964: 211) also made the valid point that the village commune was far from being an independent expression of popular will. Rather it owed its existence primarily to state and landlord support, ensuring the collection of state taxes and "a supply of labor for the landlords." Of Russia's nineteenth century writers, arguably none had a better appreciation of the gulf that existed between the romanticized understanding of the Russian "progressive" elite and the brutal reality of peasant life than Dostoyevsky, a person who spent a decade working alongside peasant convicts in the tsarist Siberian "Gulag." No matter how "kindly, just-minded, intelligent a man of the higher class may be," Dostoyevsky (1862/1911: 308–309) recorded in *The House of the Dead*, "a bottomless abyss separates him from the lower classes." The gulf between Russia's Slavophile elite was amply demonstrated in the 1870s when thousands of well-educated "Narodniks" ventured into the countryside to enlighten the peasantry as to their revolutionary potential. As Turton (2009: 239) observes, when confronted with these strange city folk, "the profoundly conservative peasants did one of two things: they ignored them or turned them over to the Tsarist gendarmes."

One result of the "Narodniks" failed education campaign was that it convinced significant sections of the Russian intelligentsia that social and economic change was only achievable through violence and terror. From among the ranks of the old "Narodnik" movement emerged a new organization, *Narodnaya Volya* (Peoples Will), dedicated to the destruction of the tsarist state through carnage and force. When the assassination of Alexander II in March 1881 failed to bring down the regime, a campaign to murder his successor (Alexander III) was initiated under the leadership of Alexander Ulyanov. Arrested and executed in 1887, Ulyanov's execution spurred the formation of even more virulent and revolutionary opposition, led by his brother Vladimir, who adopted the *nom-du-guerre* of Lenin. In advocating a Marxist-based revolution, however, Lenin had to explain how a proletarian revolution – based on an industrial working class – could occur in a country where overwhelming majority were peasants. Lenin's attempt to circumvent this theoretical and practical

problem in his *The Development of Capitalism in Russia* reveals – despite its collation of a mass of useful statistics – a greater level of confused thinking than is typical even among Slavophile writers. Significantly, most of Lenin's study is given over to a discussion of Russia's peasantry rather than capitalism *per se*, his central argument being that Russia had experienced a profound process of "depeasantizing" (Lenin 1898/1964: 181). On one hand, Lenin (1898/1964: 185–186, 339) pointed to the supposed emergence of wealthy rural "kulaks," a class made up of "the peasant industrialist" and the "peasant bourgeoisie." In truth, most of these "kulaks," who were to be murdered in their millions under Stalin, were wealthy only by comparison with their neighbors. At the other end of the rural spectrum, Lenin (1898/1964: 179) discerned a large "rural proletariat," forced to combine work on their farms with agricultural and industrial wage labor. For Lenin, the fact that this "rural proletariat" still lived on the land, farmed the land, and resided in their ancestral farmhouse was immaterial. As revolutionary socialists, Lenin (1898/1964: 324) declared, "we are very indifferent to the question of the form of peasant land tenure." Lenin's analysis represents a particular unfortunate example of bending facts to suit a predetermined conclusion. For, despite Lenin's arguments to the contrary, the fact that a peasant worked part- or full-time as a waged laborer did not necessarily make them either a proletarian or a socialist. As subsequent events under communist rule were to demonstrate, the Russian peasant certainly viewed proposals for collectivization and state ownership with extreme disfavor. Accordingly, the attempt to build a revolutionary new society on the peasant's presumed proletarian instincts was to culminate, under communism, in one of the greatest tragedies in human history.

The revolutionary enthusiasm of both the *Narodnaya Volya* and Lenin's Bolsheviks brings to the fore the most fundamental question in not only management history but the social sciences more generally: to what extent should changes that promise immense long-term advantages be constrained by the possibility – or necessity – of violence in bringing those changes to fruition? Arguably, none confronted this question more ably than Dostoyevsky does in *Crime and Punishment*, which recounts whom a destitute student (Roskolnikov) seeks to better his own circumstances through the murder and robbery of a wealthy widow. In Roskolnikov we witness not only an individual making criminal choices but also a symbolic representation of a whole class of dissatisfied intellectuals. For those favoring economic amelioration through violence, the matter is, as one character observes in *Crime and Punishment*, just a question of "simple arithmetic" with one "crime" or act of violence "wiped out by thousands of good deeds" (Dostoyevsky 1866/1963: 66). Elsewhere in *Crime and Punishment*, Roskolnikov declares that "the man of the future" always has "a sanction for wading through blood" if this leads to historic good (Dostoyevsky 1866/1963: 236–237). In Dostoyevsky's estimation, however, in words conveyed by the words of Roskolnikov's criminal prosecutor, Porfiry Petrovich, crimes committed in the pursuit of a supposed good never end well; the ill-effects shared not only by the victim but also by the perpetrator, who is transformed from well-meaning reformer into murderous killer. Unfortunately for the future of management in Russia, and the society more generally, in the twentieth-century Russian society was to have the viewpoint of Roskolnikov imposed upon it, rather than that of Petrovich.

Conclusion

Often overlooked by Western scholars, the Orthodox East has provided some of the most important societies in the human experience. For a thousand years, Byzantium not only provided a living link to the Greek, Roman, and Judeo-Christian worlds of antiquity; it also acted as the eastern gatekeeper for European Christendom. Among the societies that owed a cultural and religious debt to Byzantium, none was more historically important than Russia. Like Byzantium before it, Russia occupied a precarious geographical position on Europe's eastern flank, exposing it to invasion by nomadic horsemen. Like Byzantium before it, Russian society also possessed a deeply held belief in its own historic destiny, not only as a defender of Orthodox faith but also as the flagbearer of a culture and civilization that it felt to be superior to all others. Confronted with constant invasion and threats to its very survival, Russian society – like Byzantium before it – chose to give a primacy to communal solidarity and defense, organized around a strong centralized state. In both Byzantium and Russia, however, this centralized state proved as much hindrance as help in providing the resources necessary for societal advance and progress. For, in both Byzantium and Russia, the survival and success of the society came to be associated with a social pact between the state and a militarized aristocracy, an alliance that marshaled economic and military resources by bleeding other sections of society. Invariably, social solidarity was prioritized at the expense of individual freedom, entrepreneurship, and private commercialized endeavor. The historical uniqueness of the Orthodox East has also caused scholars such as Huntington to argue that it is profoundly different from Western Europe, Huntington (1996/2003: 141) declaring that even after the Petrine reforms, Russia remained a society in which "Asiatic and Byzantine ways, institutions and beliefs predominated." According to Huntington and likemined scholars (Masaryk, Pirenne, Quigley), this cultural orientation has resulted in a society that places little value on individual freedom and liberty. This is a viewpoint that this study rejects. Constantly, across the centuries, the battle to maintain values associated with freedom, individual identity, and personal conscience have remained a constant in Russian history, a battle often waged in the most difficult of circumstances. Certainly, no one can read the works of Herzen, Tolstoy, Turgenev, Gogol, Dostoyevsky, and Solzhenitsyn without realizing that their emphasis on human dignity and freedom has a deep resonance within Russian society. Yet, it is also true that in the highly centralized societies that Russia has produced – Muscovy, imperial Russia, Soviet Russia – an inner sense of freedom could only be maintained through shows of outward compliance and obedience. In justifying such behavior in the Russia of the Romanovs, Dostoyevsky (1864/1972: 48) lamented, "Every decent man in this age is and must be a coward, a coward and a slave . . . Only donkeys and mules make a show of bravery."

If Russian culture has maintained a belief in individual freedom and personal identity, the state's constant emphasis on outward compliance demands a reconsideration of our understanding of what we mean by the terms "management" and, more specifically, "modern management." Yes, it is true that if we look to the classic definition of "management – i.e., planning, organizing, leading, controlling" – we

can assume that "leading" necessarily entails employee "motivation." But how does one motivate a serf to work that little bit harder when they know that the fruits of that additional effort will be taken from them? Similarly, how does one motivate a peasant to make additional investments in their plot of land when they know that their village commune will allocate that land to another family in the ensuing summer? Russian estate owners and managers never found an adequate answer to these fundamental questions. As David Moon (2006: 386) observes in relation to the typical peasant response to managerial control in imperial Russia:

> They worked badly on their landowners' land when performing their labour services, stole estate property, accidently broke new machinery . . . paid less than the full amount of their cash dues late, feigned incomprehension of orders, hid in the woods.

Within the confines of imperial Russian society, a host of people sought solutions to the low productivity of the workforce without real success: Peter the Great, Herzen, Tolstoy, Lomonosov, and Goltsev. The reason for this is clear: Russia lacked the supporting social and legal structures that are integral to "modern management" as it is emerged in Western Europe. In the West, such supporting structures not only fostered competition; they also provided labor a genuine freedom to choose their occupation and employer, along with guarantees of individual freedom and protection of property. In looking to the Russian experience, one can understand why these attributes were seldom fostered. By allowing such freedoms and protections, the state feared a weakening of the organizing ability it regarded as essential to national defense and security. However, by denying its citizens freedom of movement and protection of property, the imperial Russian state – like Muscovy and Byzantium before it – curtailed the creativity and entrepreneurship that is the hallmark of a successful society. In the final analysis, this failure proved more damaging to the society than any military defeat inflicted by an invading foe.

Cross-References

► What Is Management?

References

Ananich B (2006) The Russian economy and banking system. In: Lieven D (ed) The Cambridge history of Russia, vol 2. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK, pp 394–425
Babbage C (1832) On the economy of machinery and manufactures. Charles Knight, London
Baykov A (1954) The economic development of Russia. Econ Hist Rev 7(2):137–149
Braudel F (1977) Afterthoughts on material civilization and capitalism. John Hopkins University Press, Baltimore
Braudel F (1979/1982) The wheels of commerce: civilization and capitalism, 15th – 18th century, vol 2. Collins, London
Braudel F (1987/1993) A history of civilizations. Penguin Books, London
Camus A (1951/1978) The rebel: an essay on man in revolt. Alfred A Knopf, New Work

Cipolla CM (1981) Before the industrial revolution: European society and economy, 1000–1700, 2nd edn. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK
Davis RHC (1970) A history of medieval Europe: from Constantine to Saint Louis, 2nd edn. Longman, London
Dennison T (2011) The institutional framework of Russian serfdom. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK
Dostoyevsky F (1862/1911) The house of the dead, or prison life in Siberia. J.M. Dent and Sons, London
Dostoyevsky F (1864/1972) Notes from underground. In: Dostoyevsky F (ed) Notes from underground/The double (trans: Coulson J). Penguin, Harmondsworth, pp 15–126
Dostoyevsky F (1866/1963) Crime and punishment. Dodd, Mead & Company, New York
Engel BA, Martin J (2015) Russia in world history. Oxford University Press, Oxford
Flier M S (2006) Political ideas and rituals. In: Pirenne M (ed) The Cambridge history of Russia, vol. 1. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK, pp. 387–408
Gerschenkron A (1965) Agrarian policies and industrialization: Russia 1861–1917. In: Habakkuk HJ, Postan M (eds) The Cambridge economic history of Europe, vol 6. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, MA, pp 706–800
Graham HF (1987) How do we know what we know about Ivan the terrible. Rus Hist 14(1):179–198
Gregory P (1972) Economic growth and structural change in tsarist Russia: a case of modern economic growth? Sov Stud 23(3):418–434
Harcave S (1968) Years of the golden cockerel. Macmillan, New York
Hartley JM (2006) Provincial and local government. In: Lieven D (ed) The Cambridge history of Russia, vol 2. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK, pp 449–467
Hellie R (2006a) The economy, trade and serfdom. In: Pirenne M (ed) The Cambridge history of Russia, vol 1. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK, pp 539–558
Hellie R (2006b) The peasantry. In: Pirenne M (ed) The Cambridge history of Russia, vol 1. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK, pp 286–297
Hellie R (2006c) The law. In: Pirenne M (ed) The Cambridge history of Russia, vol 1. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK, pp 360–386
Herzen A (1851/1956) The Russian people and socialism: An open letter to Jules Michelet. In: Herzen A (ed) From the other side & The Russian people and socialism (trans: Wolheim E). Weidenfeld and Nicholson, London, pp 164–208
Herzen A (1855/1956) From the other side. In: Herzen A (ed) From the other side & The Russian people and socialism (trans: Wolheim E). Weidenfeld and Nicholson, London, pp 3–162
Hughes L (2006) Russian culture in the eighteenth century. In: Lieven D (ed) The Cambridge history of Russia, vol 2. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK, pp 67–91
Huntington SP (1996/2003) The clash of civilizations and the remaking of world order. Simon & Schuster, New York
Jones AHM (1964) The later Roman empire 284–602: a social, economic and administrative survey, vol 2. Basil Blackwell, Oxford
Kleimola AM (1979) Up through servitude: the changing condition of the Muscovite elite in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Rus Hist 6(2):210–229
Koerner R (1941/1966) The settlement and colonization of Europe. In: Postan MM (ed) The Cambridge economic history of Europe, vol 1. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK, pp 1–91
Kotkin S (2017) Stalin: waiting for Hitler 1929–1941. Penguin Books, London
Kropotkin P (1912/1968) Fields, factories and workshops, 2nd edn. Bejamin Blom, London/New York
Lenin VI (1898/1964) The development of capitalism in Russia. In: Lenin VI (ed) Collected works, vol 3. Progress Publishers, Moscow, pp 21–607
Lieven D (2006) Russia as empire and periphery. In: Lieven D (ed) The Cambridge history of Russia, vol 2. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK, pp 9–26

Marshev V (2019) Formation of management thought in Russia and early USSR from the 1800s to the 1920s. J Manag Hist 25(3):285–303
Masaryk TG (1913/1955) The spirit of Russia. George Allen & Unwin, London
Mayer W (2009) John Chrysostom on poverty. In: Allen P, Bronwen N, Mayer W (eds) Preaching poverty in late antiquity. Evangelische Verlagsnstalt, Leipzig
Mengelberg K (1961) Lorenz Von Stein and his contribution to historical sociology. J Hist Ideas 22(2):267–274
Miller DB (2006) The Orthodox Church. In: Pirenne M (ed) The Cambridge history of Russia, vol 1. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK, pp 338–359
Moon D (1999) The Russian peasantry, 1600–1930: The world the peasants made. Longman, London
Moon D (2006) Peasants and agriculture. In: Lieven D (ed) The Cambridge history of Russia, vol 2. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK, pp 393–369
Morgan LH (1878) Ancient society. Henry Holt and Company, New York
Ostrogorsky G (1941/1966) Agrarian conditions in the Byzantine Empire in the middle ages. In: Postan MM (ed) The Cambridge economic history of Europe, vol 1. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK, pp 205–234
Pipes R (1974) Russia under the old regime. Charles Scribner's Sons, New York
Pirenne H (1925/1952) Medieval cities. Their origins and the revival of trade. Princeton University Press, Princeton
Poe M (2006) The central government and its institutions. In: Pirenne M (ed) The Cambridge history of Russia, vol 1. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK, pp 435–463
Pollard S (1980) A new estimate of British coal production, 1750–1850. Econ Hist Rev 33(2):212–235
Portal R (1966) The industrialization of Russia. In: Habakkuk HJ, Postan M (eds) The Cambridge economic history of Russia, vol 6. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK, pp 801–875
Quigley C (1979) The evolution of civilizations: an introduction to historical analysis, 2nd edn. Indianapolis Library Press, Indianapolis
Raeff M (1983) The well-ordered police state: social and institutional change through law in the Germanies and Russia, 1600–1800. Yale University Press, New Haven
Riasanovsky NV (1993) A history of Russia, 5th edn. Oxford University Press, Oxford, UK
Russian primary chronicle (1337/1953) The Laurentian text. Medieval Academy of America, Cambridge, MA
Sachs J (2005) The end of poverty: economic possibilities for our time. Penguin Press, London
Shakiba ZP (2006) Central government. In: Lieven D (ed) The Cambridge history of Russia, vol 2. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK, pp 429–448
Shaw DJB (2006a) Urban developments. In: Pirenne M (ed) The Cambridge history of Russia, vol 1. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK, pp 579–599
Shaw DJB (2006b) Russia's geographical environment. In: Pirenne M (ed) The Cambridge history of Russia, vol 1. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK, pp 19–43
Shaw DJB (2006c) Towns and commerce. In: Pirenne M (ed) The Cambridge history of Russia, vol 1. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK, pp 298–316
Simms JY (1982) The economic impact of the Russian famine of 1891–92. Slavonic and East European Review 60(1):63–74
Smith R (1977/2010) Peasant farming in Muscovy. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK
St Gregory the Great (c.AD 593/1959) Dialogues: the fathers of the Church. Catholic University of America Press, Washington, DC
St John Chrysostom (c.AD 398/1848) The homilies of St John Chrysostom on the Gospel of St John. John Henry Parker, London
Tolstoy L (1876/1978) Anna Karenina. Penguin Classics, London
Turgenev I (1862/2009) Fathers and children: Norton critical edition. W.W. Norton and Co., New York. [Note: in the interests of political correctness, recent additions have abandoned the original title, Father and sons]

Turgenev I (1869/2009) Apropos of fathers and sons. In: Katz MR (ed) Fathers and children: Norton critical edition. W.W. Norton and Co., New York, pp 167–174
Turton G (2009) The historical context of fathers and sons. In: Katz MR (ed) Fathers and children: Norton critical edition. W.W. Norton and Co., New York, pp 236–240
United States Department of Commerce (1975) Historical statistics of the United States. Colonial times to 1970: bicentennial edition. U.S. Department of Commerce, Washington, DC
Weeks TR (2006) Managing empire: tsarist nationalities policy. In: Lieven D (ed) The Cambridge history of Russia, vol 2. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK, pp 27–44
Wirschafter EK (2006) The groups between: raznochintsy, intelligentsia, professionals. In: Lieven D (ed) The Cambridge history of Russia, vol 2. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK, pp 245–263