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Russia as a Space of Hope: Nineteenth-century French Challenges to the Liberal Image of Russia

Introduction

Beginning with Montesquieu's *De l'esprit des lois*, a particular perception of Russia emerged in France. To the traditional negative image of Russia as a space of brutality and backwardness, Montesquieu now added a new insight into her 'sociological' otherness. In *De l'esprit des lois* Russia was characterized as a space marked by an absence. The missing element in Russian society was the independent *intermediate corps* that in other parts of Europe were the guardians of freedom. Thus, Russia's backwardness was explained by the lack of the very element that made Western Europe's superiority. A similar conceptual frame was to become predominant in the French liberal tradition's perception of Russia. After the disillusion in the progressive role of enlightened despotism — one must remember here Voltaire and the myth of Peter the Great and Catherine II — the French liberals went back to 'sociological' explanations of Russia's backwardness. However, for later liberals such as Diderot, Volney, Mably, Levesque or Louis-Philippe de Ségur the missing element was not so much the intermediate corps as the 'third estate'.[1] In the turn of liberalism from noble to bourgeois, the third estate — and later the 'middle class' — was thought to be the 'yeast of freedom' and the origin of progress and civilization. In the nineteenth century this liberal-bourgeois dichotomy of *barbarian* Russia (lacking a middle class) vs *civilized* Western Europe (the home of the middle class) became hegemonic in the mental map of French thought.[2]

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However, after the French Revolution and for the whole nineteenth century, a group of different sets of images of Russia emerged, challenging what we have called the 'liberal' representation of that country in France. Representations of Russia were intimately tied to the making of European identity. For that reason, struggles for the definition of 'Europe' often involved quite different — sometimes opposite — representations of Russia. Conversely, defining Russia was often a way of asserting a certain identity for France or, more generally, for Europe. Let us discuss briefly the struggles for the definition of 'Europe' in post-revolutionary France.

Eighteenth-century French Enlightenment secularized the idea of 'Europe', an idea that, until that moment, was almost a synonym of 'Christendom'. In this process, a group of new lay ideas replaced the old transcendental content of 'Europe': Progress, Freedom, Reason, Civilization, and Enlightenment. Very soon — among Scottish Enlightenment writers first, and a little later among Frenchmen such as Turgot, Condorcet or Diderot — these elements were related to the economic sphere. For example, in the theory of the 'four stages', the type of government and the cultural splendour of a nation were associated with certain stages of economic development. Thus, 'Europe' was the land of the higher stage — commerce and manufacture. On the other hand, despotism, barbarism and other forms of 'backwardness' were excluded from the meaning of 'Europe', as elements of a 'previous' stage of development and, therefore, typical of agricultural or cattle-raising (non-European) nations.[3]

Thus, for the Enlightenment, History was understood as an essentially cosmopolitan process. For example, in Voltaire's works Europe was just the land in which the progress of Enlightenment went farthest. There was nothing particular differentiating Europe from the rest of the world. Diderot related European identity more closely to the social-economic sphere, making 'Europe' the land of 'civilization'. In Diderot's mind, 'civilization' was the outcome of the development of commerce and of the presence of certain social structures featuring a *mediating* and *unifying* middle class. In this set of representations, Russia — the mirror image of Diderot's 'Europe' — was the land of the *absence* of that social class and, therefore, the land of despotism.[4]

Against this way of understanding History as a cosmopolitan process, Romanticism opposed the idea of national particularity.

As is well known, German Romanticism raised the idea of *Kultur* as the specific and unique development of an individual nation. In the concept of *Kultur*, the spiritual or cultural sphere — rather than the social-economic sphere, as in 'Civilization' — holds the most important elements that define a nation. With this particularistic approach, the idea of Europe was at risk of being dissolved and eventually disappearing. But this was not a necessary conclusion of Romanticism, for it was still possible to reconstruct 'Europe' after acknowledging national particularities. All that was required was to find something in common between the otherwise individual nations.

On the other hand, in certain versions of Romanticism the issue of Civilization vs *Kultur* overlaps with another one, namely, the opposition between individualism and communitarianism. Choosing the latter, some Romantic intellectuals rejected capitalism — whose social organization was atomizing the 'community' — liberalism — that turned individualism into a doctrine — and the bourgeoisie — whose behaviour embodied all the dangers described above. In this respect, Romanticism offered some attractive elements for socialism (which, however, originally belonged to the liberal-Enlightened tradition) as well as for conservatives seeking to re-establish order. Living in 'communion' could be the aim of both socialists and the most extreme and aristocratic right-wingers, the former looking to the future and the latter regretting the past. As is well known, in the nineteenth century a whole range of Romantic and communitarian topics and ideas circulated between the far Left and the far Right. However, it must be remembered that not all the Romantics were engaged in this 'communitarian' challenge to their present, nor did all the socialists or conservatives find in individualism the source of all evil. Particularly in France, many Romantic intellectuals shared the same universe of ideas as the liberals. As Arthur Lovejoy pointed out long ago, an extraordinary variety of ideas, intellectuals and artists went under the name of 'Romanticism', sometimes with opposite ideas or on contrary 'sides' of the political arena. The complexity of the concept was such, that the famous historian could not find a common denominator.[5] Therefore the label of 'communitarian Romantics' seems the best way of naming the particular group of Romantics with whom we will deal in this article.

Among this particular group we shall find one of the strongest

challenges to the liberal image of Russia in France, particularly (but not only) after the Revolution of 1848. At that time, some intellectuals found in Russia a useful argument for their political purposes. According to the communitarian Romantics, far from being the land of barbarism, a land in which something essential was missing — as it appeared to the liberals — Russia could help to regenerate Europe, leading it to its destiny or its real nature. Why was Russia fitted for such a task? Because her society was supposedly still organized around a *commune,* the peasant commune or *mir*. Thus, Russia could show Europe the way back to the *lost community* (for the conservatives) or forward to the *desired community* (for the socialists). Europeans only needed either to recover or to emulate this element that Russia had not lost. In any case, 'Russia' was represented as a superior or better place *vis-à-vis* old and decadent 'Europe'.

The most common elements in this new positive appraisal of Russia were the absence or weakness of a bourgeoisie/middle class (considered — against the opinion of liberals — as the main dissolving agent of the community) and the presence of an egalitarian or communitarian popular culture. Naturally, for these intellectuals, praising the Russian commune was a way of condemning the actual condition of European 'bourgeois', individualistic and decadent society.

The second challenge to the liberal representation of Russia that we shall deal with is found mainly among intellectuals whose main concern was to re-establish order in a time of revolutions and growing social unrest. Some of them — not without doubts and ambiguities, as we shall see — chose Russia as an example of order that the disordered Europe should follow. One of the groups that made this choice were the ultramontane and traditionalist critics of the Enlightenment and the French Revolution. For them, it was a matter of restoring *Ancien Régime* Europe, the Europe that was synonymous with 'Christendom' and respected traditional authority and values. For them, shortly after 1789 and its aftermath, Russia offered the example of a peaceful and ordered nation, untouched by the influence of the *philosophes* and their new impious ideas and the politicians with their unacceptable claims. For them, finally, it was a matter of proving that 'civilization' was the work of legitimate kings and the Church, rather than Enlightenment or economic development. Another kind of 'order-seekers' that considered Russia as a possible

example for Europe were — though in a different way and for different reasons — sociologists like Comte and, partially, Le Play.

The liberal tradition was also interested in restoring order. However, the difference from the 'order-seekers' described above is that the liberals did not want to do it at the cost of the principles of 1789 and the general legacy of the Enlightenment. For them, 'Europe' had to make room for the legitimacy of the Revolution — at least in its first phase — the Rights of Man, the absence of feudal privileges and representative government; for the most radical among them, 'Europe' had to make room even for republicanism and democracy, and still remain ordered. Thus, they could not praise a Russian type of order, no matter how much order was needed. Therefore, the liberals had to struggle with the ultramontane and traditionalist thinkers for the meaning of 'Europe' and 'civilization'.

There was still a third kind of challenge to the liberal representation of Russia, although a minor one. For a small group of socialists, the idea of 'civilization' condensed everything they hated. For them, it was not a matter of struggling for the right definition of that word, for socialism was not meant to be the higher stage in the process of civilization. On the contrary, socialism could only emerge out of the total destruction of so-called civilization. Thus, for them 'Russian barbarism' represented the promise of a quick annihilation of European order and therefore, an unexpected ally for socialism. Taking the revolutionary idea of the negation of social order to an extreme, some socialists started dreaming of an invasion of Cossacks after which — out of the collapse of bourgeois order — socialism would triumph. However, this extreme form of 'seduction of barbarism' was very rare, even among socialists. Most of them still perceived Russia as their most powerful enemy, the barbarian ally of the conservative forces in Europe. For the bulk of the socialist movement a Cossack invasion was the worst of nightmares.

As part of the struggle for hegemony, the liberal tradition had to fight with enemies on the Right and on the Left. A central part of this combat took place in the realm of representations. Achieving hegemony required filling the concepts of 'Europe' and 'civilization', among others, with the 'right' content, i.e. creating a liberal-bourgeois European identity. The clash of representations of Russia that we shall discuss in this article was an episode — and not a minor one — in this struggle.

Russia as an Example of Order

Conservatives, Traditionalists and Ultramontanes: the First Challenge to the Liberal Tradition

After the experience of the French Revolution, those who regretted the *Ancien Régime* challenged the tradition of the Enlightenment with a different worldview. The 'ultra-royalistes' of the time of the first Restoration supported the supposedly harmonious hierarchy of the old days against the egalitarian principles of 1789; it was a matter of restoring the 'organic' and 'natural order' evilly broken by the *philosophes* and the mob. For traditionalists and ultramontanes 'Europe' meant 'tradition' and 'religion', the opposite of the universalistic idea of the Rights of Man. Some of them even praised the idea of the divine origin of the Monarch and refused to accept any written Constitution as an inconvenient limit to his power. However, most of them were also against despotism, for it was the enemy of the 'old liberties' — rather than the new abstract 'freedom' — that they wanted to preserve.[6]

The role of the tsars as active supporters of the restoration of the *Ancien Régime* is well known, and we shall not go back to that issue here. However, it should be borne in mind that in the treaty of the Holy Alliance the monarchs chose to present themselves as 'members of the same Christian nation', in an obvious challenge to the secular identity of Europe. Consequently, it would not be surprising to find 'ultras' admiring Russia and its regime.[7] However, conservative intellectuals' perceptions of Russia were somewhat more ambiguous, as will become evident in the analysis of the works of the two most prominent ultramontane thinkers: Louis de Bonald and Joseph de Maistre.

Louis de Bonald and Joseph de Maistre. Louis de Bonald is a good example of that ambiguity. In his *Théorie du pouvoir politique et religieux dans la société civile* (1796) Russia is perceived as a society in which 'despotism' was not only the legacy of an obscure past, but also the creation of Peter I. Peter's main fault was, naturally, abolishing the traditional laws of succession to the throne. However, Bonald trusted Catherine II: she could 'constitute' Russian society and therefore 'determine Russia's fate and, perhaps, Europe's fate'.[8] In order to do so, Catherine should firstly restore clear rules of succession. But there was something

else in the origin of Russian 'despotism'. One of the most important features in Bonald's definition of 'despotism' is the absence of 'social distinctions' that defended society by counterbalancing the power of the monarch. By 'social distinctions' Bonald meant the privileged orders of society — as in Montesquieu — rather than social classes — as in Diderot: Bonald explicitly rejected the idea that distinctions based on property could fulfil that task. In this respect, despotism was somewhat similar to 'democracy', as neither of them had 'permanent social distinctions'.[9]

In a similar way, in his *Discours politiques sur l'état actuel de l'Europe* (1802) Bonald argued that Russia was behind the rest of Europe in the 'path of human knowledge' because it did not have the benefits of 'Latin and Roman' influence. Despite this fact, pre-Petrine Russia had all the necessary elements to achieve social perfection. However, Peter the Great spoilt everything: 'Il commença l'education de son peuple comme nous commençons aujourd'hui celle de nos enfants, par les arts et le commerce, et il introduisit la corruption avant de former la raison'.[10] It becomes evident how far Bonald was from the liberal representations of Russia.

Thus, Bonald's 'Europe' was the Europe of privileges, monarchy and religion, while 'civilization' was the produce of Christian religion and monarchy.[11] Therefore, even when Bonald showed some expectations regarding Russia's future role, the characteristics of that country prevented him from taking it as a model for Europe.

However, in other works Bonald seemed to be more optimistic about Russia. In his *Essai analytique sur les lois naturelles de l'ordre social* (1800) he argued that Russia had left 'despotism' behind when a new law of succession was established. On the other hand, the Emperor was ready to restore the religious unity of Christendom (or so Bonald expected) and 'entrainer peut-être l'Orient dans son retour . . .'.[12] Apparently, all those expectations were later to be disappointed: by 1840 Bonald perceived Russia clearly as one of the main enemies of Roman religion.[13]

The ambiguity of the traditionalists' perception of Russia appears even more clearly in the works of Joseph de Maistre. As a representative of the Sardinian monarchy, he spent fourteen years — from 1803 to 1817 — in Saint Petersburg; during that period he wrote most of his most famous philosophical texts. His activities and relationships in Russia are well known, and we

shall not deal with them here.[14] In his letters and texts the evolution of his ideas on Russia — from initial hope and expectations to disappointment — becomes apparent. In 1806, for example, he enthusiastically wrote that Russia was 'untouched' and the Russians — 'neither Frenchified nor Germanized' — still loved their monarch and their fatherland. De Maistre expected that the Tsar — the 'protector of European Freedom' — was going to lead a war of 'Europe against Bonaparte'.[15] In a letter to a correspondent in 1812 de Maistre was more sceptical regarding the tsars; however, Russian society could still be an example worth following:

> Tous les livres sont pleins du despotisme et de l'esclavage russes. Je puis vous assurer cependant que nulle part l'homme n'est plus libre et ne fait plus ce qu'il veut. Les extrêmes se touchent, de manière que le gouvernement arbitraire amène plusieurs formes républicaines. Tout cela se combine d'une manière que l'on ne comprend bien que lorsqu'on l'a vu. La théorie des grades produit une aristocratie que tempère celle de la naissance, et désarme l'orgueil des nouvelles races qui a renversé les États parmi nous. L'homme nouveau qui peut parvenir à tout, en vivant et en obtenant des grades, n'a aucun intérêt à troubler 1'État. L'esclavage a beaucoup de compensations et n'exclut point l'enthousiasme national [. . .] Le véritable ennemi de la Russie c'est le gouvernement c'est l'Empereur lui-même, qui s'est laissé séduire par les idées modernes et surtout par la philosophie allemande, qui est le poison de la Russie.[16]

Thus, confronting the current literature on Russia, de Maistre dismisses despotism and serfdom as valid reasons to criticize that country. On the contrary, he praises the Table of Ranks (what he calls 'theory of the grades') and service nobility as a hierarchical organization that is even better than *Ancien Régime* society. De Maistre goes so far as to imply that with that kind of organization, Revolution in France would not have happened.

In several letters — as in the end of the paragraph reproduced above — de Maistre criticizes the Tsar and particularly the reforms proposed by Speranskii. Interestingly enough, in a letter to Rossi (1809) de Maistre objected particularly to policies aimed at the creation of a Third Estate:

> L'Empereur a dans le fond de son cœur un sentiment inextinguible de mépris pour la constitution de son empire, et ce sentiment favorise puissamment l'esprit d'innovation: je lui suppose quelques intentions d'établir un bras intermédiaire, un *tiers-état* [. . .] Cela fait trembler, d'autant plus qu'il n'y a ici aucun principe moral qui puisse servir de supplément et de correctif aux lois.[17]

It is important to remark that de Maistre was dismissing the

very same element that the liberal tradition in France had pointed out as the main cause of Russia's backwardness. Accordingly, his definition of 'civilization' was also different. In another letter the next year he argued that Russia was the only nation that did not begin its 'education' in the 'temples', for the priests in Russia have no independent role. On the contrary, they tried to achieve 'civilization' in a harsh way, rather than following the slow process of education led by religion. The letter finishes with a dramatic statement that shows de Maistre's disappointment (although later on de Maistre was still to recover some optimism regarding Russia's international role):

> Il me prend envie de pleurer, comme une femme, quand je songe au rôle qui était offert à la Russie et qu'elle a laissé échapper; elle pouvait balancer et peut-être surpasser le gloire de l'Angleterre et de l'Espagne; elle pouvait être le centre du commerce du continent, devenir le soutien, l'espoir, le refuge de toute la probité qui respire en Europe, s'enrichir et s'immortaliser. Au lieu de cela, elle abdique toute idée sublime; elle trompe, elle se ruine, elle s'humilie et s'environne d'ennemis . . .[18]

In *Du Pape* (1819) — de Maistre's masterpiece — 'civilization' appears clearly as the work of the Roman Pope as the leader of Christendom; in a similar way, the Catholic religion is the main content of his idea of Europe.[19] Thus, according to de Maistre 'Europe' and 'civilization' were the outcomes of a long process of spiritual education led by the Church, rather than — as in the liberals' view — a social-economic process led by the Third Estate. For that reason, de Maistre could not praise Peter the Great's attempt to civilize Russia: unlike Voltaire, a traditionalist like de Maistre could not appreciate a man who 'did not follow the course of Nature'. On the contrary, looking at the traumatic experience of 1789, de Maistre would have liked to completely eradicate the will of men from History. Thus, it is not surprising to find in *Du Pape* a long fragment related to Russia, in which de Maistre argues that the main problem in Russia's history was that it had not received the essential influence of Roman religion. Although he defends the Russians from the current negative stereotypes, de Maistre considers that Peter the Great introduced in Russia a 'false civilization', taken from the most corrupt era of European history, instead of letting religion continue with its slow work.[20] It is worth noticing how Rousseau's notion of Russian 'false civilization' changed slightly in the hands of an ultramontane.

In some of his other works de Maistre repeated similar arguments related to Russia (curiously enough, less so in his famous *Soirées de Saint-Pétersbourg*). One example is his *Cinq lettres sur l'éducation publique en Russie* or his *Quatre chapitres sur la Russie* (1811), where he also included his much-quoted prediction according to which a 'Pugachev from the University' could easily unleash a devastating revolution in Russia.[21] At the end of his intellectual life, in the *Lettre à M. le Marquis . . ., sur l'état du Christianisme en Europe* (1819), de Maistre — worried about the persecutions against Catholics and the Tsar's approaches to the Protestants — ended up arguing that 'no-one has harmed religion as much as the Emperor of Russia'.[22] The cycle of hope and disillusion was complete.

As a conclusion, behind the simple Russophilia emphasized by most current scholarship, both Bonald and de Maistre displayed a conflicting set of images. Seeking to combat the secular Enlightenment ideas of Europe and civilization, they were attracted to Russia as a possible example of order. However, the minor and subordinated role of the Orthodox Church and the undeniable fact of despotism and serfdom made it difficult to accept it fully.[23]

Honoré de Balzac. Balzac was another conservative who found in Russia a good example of order. As a Legitimist and Catholic candidate, he failed repeatedly in his attempts at becoming a member of the Parliament in the 1830s and after the Revolution of 1848; his deeply authoritarian ideas are well known.[24] In both his life and his writings, the Slavic world in general — Poland and Russia in particular — were a major influence and a recurrent theme[25] and in 1843, 1847 and 1848 he visited Russia and the Ukraine.[26]

It is not impossible to find negative perceptions of Russia in his texts — in 1836 he warned his readers in the *Chronique de Paris* about the danger that the country represented for Europe. However, later on in the same year he supported the idea of an alliance with Russia — rather than with England.[27] After that time Balzac remained an admirer of Russia, and in several occasions after 1840 — particularly in his letters to Mme Hanska, some of which are signed 'Votre mougik, Honoré' — he proclaimed a desire to move to Russia and become a Russian.[28] In 1840, under the title *Lettres Russes* — a group of letters suppos-

edly addressed to a Russian prince — Balzac strongly criticized the French government and the 'bourgeoisie parvenue' that it represented.[29] Thus, Balzac chose an imaginary dialogue with Russia as a way of criticizing his own country. But it was only in his *Lettre sur Kiew* (1847) that Balzac manifested all his admiration towards Russia. In that work he showed his preference for 'absolute power' and Russian 'so-called despotism', which he found preferable to having to deal with 'the mob'. Criticizing Custine, he praised the 'blind obedience' of the Russians, which was in any case better than the 'deep lack of discipline' of the French. Finally, he recommended the Tsar not to talk about freedom with the serfs, for it would disorganize the Empire.[30]

Thus, for the anti-liberal Balzac — the enemy of 'social equality', 'democracy' and 'atheism', the person who denied the political capacity of the 'middle class' and stated that the 'individual' was not the base of society —[31] Russia could offer an alternative and valid order.

Other Conservatives. A similar approach to Russia can be found in other minor conservative publicists of the time. For example, in his *Essai sur l'histoire ancienne et moderne de la nouvelle Russie* (1820), the marquis de Castelnau praises the Russian government, arguing that true freedom only exists when the monarchy can make free use of its power against those who abuse the people. On the contrary, false freedom consists in enjoying 'the rights of Man without any limit'.[32] In a similar way, in *La Balalaÿka* (1837) the Legitimist Julvécourt considers that a despotic government is an advantage for Russia, and serfdom is a kind of parental protection for the benefit of the serfs.[33] In a similar way, in 1853 the anti-liberal and conservative Vicomte de Beaumont-Vassy argued that Russia's 'despotic system' — in which the government had 'no obstacles' and social hierarchy was firm — was better than the 'parliamentary system' that only encouraged the freedom to overthrow monarchs and weaken authority, tradition and faith.[34] Finally, as late as in 1877 Arsène Legrelle in his *Le Volga* described his travels to Russia as 'a journey through an atmosphere of moral order' that reminded him how much 'the principle of authority' was needed to achieve real progress, and how often 'liberalism is the worst enemy of sincere freedoms'. And he concluded: 'It is a shame that we need to go so far to become convinced by experience of this useful truth.'[35]

The simple conservative and traditionalist positions, however, became less and less tenable in nineteenth-century France. As political life turned more and more to the Left, it was no longer possible to support a simple return to the *Ancien Régime*. The old France was dead, and the legacy of 1789 and bourgeois society was an undeniable fact of reality. After the first Restoration the 'ultras' became 'Legitimists' and later — as a result of the socialist menace — most of them gathered together with their former enemies — the Orleanists — and the rest of the liberals in a single 'Order party' (some of them even became republicans and democrats).[36] Thus, in the second half of the nineteenth century the kind of anti-liberal positive appraisals of Russia examined above tended to disappear, even if 'Plutôt les Russes que les Rouges' was a favourite expression used by conservatives in 1849 and 1850.[37] In a speech delivered at the Assembly in 1851, Victor Hugo still accused the right-wingers of dreaming of the Russian army every time they heard the words 'democracy', 'freedom', 'humankind' and 'progress', but — interestingly enough — the Right found the accusation terribly offensive and false.[38]

Order and Progress: the Pseudo-scientific Utopia of Auguste Comte

Curiously enough, a republican like Auguste Comte also found something worth considering in Russian despotism. In the preface of the third volume of his *Système de politique positive* (1853) he included a nineteen-page appeal *A sa majesté le tzar Nicolas*, inviting the Emperor to become an ally in Comte's project of 'human regeneration'. The reason for the unlikely proposal was that, after all, they had much in common. Comte was proud of 'having struggled against the sovereignty of the people and against equality' more radically in the name of Progress than the conservatives had done in the name of Tradition. On the other hand, the Emperor was in the 'vanguard of the human movement', protecting his nation from western unrest. The alliance that Comte proposed — resembling the old dream of the Physiocrats — was one between the 'theoretician' (himself) and Power. Why Russia? Because 'only from Eastern Europe we can expect today leaders willing to appreciate and make use of theoretical Enlightenment'.[39] On the contrary, Western Europe was submerged in an 'immense decease' and ruled by 'mediocre' leaders.

The appeal continues, explaining the political programme of the *Système* . . ., and ends by arguing that the 'natural leader of European conservatives' — Nicholas — would appreciate a doctrine that 'consolidates and develops conservative politics'.[40]

As Paul Bénichou pointed out, there is a link between Enlightenment and nineteenth-century utopianism, in the will to order society according to science. However, that aspect of Enlightenment could easily work against other aspects, such as the ideas of individual freedom and the Rights of Man. That was the case of the 'pseudo-scientific utopianism' of Saint-Simon or Comte.[41] According to Mary Pickering, after the mid-1820s Comte preached a period of political inactivity during two or three generations as the indispensable prelude for his programme of human regeneration. Thus, in spite of his republicanism, he proved ready to make alliances with the 'ultras' and even praised the Holy Alliance's repression of the Spanish liberal rebellion. In those days his philosophy was in favour of a fixed social hierarchy and dismissed the issue of individual freedom and the distinction between private and public spheres, foreshadowing 'modern totalitarianism by insisting that every person would be considered a public functionary, a contributor to the whole social economy (. . .)'. Thus, although Comte sought to preserve some of the progressive liberal values, he eventually reconstituted them in an ultimately illiberal system, one that betrayed the leading liberal principle, individual freedom, and its foundation, pluralism.[42]

Comte — unlike the liberals — admired Russian hierarchical order; a firm power such as the Emperor's — rather than European decrepit liberal politics — was exactly what he needed for his Positivist dictatorship and the 'regeneration of the Patriciate' that would replace the present-day exhausted bourgeoisie.

A Patronizing Order: Frédéric Le Play

For different reasons another sociologist — Frédéric Le Play — also found something to admire, at least partially, in Russian order. Unlike Comte, Le Play had the opportunity of travelling in Russia, where he worked as a mining director for prince Demidov, and studied the way the lower classes lived. Later on he published his travel accounts in *Voyages en Europe 1829–1854*.[43] However, his most interesting remarks on Russia are to be found

in his masterpiece — *Les Ouvriers Européens* (1855) — and in one of his main political works — *La Réforme Sociale en France déduite de l'observation comparée des peuples européens* (1864). Popular among the Catholic political audience and *Conseiller d'État* under Napoleon III, Le Play spent most of his time looking for the appropriate social-political order for Europe and — in the 1870s — organizing his followers in a network of adherents to spread his reform proposals.[44] His observations of different societies served not only a sociological interest, but also his own political programme.

A whole volume of Le Play's *Les Ouvriers Européens* deals with the 'Workers of the Orient' — in which he includes Russia, Turkey, Hungary and Morocco, Russia constituting the longest part. From the beginning, Le Play opposes East and West in a typically Romantic way. Although the West enjoys 'scientific and artistic Progress', at the same time it suffers from 'violent antagonisms'. On the other hand, Oriental societies may be afraid of change, but they enjoy 'welfare' and peace. For that reason, 'Progress' proves not to be the measure of 'social superiority', and the West could well learn 'lessons of social peace' — mainly fear of God and respect for fathers, traditional customs and authorities — from its Eastern neighbours. The lower development of urbanism in the East helps to preserve welfare, making less room for the 'vices of wealth' and the 'errors spread by literature'. On the contrary, in the West the 'parvenus' only care for themselves and their own wealth, without taking any of the responsibilities that come with social hierarchy: far from that, they preach 'the false dogmas of freedom and equality'.[45]

Le Play found in Russia much evidence to support his idea of the advantages of the East. To begin with, Russian peasant families were observant of religion and education did not go against the authority of the elders. Second, the peasant relationships with their landlords were 'excellent' and there were none of the typical conflicts of the West. Third, and more important, the 'social system' of the peasantry 'subordinates the individual in three ways': to the family, to the commune and to the landlord, thus encouraging 'stability' rather than 'progress'. Unlike in the West, individuals did not work only for themselves, but also for the rest of society; by the same token, they enjoyed community support when they were old or disabled. In a similar way, the *artel*' system — unlike the isolation of western workers — pro-

vided Russian labourers with a sort of supporting 'big family' with which they lived communally. Even though Le Play by no means approved of collective property — he was a firm supporter of private and individual property — the Russian 'system' was in his view worth admiring because it ensured the population social stability and security, keeping society in peace. Once freedom had been granted, Russian reformers should gradually introduce individual property but keep the 'protecting institutions' and the 'voluntary patronage', elements that, in their turn, could play 'a major role in Europe's social reform'.[46]

In *La Réforme Sociale* Le Play also included long references to the Slavs, Russia and the communal system, relating them directly to the western political problems:

> La Russie et les États slaves du Centre et de l'Orient [. . .] conservant intactes la famille patriarcale et la commune rurale, leurs populations peuvent nous rendre l'intelligence des institutions sociales du moyen âge, et nous donner une vue plus nette de celles qui conviennent au temps présent.

At the same time, emancipated from the former 'compulsory association' by the reforms of 1861, the Russian peasants could now evolve towards a voluntary one, different from the 'communist way' that many western workers were finding appealing.[47]

Thus, Le Play found in Russia institutions such as the family, the commune, the *artel'* and the nobility that could help to find a way out of western instability. However — unlike Comte — he did not admire the tsars or praise state authority. On the contrary, Le Play was interested in keeping — to some extent — the autonomy of individuals and private property. As Françoise Arnault has pointed out, Le Play — probably following Bonald and de Maistre — believed in the need for 'patronizing' institutions and a landed aristocracy above the bourgeoisie as the guardian of religion and social order. The main aim of his political programme was to find a middle way between two extremes: on one side, collective property, religion of authority and patriarchal family; on the other side, individual property (more and more fragmented), scepticism and unstable families.[48] The consequence of his political view was a certain pessimism regarding Progress — an awareness of the gap between technical progress and welfare. His ideas of order and society finally led him to the rejection of the very idea of civilization. In the second edition of *Les Ouvriers Européens* he included a short 'dictionary' of his

ideas: in it, 'Civilization' is defined as a 'false and dangerous' word, 'Evolutionism' is a 'false doctrine', 'Equality' is 'incompatible with human nature' and one of the 'three false dogmas of 1789' and 'Decadence' is the fault of the 'new rich', intellectuals and bad governments.[49] On the other hand 'Traditions' are the basis of prosperity.[50] Thus, even if Le Play shared some ideas with the liberals, his conservatism took him away from the fundamental premises of that tradition.[51]

Russia and the Seduction of Barbarism

On the opposite side of the arguments of the 'order-seekers' — who found in Russia potential sources of order — a few socialists found exactly the contrary. For them, western civilization was not only dying, but it also deserved to be completely wiped out in order to create the new society.

Thus, if there was nothing worth keeping from the so-called civilization, perhaps the Tsar of Russia could offer an unexpected short cut to socialism by invading Europe. Hatred of civilization made them surrender to the seduction of barbarism; thus, for them the image of the streets of Paris invaded by frenzied Cossacks was not nightmarish, but rather sublime.

Victor Considerant — the famous Fourierist leader — took Fourier's criticism of civilization to the extreme of regretting 'this sewer of miseries that they call civilization'.[52] In the year of the Revolution, 1848, he published *Le socialisme devant le vieux monde*, a summary of his ideas on socialism. In one of the last chapters — interestingly enough, entitled 'The Apocalypse' — he wrote that the Tsar Nicholas was an 'instrument of Providence' called to save Revolution, democracy and freedom in Europe. Considerant imagined that the Tsar — as part of his plans to conquer the West — would organize a Panslavic union and then unleash 'Asiatic hordes' against Europe. However, once the Tsar had destroyed everything, the hordes would fraternize with the workers and give birth to socialism.[53]

Even more eccentric was the socialist-anarchist Ernest Cœurderoy, who — just like Considerant — took part in the Revolution of 1848 and then was forced into exile in 1849. In his *De la Révolution dans l'homme et dans la société* (1852) he wrote that Revolution was not going to happen until 'the Cossacks

come down [from the North]'. Just as the Barbarians after the collapse of the Roman Empire had spread Christianity throughout Europe, the Cossacks would do the same with socialism:

> Oui, j'en jure sur le progrès de tous les temps, sur la conscience de tous les peuples, l'Europe ne sera un instant cosaque que pour devenir socialiste [. . .] La négation de la nationalité par la force russe précédera l'affirmation de l'humanité par le principe français de liberté [. . .] [Et] les Russes seraient appelés un jour les fils aînés du socialisme.[54]

Two years later Cœurderoy further developed this idea in a whole book, whose title requires no further explanation: *Hurrah!!! Ou la Révolution par les Cosaques*.[55]

It is rather curious to find socialists dreaming of the Cossacks (just what the Legitimists were often accused of doing). However, among moderates and conservatives derogatory comparisons between the working class and the Cossacks were quite common: the workers were often called 'moujicks', 'barbarians from within' or 'our Cossacks'.[56] As part of their 'revolutionary pessimism', socialists like Cœurderoy inverted the derogatory sense of the reference to the 'barbarians' and thus associated the working class and the Cossacks in a positive sense. The frequent parallel between European crisis and the fall of the Roman Empire — a central part of the nineteenth-century Romantic myth of the Barbarians so well described by Pierre Michel — also suggested a similar relationship between workers and Cossacks as 'new barbarians'.

However, it must be remembered that perceptions of Russia like Considerant's or Cœurderoy's were rather exceptional. Among most of the socialists Russia remained the guardian of conservatism, and the idea of a Cossack invasion was anything but promising.[57]

Russia as the Desired Community

More common as a challenge to the liberal representation of Russia — particularly in the second half of the nineteenth century — was the idealization of the Russian peasant commune as a sort of harmonious alternative to capitalist instability. Although this idea does not necessarily belong to the Left — the conservative Haxthausen is the obvious example — it is not common to find right-wing appraisals of the commune in France. Enthusiasm for

the Russian commune was part of a wider Romantic 'discovery of the Slavs'. In many quarters, the Slavs were supposed to be a 'young people' that would renew European old societies with 'new blood'. The seductive appeal of the Slavs was often combined with more general Romantic admiration for the Orient and its supposed ancient wisdom. Let us begin this section with some antecedents of the 'discovery of the Slavs' in France.

Mme de Staël and the Discovery of the Slavs

Mme de Staël — the so-called writer of 'the first Romantic manifesto in France' —[58] can be acknowledged as the person who introduced the Slavs to France. In eighteenth-century France, the Slavs were hardly perceptible as a unity. The idea of a 'race' with certain characteristics was rather alien to the universalistic principles of the Enlightenment: for eighteenth-century educated people it was more often a matter of individual countries — Russia, Poland, or Hungary, perceived as very different indeed — than of a whole Slavic people.

Undoubtedly, Mme de Staël discovered the Slavs in German philosophy, an area in which she was particularly skilled. It is not unlikely that she borrowed her ideas about the Slavs from Herder — one of the precursors of Romanticism — whose philosophy occupies a whole chapter of her *De l'Allemagne*.

Herder's representations of Russia had some similarities with Leibniz's — including admiration for Peter the Great and the idea of Russia as a link between East and West.[59] However, his general ideas on History and the role of the Orient and the Slavs were quite new. In his *Auch eine Philosophie der Geschichte zur Bildung der Menschheit* (1774) he praised 'Oriental despotism' as the indispensable period of education and 'Paternal authority' that all Nations need in their 'childhood'. On the other hand, challenging Enlightenment assumptions, Herder also admired the Middle Ages and regretted the corrupting consequences of the development of commerce. It was Christianity — rather than commerce — which was the source of all progress, for it was a kind of 'yeast' or 'intermediate order' amalgamating feudal society.[60]

Regarding the Slavs, in *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit* (1784–1791) Herder enabled a radical change in current geographical perceptions when he criticized the traditional division of nations in a north–south axis according to

climate. Challenging the Ptolemaic heritage on one hand, and introducing particularism against Enlightenment universalism on the other, Herder made a 'third space' for the Slavs in the East. No longer part of 'the North', no longer lost in cosmopolitan History, the Slavs could now be granted a geographical and historical place of their own. Similar to the Orient in many ways, this space was called 'Eastern Europe' [*östliches Europa*], a rather unusual concept in those days.[61]

In the fourth part of the *Ideen* . . . Herder included his famous chapter about the Slavs, depicting their characteristics and historical destiny. Originally, the Slavs were generous, peaceful and free, but also obedient and docile. For this reason they were enslaved and, as a result, they became cruel and indolent. However, it was still possible to perceive their good qualities. According to Herder, it was now the time for the Slavs to 'awake from their long sleep' and to be liberated. Thus, Herder not only distinguished the Slavs as a unified people but also gave them a promising future.[62]

Similar elements can be found in Mme de Staël's *De l'Allemagne* (1810), beginning with the partition of Europe into 'three major different races: Latin race, Germanic race and Slavonic race'. However, according to de Staël only the first two races constituted the 'real' Europe, the Latin carrying the Classical legacy and the Germanic adding the feudal institutions. Culturally, France and Germany were the two poles of the European 'moral chain'. 'Slavonic civilization', on the other hand, was still too recent and for the moment it had only shown cultural 'imitations' and nothing 'original'.[63] It is important to notice that de Staël repeats here Rousseau's theme of the inauthenticity of Russian civilization, but extends it to all the Slavs. However — unlike Rousseau — Mme de Staël did not think that the Slavs would always be 'imitators' but rather that they still had not had the opportunity to develop their own potential.

Later on, in 1812, as part of her long journey of escape from Napoleon, Mme de Staël found a temporary refuge in Russia. In *Dix Années d'Exil* she wrote her observations of that country, comparing it with the Orient, though in a positive sense: 'On se sent, en Russie, à la porte d'une autre terre, près de cet Orient d'où sont sorties tant de croyances religieuses, et qui renferme encore dans son sein d'incroyables trésors . . .' Russia is a strong and vigorous nation and the Russians — like the Orientals and

unlike Europeans — have a limitless imagination and a natural aptitude for dreams and passions.[64] In this respect — in a typical Romantic way — Mme de Staël was challenging the centuries-old tradition of derogatory references to the Orient.

Given such extraordinary conditions, Russia was called to a great future:

> De même qu'on voit deux rivières, après leur jonction, couler dans le même lit sans confondre leurs flots, de même la nature et la civilisation sont réunis chez les Russes, sans être identifiées l'une l'autre [. . .] Le génie leur viendra dans les beaux-arts, et surtout dans la littérature, quand ils auront trouvé le moyen de faire entrer leur véritable naturel dans le langage, comme ils le montrent dans les actions.[65]

In de Staël's Romantic approach, nature and society, content and form, passion and manners, contribute to a more 'cultural' definition of civilization, which enables her to reappraise Russia in a different light. Criticizing Europe, de Staël could place great expectations on the Orient and on Russia. Interestingly enough, this shift in perceptions also casts new light on Russia's social structure. Although serfdom was regrettable:

> . . . cet esclavage de Russie ne ressemble pas pour ses effete à celui dont nous faisons l'idée dans l'Occident; ce ne sont point, comme sous le régime féodal, des vainqueurs qui ont imposé de dures lois aux vaincus; les rapports des grands avec le peuple ressemblent plutôt à ce qu'on appelait la famille des esclaves chez les anciens, qu'à l'état des serfs chez les modernes. Le tiers-état n'existe pas en Russie; c'est un grand inconvénient pour le progrès des lettres et des beaux-arts; car c'est d'ordinaire dans cette troisième classe que les lumières se développent: mais cette absence d'intermédiaire entre les grands et le peuple fait qu'ils s'aiment davantage les uns les autres. La distance entre les deux classes paraît plus grande, parce qu'il n'y a point de degrés entre ces deux extrémités, et dans le fait, elles se touchent de plus près, n'étant point séparées par une classe moyenne.[66]

The quotation reproduced above shows a certain ambivalence. On the one hand, de Staël idealizes Russia as a space without social conflicts thanks to the *absence* of an intermediate class. Unlike Diderot or Guizot, de Staël considers here that the middle class *splits* society rather than amalgamating it. But this opinion is not comparable with the traditionalists' either, for de Staël strongly criticized the Russian nobility and was not at all interested in the fact that Russia was not Catholic. In this respect, de Staël's idealization of Russia's harmony anticipates, to some extent, the representation of Russia as a 'desired community' that we shall discuss in the rest of this article.

However, at the same time de Staël admits that civilization originates in the middle class and — unlike the 'communitarian Romantics' — she does not attack individualism. After all, Mme de Staël was a Romantic but also a liberal. The Europe that she imagined required the principles of 1789 — without doubt — but also passion and spirit. Not without reason Mme de Staël is considered a key link between eighteenth-century ideas and nineteenth-century Romantic liberalism. The ambiguities in her appraisal of Russia and the middle class can be attributed to her own ambivalent feelings regarding German Romanticism. As Simone Balayé has pointed out, Mme de Staël found inspiration in Romantic thought without fully accepting its more radical positions.[67]

Foreign Influences

After the beginning of the 1840s the 'communitarian Romantics' — particularly socialists — discovered the Slavonic peasant commune and made of it one of the strongest 'pieces of evidence' to prove their views. Before that time there is hardly any evidence showing that the Frenchmen were aware of the existence of the supposedly egalitarian Russian *mir*.[68] In this sudden discovery a few foreign intellectuals played a major role. Let us discuss briefly the most influential of them: Adam Mickiewicz, baron Haxthausen and Alexandr Herzen.[69]

Adam Mickiewicz and the Chair of Slavic Language and Literature at the Collège de France. In order to help Mickiewicz — the famous Polish Romantic poet exiled in France — Léon Faucher (who was married to Mickiewicz's cousin, Maria Wolowska) managed to convince Victor Cousin to establish a Chair of 'Slavic Language and Literature' at the *Collège de France*. After considerable opposition in Parliament, the project was approved and Mickiewicz became the first professor. He occupied the chair for only four years, between 1840 and 1844. The developing tendency of his lectures — more and more inclined towards mysticism and politics rather than Slavic literature — and several scandals forced the government to dismiss him.[70]

However, in this short period Mickiewicz's ideas on the Slavs managed to produce a remarkable impact, thanks to his audience — some of the most reputed intellectuals attended his classes

and/or were personal friends[71] — and the publication of his course in the five-volume book *Les Slaves* (1849). Mickiewicz's ideas had a twofold influence in the emergence of the image of Russia as an example of the 'desired community'. First, his course re-enforced the idea of the unity of the Slavic world, regardless of the different political regimes. This distinction between a Slavic *essential* foundation and its *contingent* governments was crucial, for it was going to allow the socialists to praise Russian society while remaining, at the same time, enemies of the Tsar's regime. Second, Mickiewicz claimed that the Slavs were not used to private property in land and that in the 'Slavic communes' communal forms of ownership predominated. Therefore — Mickiewicz asserted — the Slavs would not undergo the kind of problems that the West was facing regarding private property and social unrest.[72] On this point Mickiewicz's ideas about the providential role of the Slavs explicitly appealed to the French socialists:

> . . . toutes les fois qu'une idée nouvelle se révèle dans le monde, la Providence choisit une race pour la réaliser [. . .] Il sera donc intéressant, pour vous, d'examiner, parmi les idées qui vous sont chères et vous sont propres, laquelle a le plus de chances pour conquérir les sympathies d'une race immense. Assurément l'idée à laquelle la race slave prêterait son appui aurait de grandes chances de victoire. Sera-ce une idée fouriériste, ou communiste? Sera-ce une idée de l'humanité collective d'après Pierre Leroux?[73]

Thus, according to Mickiewicz, the Slavs' traditional institutions anticipated the new society that western radical reformers were trying to build. No wonder that some socialists considered that the redemptive class in the West — the proletariat — had a natural ally in the redemptive race in the East — the Slavs. The 'new Christians' and the 'new barbarians' were working together again. Mickiewicz's influence on French perceptions of the Slavic world can hardly be overemphasized: as A. Walicki has pointed out, the Polish poet was the first to introduce the 'Slavic idea' to the 'intellectual capital of the West'. Polish Romanticism in general, on the other hand, was highly influential in the development of Russian Slavophilism.[74]

August von Haxthausen and the Discovery of the Russian Commune. Another strong foreign influence in this respect was the German conservative baron von Haxthausen. His three-volume *Studien über die inneren Zustände, das Volksleben, und insbesondere die*

ländlichen Einrichtungen Russlands (1847–1852) was highly influential all through Europe — including Russia, where he had been specially invited by the Emperor to undertake his research — and provided the first detailed study of the Russian commune. In this respect, Haxthausen's work was a revelation and a turning point in European accounts of Russia, which usually described nothing but the court, the cities and educated society. The first two volumes of his work were translated immediately into French as *Études sur la situation intérieure, la vie nationale et les institutions rurales de la Russie* (1847) and the third volume followed soon after the German edition; in France they were widely read and discussed.

Haxthausen — part of a German Romantic generation particularly interested in folklore and popular institutions — found in Russia a sort of Romantic-conservative utopia, a space that had remained 'intact and independent' from the influence of the 'Germanic and Romanic races'. In this 'patriarchal state', the authority of the family and the Father was preserved in the peasant commune, that was nothing but 'the family enlarged'. The land was the common property of the commune and was 'equally divided among all who live upon it'. Thus, all Russians were obedient to their Father — as chief of the family — the *Starosta* (Elder) — as head of the commune — and the tsar — the father of the big 'single family' called Russia.[75] Haxthausen's Romantic utopia explicitly offered a dialogue with western reality:

> As every Russian belongs to a Commune, and all the members are entitled to equal shares in the land, there are no born proletarians in Russia. In all the other countries of Europe, the originators of social revolution rise up in rebellion against wealth and property [. . .] In Russia such a revolution is impossible, as this Utopia of the European revolutionists already exists here, fully incorporated with the national life. [. . .] Russia, in her internal development, has the promise of a great future destiny.[76]

In the rest of the book Haxthausen describes in detail the peasant commune and its egalitarian practices. Reading his book, some socialists found it easy to leave aside the baron's more conservative conclusions, taking only his discovery of the egalitarian commune without private property. It was easy for them to imagine an essentially Russian or Slavic social principle surviving under the triple burden of nobility, bureaucracy and autocracy. Thus, Haxthausen's discovery — despite his conservative aim — ended up as part of the Socialist utopia.

Aleksandr Herzen and Russia as Anticipation of Socialism. The idea of Russia as anticipation of socialism appears clearly in some of the works of Herzen. His general ideas and his relationships with France are well known,[77] and we shall examine here only two of his works that were particularly influential in that country.

Herzen's *Du développement des idées révolutionnaires en Russie* — published in French in 1851 and reprinted in 1853 and 1854 — has been considered the first account of Russian history written by a member of the Russian intelligentsia available to the European public.[78] In his book, Herzen argued that western European civilization was in a situation that was comparable with that of the Roman Empire at the time of its fall, and therefore the fate of humankind was now in the hands of two new nations, the USA and Russia. However — unlike Tocqueville — for Herzen, both possible futures represented by these new nations are positive. In order to prove that Russia could also offer a positive way out of Europe's crisis, Herzen made use of some of the arguments that we have already noted.[79] First, he distinguished the people — the 'real' Russia — from the government — an artificial and foreign institution placed on top of the people. Second, Herzen described the egalitarian peasant commune and the *artel' as* democratic and 'communist' institutions. This ancient element — characteristic of the Slavic peoples as opposed to 'Germanic-Romans' — was still alive beneath the weight of autocracy; therefore, Russia was the best soil for 'social regeneration' and perhaps the Russians would be called to fulfil the task of the 'old Germans' regarding the world that was dying. In summary, the Slavic races and western proletariat — the 'barbarians from the North and the barbarians "from within"' — had the same enemies and the same hope in 'social revolution'.[80]

In 1851 Herzen wrote another influential text, *Le peuple russe et le socialisme*, an open letter to Jules Michelet. In this text he reproduced most of the ideas described above, now also comparing the Russians with the first Christians and criticizing even more harshly European civilization, the bourgeoisie and the *juste milieu*.[81]

It is worth noting, however, that Herzen's criticism of western civilization and his appraisal of the Russian commune are far more moderate than the ones we shall comment on below. Even though it is egalitarian, the Russian commune on its own

'benumbs Man, absorbs his independence and he can not defend himself against despotism'.[82] For that reason, Russia's communal system lacked the western individualist principle — a principle that could only be introduced from without as Peter the Great had done. The new society was to be, according to Herzen, a dialectical combination of both elements, i.e. (Slavic) communalism and (Germanic-Roman) individualism.

As will become evident, the influence of foreign intellectuals was crucial in the making of a French 'communitarian Romantic' representation of Russia. 'Discovering' the Slavic communal traditions, the works of Mickiewicz, Haxthausen and Herzen inflamed the imagination of some of those who were looking for a way out of liberal-capitalist society.[83]

Communitarian Romantic Representations of the Slavs and Russia in France

Cyprien Robert and the Discovery of the Slavic Commune. The first and most important French contributor to the discovery of Slavic 'communitarianism' was Cyprien Robert — Mickiewicz's successor in the chair of Slavic Language and Literature from 1845 to 1857. In 1842, after having travelled in Greece, Turkey and the Balkans, he published a series of articles on 'The Greek-Slavonic World' in the *Revue des Deux Mondes*. In the first article he traces a distinction between 'Western Europe' — the synthesis of the heritage of Latin and Germanic races, that had created in America a 'new Occident' — and 'Eastern Europe' [*Europe orientale*] — formed by the Greek and Slavic races — 'the battlefield of Europe and Asia'.[84] As Robert explains himself, his interest in making this area visible is related to the 'Eastern question': France should notice that the Muslims are not the sole inheritors of the 'oriental civilization' and that there is an 'Eastern Christendom' ready to be reanimated and renewed. Instead of being interested in the Turks and Arabs, France should try to organize the 'Greek-Slavic races' as the best way of counterbalancing the English and Russian interests in the area. In order to do so it is indispensable to know more about these peoples: that is the task that Robert was trying to fulfil with his articles.[85]

As a part of his description of Eastern Europe, in the first article Robert argues that — unlike Western Europe, where

'people's sovereignty is mainly in the hands of the cities and the bourgeoisie' — in Eastern Europe there are 'only families and tribes, and the cities do not exist as such'. Among the Slavs, the associative principle represented in the peasant communes can offer 'a remedy for this fever of *individualism* that undermines European societies'.[86] In subsequent articles Robert further developed this idea of the historical role of the egalitarian Slavic commune, with its cult of the family and the elders, where 'the Western dreams of fraternal equality become real' and proletariat and pauperism are unknown.[87]

After 1845 and for twelve years, the course at the *Collège de France* offered Robert an enlarged audience for his ideas. On the other hand, in 1848 he was appointed chief editor of *La Pologne,* the periodical of the *Société Slave de Paris* (SSP). The SSP — mainly under the influence of Prince Adam Czartoryski and the Polish émigrés in France[88] — was set up in March 1848 to advocate a 'Slavonic federation' and a rebellion of the Slavic peoples against their oppressors — Vienna and Petersburg. This rebellion would be 'radically democratic' and the SSP would promote 'revolutionary agitation' and an alliance between 'Slavic and French workers'.[89] In 1849 Robert published in *La Pologne* the inaugural lecture of his course at the *Collège de France*, where he presented his ideas about the role of the Slavs in a particularly radical way. Thanks to the absence of large cities — unlike Western Europe — the Slavs would not have to struggle with the 'selfish bourgeoisie' and the elements of their social organization would play a major role 'in the destiny of the World and the Progress of Humankind'.[90] This sort of statement was very usual in the pages of *La Pologne*.

In 1850 the SSP was banned and the new regime 'suggested' that Robert should not deal with political issues in his lectures. However, in 1852 Robert once more published his ideas at length in his two-volume *Le monde slave*. From the very first pages of his book, Robert asserts that only the 'Slavic World' has the key for the 'regeneration' of the 'Old' and 'exhausted' Europe, for the Slavs 'were born for conciliation':

> Ce rôle d'entremetteurs entre l'Asie et l'Europe, entre l'immobilité et le progrès, entre le passé et l'avenir, entre la conservation et la révolution, ce rôle plein d'écueils et en apparence si ingrat, les Slaves l'ont accepté dès le début de leur histoire avec une admirable abnégation.[91]

In this role of 'perpetual mediation', the peasant commune plays the most important part, for in the West 'socialism offers no practical or rational solutions' other than the ones that the Slavs already have. Thus, if a 'Russian muzhik' dared to go to Paris to explain how his village is organized, he would be imprisoned as 'Red or anarchist'. 'Slavisme' (i.e. the communal organization) could save Europe by combining the 'healthy elements of socialism' with the principle of 'domestic authority', hence avoiding the dangers of state centralism.[92]

Regarding Russia in particular, Robert had always been quite negative (he even developed the idea of the 'Two Panslavisms', of which the 'good one' — Greek-Slavic — was meant to fight against 'Russian' Panslavism).[93] However, in *Le monde slave* — probably after having read Haxthausen — Robert carefully distinguishes 'the Russia-*nation* and the Russia-*empire*'. In this way, the Russian people were depicted with all the good attributes of the rest of the Slavs, while autocratic institutions — including serfdom — appeared as an artificial superstructure imported from the West.[94]

In sum, Robert presents a utopian Romantic image of the Slavic egalitarian commune, related to the political role of the Slavs as redeemers of European civilization and the intermediate link between East and West.

Although Robert's life is not well known,[95] it is interesting to compare his ideas about the Slavs with his general intellectual itinerary. In the 1830s, before becoming a Slavist, Robert was a member of the small circle of disciples that Lamennais —by then no longer a ultramontane — gathered in La Chênaie for his project of the *Congrégation de Saint-Pierre*. This intellectual élite of Lamennais' neo-Catholic movement was meant to study and discuss ideas of social regeneration through religion. In their pursuit of this aim, the circle of La Chênaie was seduced by two sets of ideas that are interesting for our purposes. On the one hand, they accepted Bonald's and de Maistre's rejection of the individual as the principle of society, for Revelation is *previous* to the individual. Religion is not just useful to society: it *is* society itself. On the other hand, Lamennais and his disciples adopted the 'Oriental myth' developed by German Romanticism. The Orient was considered a land of wisdom, community and faith, as opposed to western rationalist and individualist tradition. In the *Annales de Philosophie Chretienne* — one of the neo-Catholic

periodicals, directed by the Orientalist Augustin Bonnety — Robert himself published articles praising the Oriental religions — a kind of 'primitive Catholicism' — and condemning the 'rational and Protestant systems'.[96] It is not impossible that in those days Robert had become familiar with Mickiewicz's ideas about the Slavs, since the Polish poet visited La Chênaie and Lamennais was quite interested in his thought. In any case, the contacts between Robert's ideas of a 'second redemption' and the Orient, on the one hand, and the role of Eastern Europe in European regeneration, on the other, are evident.[97]

Later on Robert seems to have left the neo-Catholic movement. At the time of his lectures at the *Collège de France* and his involvement in the SSP he was living an ascetic life in the *quartier Latin* and in 1857 he suddenly disappeared. To this day his fate remains unknown. It was said that he had gone to the USA, possibly to live in one of the Icarian communities founded by the Christian-Utopian socialist sect of Etienne Cabet.[98] This information, however, is not completely reliable.[99] Hypothesizing, it is more likely that Robert had followed his friend and member of the SSP Victor Considerant — the renowned Fourierist leader. In 1854–5 Considerant had founded a phalanstery in Texas and in 1857 — the year Robert disappeared — he published an optimistic report addressed to his friends — *Du Texas, premier rapport à mes amis* — calling for new settlers.[100] In any case, the idea of living in a utopian community was not completely alien to Robert's thought. One can imagine that Cabet's neo-Christian ideas — particularly his rejection of state and class struggle and his communitarian utopianism[101] — would have been quite appealing for him.

Echoes of the Slavic Myth: Adolphe Lèbre and Europe's Redemption

The influence of the Slavic myth and its eschatological dimension are quite visible in the life and works of the Swiss-French intellectual Adolphe Lèbre. Having studied theology in Switzerland and Germany — where he met Schelling and Baader — Lèbre abandoned the idea of becoming a priest and moved to Paris. In Paris he attended Mickiewicz's lectures at *the Collège de France* and immediately fell under the spell of the poet; admiration turned into a mystic belief in the neo-Christian renovation of

Humankind with Mickiewicz as a Prophet. As part of his new faith, Lèbre visited Towianski — the mystic leader — and made plans for a trip through Eastern Europe, so that he could then go back to France and share his impressions with the general public. Unfortunately, he died remarkably young in 1844.[102] Like Robert, Lèbre had also written articles on the Orient before discovering the Slavs.

Lèbre's appraisal of the Slavs displays some of the elements that we have already found elsewhere: the Slavs do not suffer from the 'selfishness of property' that is destroying the West; they live in a 'social idyll' in which there are 'neither rich nor poor'; unlike western 'narrow liberalism' the Slavic idea of freedom does not go against God or human dignity; the Slavs remain patriots and 'will never be cosmopolites'. The Slavs 'instinctively demand a new order' for which — unlike the western peoples — they will not have to 'renounce their traditions' but rather 'go back to their old customs'. For these reasons, 'Providential harmony' has 'reserved these new peoples for the forthcoming revolution', for they have the 'germs of a free and fraternal society'. Southern peoples initiated European History; Germanic peoples appeared with Christianity: now it is the turn of the Slavs. Naturally, to accomplish this task they will have to get rid of all the negative elements that western domination imposed on them. In the case of the Russians, this appears quite clearly: Peter the Great destroyed 'Slavic life', weakened the Church and introduced 'Western administrative forms, sciences, arts' and 'materialism' following the influence of the Enlightened *philosophes*. According to Lèbre, tsarist despotism was undoubtedly a threat for Europe: yet another reason to encourage a 'Slavic union' and the awakening of Slavic consciousness.[103]

An Anarchist Appraisal of the Russian Commune: Elisée Reclus

A different kind of positive appraisal of the Russian peasant commune — though somewhat ambiguous — can be found in the works of Elisée Reclus, the famous anarchist intellectual and influential geographer. In the fifth volume of his *Nouvelle géographie universelle* (1880) — a landmark in European geographical knowledge — he traces a distinction between Russia or 'Eastern Europe' (for him it is the same thing) and 'Western Europe' (or 'Europe, properly speaking'). From the geographical

viewpoint, Western Europe features a variety of peoples, rivers, peninsulas, seas, mountains, and so forth, that encourage permanent contacts between peoples, movement and change. This is — implicitly — the reason for Western European historical superiority.[104] On the contrary, Eastern Europe/Russia is depicted as an extremely homogeneous ('heavy') land; Reclus implicitly suggests that this geographical characteristic is a cause for the inhabitants' homogeneity and their historical immobility.[105] This representation of the differences between East and West was quite common among liberal writers (it was a typical explanation for Russians' supposed 'lack of individuality' since Chappe d'Auteroche).[106] However, none of the other liberal themes — like the absence of the middle class — are present. On the contrary, Reclus describes the peasant commune in quite friendly and non-liberal terms. The peasant commune looks after the welfare of all its members and is a 'free' form of self-administration; the peasants live there in 'perfect equality', since all the 'associates' have the same right to the land. On the whole, Russia is depicted as a land of 'contrasts': the majority of the population remains illiterate and yet the cultivated part of society has fewer prejudices than elsewhere; women remain under 'slavery' and yet nowhere else is public opinion more committed to gender equality; state power is unlimited and yet there is a strong socialist movement and egalitarian institutions persist among the lower classes.[107]

Later on, in his pamphlet *A mon frère le paysan* (1893), Reclus presented the Russian '*mir*' as the most convenient kind of association for the coming society's countryside (except for the division of the land in small allotments, of which Reclus disapproved).[108]

Thus, Reclus's appraisal of the commune is positive but without the most anti-individualist Romantic elements (as in Haxthausen or Robert) or any eschatological reference to the death of European civilization (as in Lèbre). Reclus's appraisal is somewhat more moderate and less exalted. In fact, as Marie Fleming has pointed out, the anarchism of Elisée Reclus was from the very beginning very critical of utopian communism, precisely because of its tendency to dismiss individual freedom in favour of the commune. To Reclus's mind, it was a matter of conciliating the freedom of the individual with general welfare, and in the theoretical debates within the anarchist tradition he always sup-

ported the idea of individual autonomy.[109] For these reasons, his appraisal of the Russian commune has to be distinguished from those examined previously.

Conclusions

During the nineteenth century, in the general political arena, the liberal tradition had to fight against powerful enemies. Several types of socialists, communists, anarchists (on the Left) and conservatives, ultramontanes and authoritarians (on the Right) disputed its pre- eminence. In this struggle for hegemony, the debate about Russia played an important role. Against the principles of 1789 the ultramontanes explored Russia in search of a model of order, only to find that she lacked the principal ingredients: a corps of nobility and the Catholic religion. Other conservatives found that Russia had some elements worth admiring, such as 'patronizing' institutions (Le Play) or a powerful monarch (Comte and Balzac). On the Left, some intellectuals found in Russia the promise of total destruction (Cœurderoy) or a model of association (Reclus). Others, more inclined towards Romantic anti-individualism or religious mysticism, found an idyllic society and a promise of redemption (Robert and Lèbre). On the other hand, the liberal tradition continued to find in Russia nothing but a negative reflection of their 'Europe': the *absence* of middle class, bourgeoisie, civil society, individuality, economic progress, freedom; in summary, the *lack* of civilization. In the battle for the definition of the identity of Europe/the West — a central part of the more general political struggle — liberal and bourgeois ideology would emerge as hegemonic. In that process, the liberal representation of Russia became predominant. In many ways, our own perception of Russia is still today marked by that victory.

Notes

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1. See my 'Civilizar un Pueblo Bárbaro: Las imágenes de Rusia en el debate de la Ilustración francesa acerca del concepto de "civilización"', *Anales de Historia*

Antigua, Medieval y Moderna (Universidad de Buenos Aires), Vol. 34 (2001), 163–90.

2. See, for example, the remarks on Russia in the works by Escherny, Ducret de Passenans, Alphonse Rabbe, Dufour de Pradt, Armand Carrel, Ernest Charrière, Frédéric Lacroix, Victor Hugo, Custine and Alexandre Dumas (the elder), to mention just a few.

3. Ronald Meek, 'Smith, Turgot y la Teoría de los "cuatro estadios"', *Smith, Marx y después: Diez ensayos sobre el desarrollo del pensamiento económico* (Madrid, Siglo XXI 1980).

4. See my 'Diderot en Rusia, Rusia en Diderot. El papel de la imagen de Rusia en la evolución del pensamiento político del último Diderot', *Stvdia Historica: Historia Moderna* (Salamanca), vol. 22, 2000, pp. 245–82.

5. Arthur Lovejoy, 'On the Discrimination of Romanticisms', *Essays in the History of Ideas* (Baltimore 1948).

6. René Rémond, *La droite en France, de la Première Restauration à la Ve. République* (Paris 1968), 25–41.

7. See, for example, the pamphlets by P. Fantelin, *Ode à Sa Majesté Alexandre ler., empereur des Russies* (Paris n.d. [1814?]) and the baron Auguste Jubé de la Perrelle, *Hommage des français à l'empereur Alexandre* (Paris 1814).

8. *Œuvres Complètes* (Paris 1859–1864), Vol. 1, 341–2.

9. Ibid., 195, 367 and 211.

10. *Discours Politiques sur l'État Actuel de I 'Europe* (Paris 1859*)*, 401–4.

11. *Œuvres Complètes* (Paris 1859–64), Vol. l, 316.

12. Ibid., 966–7.

13. See Jean-René Derré (ed.), *En marge de la Sainte-Alliance: Lettres de Bonald au Comte de Senfft* (Paris 1967), 130.

14. See M. Stepanov, 'Zhozef de Mestr v Rossii', *Literaturnoe Nasledstvo*, Vols. 29–30 (1937); Richard Lebrun, *Joseph de Maistre, an Intellectual Militant* (Kingston & Montreal 1988), 175–226 and Jean-Yves Le Borgne, *Joseph de Maistre et la Révolution* (Université de Bretagne Occidentale, 1976), 261–75. There is an interesting controversy on the similarity or dissimilarity of the ideas of Maistre and N.M. Karamzin. See M. Schippan, 'N.M. Karamzin und J. de Maistre über den Weg Russlands (1811)', *Zeitschrift für Slawistik*, 36–4 (1991), 535–43 and Catherine Larionova, *'Mémoire sur la Russie Ancienne et Moderne* de Nicolas Karamzine et les *Quatre Chapitres sur la Russie* de Joseph de Maistre', *Romantisme*, 26–92 (1996), 37–41.

15. *Œuvres Complètes* (Lyon 1884–6), Vol. 10, 121–2 and 217–19.

16. Op. cit., Vol. 12, 195–6.

17. Op. cit., Vol. 11, 291.

18. Ibid., 519–27.

19. *Du Pape* (Genève 1966), 231 and 275–6.

20. Ibid., 284–7.

21. *Œuvres Complètes* (Lyon 1884–6), Vol. 8, 165–9 and 284–94.

22. Ibid., 519.

23. In his *Histoire de Russie* (Tours 1856, 471–5), Charles-Barthélemy — Catholic and traditionalist, follower of Bonald and de Maistre and enemy of all revolutions — repeated most of de Maistre's arguments regarding civilization in Russia, the absence of Roman influence, the subordinate role of Russian priests, etc. Another interesting example is the royalist count Fortia de Piles. In an addi-

tion to the second edition of his *Examen de trois ouvrages sur la Russie* (Paris 1818, 206) he criticized Peter I because he had not assured the freedom of the nobility, 'the first step towards civilization'. By contrast, however, in an earlier work he criticized Russia's despotism, her 'Asiatic' nature, and pointed out that there were only 'a few poor bourgeois' in Russia (*Voyage de deux Français en Allemagne, Danemarck, Suède, Russie et Pologne fait en 1790–1792*, Paris 1796, Vol. 4, 157 and 279–80).

24. See Bernard Guyon, *La Pensée Politique et Sociale de Balzac* (Paris 1967), 688–99.

25. See Sophie de Korwin-Piotrowska, *Balzac et le Monde Slave: Mme. Hanska et l'Œuvre balzacienne* (Paris 1933) and M.I. Buianov, *Markiz protiv imperii, ili, Puteshestviia Kiustina, Balzaka i Diuma v Rossiiu* (Moskva 1993).

26. See L. Grossman, 'Bal'zak v Rossii', *Literaturnoe Nasledstvo,* Vols 29–30 (1937); Michel Cadot, *La Russie dans la vie intellectuelle française 1839–1856* (Paris 1967), 110–15 and Charles Corbet, *L'Opinion Française face à l'Inconnue Russe* (1799–1894) (Paris 1967), 235–7.

27. *Œuvres Diverses* (Paris 1940), Vol. 3, 22–3 and 68.

28. *Lettres à l'Étrangere* (Paris 1899–1906), Vol. l, 545–6 and 554, Vol. 2, 25, 106, 172 and 190.

29. *Œuvres Diverses* (Paris 1940), Vol. 3, 343.

30. Ibid., 653–5, 675 and 679.

31. Ibid., 692–708 and Vol. 2, 554.

32. Gabriel de Castelnau, *Essai sur l'histoire ancienne et moderne de la nouvelle Russie* (Paris 1827, second edition), Vol. 2, 43–4.

33. Quoted in Corbet, op. cit., l90–2.

34. Vicomte de Beaumont-Vassy, *Histoire des États Européens depuis le Congrès de Vienne*, T. Vl: *Empire Russe* (Paris 1853), 109 and 339–50.

35. Arsène Legrelle, *Le Volga: Notes sur la Russie* (Paris 1877), 348. See other examples of praise of Russia in legitimist quarters in Pierre Nora, *La Russie devant l'Opinion française de 1825 à 1840*, unpublished *Diplôme d'études supérieures* (Paris, 1954), 42ff.; Vera Miltchina, 'Vie posthume du "mirage russe"', *Le mirage russe au XVIIIe siècle*, edited by Sergei Karp and Larry Wolff (Ferney-Voltaire 2001), 221–34.

36. R. Rémond, op. cit., 72–3 and 101–6.

37. See Koenraad Swart, *The Sense of Decadence in Nineteenth-Century France* (The Hague 1964), 87. Particularly among the Catholics — as in Lamennais' *Des Progrès de la Révolution et de la Guerre contre l'Église* (1829) or in his articles for *L'Avenir* in 1831 — the perception of Russia and the tsars became extremely negative due to the conflicts in Poland (Lamennais, *Œuvres Complètes,* Paris 1836–7, Vol. 9, 24 and Vol. 10, 380–1).

38. Victor Hugo, *Actes et Paroles* (Paris 1894–5), Vol. 1, 437.

39. *Système de politique positive* (Paris 1890–5), Vo1. 3, XLVII.

40. lbid.

41. Paul Bénichou, *Le temps des prophètes: Doctrines de l'âge romantique* (Paris 1977), 221–324.

42. Mary Pickering, *Auguste Comte. An Intellectual Biography* (Cambridge 1993), Vol. l, 354, 674 and 707; see also Juliette Grange, *La Philosophie d'Auguste Comte: Science, Politique, Religion* (Paris 1996).

43. Frédéric Le Play, *Voyages en Europe 1829–1854* (Paris 1899).

44. See Michael Brooke, *Le Play: Engineer and Social Scientist* (London 1970) and Françoise Arnault, *Frédéric Le Play, de la métallurgie à la science sociale* (Nancy 1993).

45. *Les Ouvriers Européens* (Tours 1877–9), Vol. 2, IX–X, XX and XXVIII.

46. Ibid., 52–3, 66–8, 217, 540–1 and 550. The last quotation belongs to the Epilogue, added to the second edition (1877).

47. *La Réforme Sociale en France déduite de l'observation comparée des peuples Européens* (Paris 1867), Vol. 1, 69 and 199.

48. Arnault, op. cit., 79–80, 169, 192, 219 and 230–2.

49. On Le Play's anti-individualism and the debates with other economists after his rejection of the legacy of 1789, see Lucette Le Van-Lemesle, 'Les économistes libéraux et la Révolution française dans la seconde moitié du XlXme. Siècle', in Gilbert Faccarello and Philippe Steiner, eds, *La Pensée économique pendant la Révolution française* (Grenoble 1990), 597–607 and André Vianes, '1889: la pensée économique du XlXme. siècle face au premier centenaire', in Jean-Michel Servet, ed., *Idées économiques sous la Révolution 1789–1794* (Lyon 1989), 427–52.

50. *Les Ouvriers Européens* (Tours 1877–9), Vol. 1, 448, 454, 456 and 477; Vol. 2, 468.

51. Hippolyte Desprez (a conservative diplomat who — like Le Play — made a remarkable career under Napoleon III) held similar ideas regarding Russia. In a series of articles in the *Revue des Deux Mondes* he drew a distinction between 'our old Occident' and the new 'civilization' that was being born in 'Eastern Europe'. He also praised the 'Slavic spirit' or 'Slavism' as something opposite to western 'abstract rationalism'. The 'Slavic spirit' — deeply religious — was completely incompatible with the 'Revolutionary spirit' or with any violent change against Tradition. On the other hand, in the Slavic 'communes' the 'family' — rather than 'individuals' like in the West — was the basis or 'organic principle' of society, providing a sort of 'patriarchal democracy' quite different from western ideas of democracy. The main difference was that, even if the Slavs tended naturally towards democracy, they were ready to accept that the government of that democracy 'belonged rightfully to the natural superiorities' of society. However, it is worth noting that Desprez was against tsarist despotism, perceived as a non-Slavic feature of Russia — a combination of the Asiatic principle of sovereignty and western bureaucracy. See Hippolyte Desprez, 'La Révolution dans l'Europe Orientale', *Revue des Deux Mondes* (15/11/1848 and 15/12/1848), 514; 'La Russie et le slavisme', *Revue des Deux Mondes* (1/5/1850), 525–6, 530, 534–5 and 541. In a similar way, in his *L'Empereur Alexandre II* (Paris 1883, 417–22) C. de Cardonne praised the *mir* as a form of 'patriarchal democracy' which — by preserving 'discipline', 'authority' and 'solidarity' and impeding the formation of a 'proletariat' — was saving Russia from the problems of the West. However, Cardonne also noticed that 'agrarian communism' absorbs the individual, thus limiting 'individual freedom', and also that communal land tenure worked against economic progress.

52. Quoted in Bénichou, op. cit., 373.

53. *Le Socialisme devant le vieux monde* (Paris 1848), 196–7.

54. *De la Révolution dans l'homme et dans la société* (Bruxelles 1852), 213–18.

55. *Hurrah!!! ou la révolution par les Cosaques* (London 1854). Another example for this group is Désiré Laverdant's *Socialisme Catholique. La Déroute des*

Césars. La Gaule très Chrétienne et le Czar Orthodoxe (Paris 1851). As a Fourierist, Laverdant was very close to Considerant's ideas. The book is dedicated to him.

56. See Pierre Michel, *Un Mythe Romantique: Les Barbares 1789–1848* (Lyon 1981), 212 and 305.

57. As an example, in Proudhon's *Le Peuple*, Russia was considered a barbarous nation, and Panslavism was perceived as a threat of 'reactionary barbarism' against 'progressive civilization'; in particular, a Cossack invasion was explicitly feared (see 'Le Panslavisme russe et la démocratie allemande' and 'Le Panslavisme', *Le Peuple,* No. 4 (8–15 Nov. 1848), 6 and No.50 (7 Jan. 1849), 1).

58. Simone Balayé, *Madame de Staël. Lumières et Liberté* (Paris 1979), 162.

59. Wolfgang Gesemann, 'Herder's Russia', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, Vol. XXVI, No. 3 (July–Sept. 1965), 424–34.

60. J.G. Herder, *Filosofia de la Historia para la educación de la Humanidad* (Buenos Aires 1950), 30–1, 104, 73–4.

61. J.G. Herder, *Ideas para una Filosofia de la Historia de la Humanidad* (Buenos Aires 1959), 26 and 538.

62. Ibid., 536–7. See also Helen Liebel-Weckowicz, 'Nations and Peoples: Baltic-Russian History and the Development of Herder's Theory of Culture', *Canadian Journal of History*, Vol. 21, No. 1 (1986), 1–23; Mechthild Keller, '"Politische Seeträume": Herder und Russland', in M. Keller, ed., *Russen und Russland aus deutscher Sicht, 18. Jahrhundert: Aufklärung* (Munich 1987), 357–95; Pierre Pénisson, 'L'imaginaire européen de Johann Gottfried Herder', in Katia Dmitrieva and Michel Espagne, eds, *Transfers culturels triangulaires France-Allemagne-Russie, Philologiques*, No. IV (Paris 1996), 141–52; H. Barry Nisbet, 'Herder's Conception of Nationhood and its Influence in Eastern Europe', in Roger Bartlett and Karen Schönwälder, eds, *The German Lands and Eastern Europe* (New York and London 1999), 115–35.

63. Germaine de Staël, *Œuvres* (Paris 1838), Vol. 3, 6–7.

64. Germaine de Staël, *Œuvres Complètes* (Bruxelles 1830), Vol. 1, 194–203.

65. Ibid., 294.

66. Ibid., 204–5.

67. Op cit., 160. On de Staël and Russia, see also Olga Trtnik Rossettini, 'Mme. de Staël et la Russie d'après les articles parus en URSS sur l'influence Française en Russie au début du XIX siècle', *Rivista di letterature moderne e comparate*, Vol. 16–1 (1963), 50–67 and Vladimir Brett, 'Considerations et observations de Mme. de Stael pendant son voyage en Russie en 1812', *Revue des Pays de l'Est,* 30–2 (1989), 91–9.

68. Exceptionally, in his *Voyage en Russie* (Paris 1831, 86) Baron Renouard de Bussierre described briefly 'certain democratic institutions' that he found in the 'communes', such as the election of the communal chief. Similarly, Adrien-César Égron's *Vie d'Alexandra I* (Paris 1826, 355) portrayed 'the ancient democracy of the Slavs' in similar terms; Prosper de Barante also noted the 'rural republics' in his *Notes sur la Russie* (Paris 1875, 130 and 323) written between 1835 and 1840, but did not pay much attention to them.

69. Although we shall not discuss his ideas here, another minor influence was Bruno Bauer — the renowned German left-wing hegelian. Some of his works dealing with Russia were translated into French, such as *De la Dictature Occidentale* (Charlottenbourg 1854) and *La Russie et l'Angleterre* (Charlottenbourg 1854).

70. On Mickiewicz at the Collège de France, see W. Lednicki, 'Mickiewicz at

the Collège de France, 1840–1940', *The Slavonic and East European Review*, Vol. XX (1941); Zofia Makowiecka, *Mickiewicz w College de France: Pazdziernik 1840–maj 1844* (Warszawa 1969); Maria Wodzynska, *Adam Mickiewicz i romantyczna filozofia historii w College de France* (Warszawa 1979); Andrzej Walicki, *Russia, Poland and Universal Regeneration: Studies on Russian and Polish Thought of the Romantic Epoch* (Notre Dame, IN 1991), Zofia Mitosek, 'Adam Mickiewicz vu par les Francais', *Romantisme*, 72 (1991), 49–60; idem, 'Mickiewicz, Napoléon et les français', *Revue des Études Slaves*, Vol. LXX, No. 4 (1998), 739–50; Panayot Karagyozov, 'Kurs Adama Mitskevicha po slavianskim literaturam v Kollezh de Frans', *Revue des Études Slaves,* Vol. LXX, No 4 (1998), 751–70.

71. See, for example, George Sand's extensive review article of Mickiewicz's lectures, 'De la littérature Slave, par M. Adam Mickiewicz', *La Revue Indépendante,* Vol. 7 (1843), 378–401. As Walicki has pointed out, Edgard Quinet almost converted to Mickiewicz's mysticism — in one of his lectures he even called the Poles 'the vanguard of France'. Mickiewicz's influence is also very strong in Michelet's *Légende de Kosciuszko*. See Walicki, op. cit., 36; Nicole Roger-Taillade, 'L'utopie révolutionnaire dans les cours du Collège de France', *Revue des Études Slaves*, Vol. LXI, Nos 1–2 (1989), 41–56.

72. Adam Mickiewicz, *Les Slaves, cours professé au Collège de France 1840–1844* (Paris 1849), Vol. 1, 75; Vol. 4, 377 and 382.

73. Ibid., Vol. 2, 310–11.

74. Walicki, op. cit., 1–2 and 18–35; also Maria Ciesla-Korytowska, 'Mickiewicz et les Slaves: que peuvent-ils offrir à l'Occident?', in idem (ed.): *The Slavs in the Eyes of the Occident, the Occident in the Eyes of the Slavs* (Boulder, CO 1992), 83–93.

75. Franz August Maria von Haxthausen, *The Russian Empire, its People, Institutions and Resources* (New York 1970), Vol. l, X–XVII.

76. Ibid., XIX. On Haxthausen see S. Frederick Starr, 'August von Haxthausen and Russia', *The Slavonic and East European Review*, Vol. 46 (1968), 462–78; Evel Gasparini, 'II viaggio di Haxthausen', *Il Mondo Slavo* (Padova), Vol. 5 (1973), 11–23; Bettina Beer, *A. von Haxthausen, a Conservative Reformer* PhD Diss., (Vanderbilt University, Nashville, 1976); Peter Hesselmann, *August F. von Haxthausen (1792–1866)*, Schriften der Universitätsbibliothek Münster, Vol. 8 (Münster 1992); Christoph Schmidt, 'Ein deutscher Slawophile? — August von Haxthausen und die Wiederentdeckung der russischen Bauerngemeinde 1843/44', in M. Keller, ed., *Russen und Russland aus deutscher Sicht, 19. Jahrhundert: Von der Jahrhundertwende bis zur Reichsgründung (1800–1871)* (Munich 1991), 196–216.

77. See Raoul Labry, *Herzen et Proudhon* (Paris 1928); Michel Mervaud, 'Herzen et Proudhon', *Cahiers du monde russe et sovietique,* 12/1–2 (1971); Judith Zimmermann, 'Herzen, Proudhon and *La Voix du Peuple*: a reconsideration', *Russian History*, 11–4 (1984), 422–50 and Martin Malia, *Alexander Herzen and the Birth of Russian Socialism 1812–1855* (Harvard 1961).

78. Franco Venturi, 'Introducción', in Aleksandr Herzen, *El Desarrollo de las Ideas Revolucionarias en Rusia* (México 1979).

79. In fact, as A. Walicki has pointed out, Herzen's work was to a certain extent a response to Mickiewicz's 'Polish' version of the Slavic idea. On the other hand, the development of Herzen's idea of 'Russian socialism' was strongly influnced by Mickiewicz's course at the Collège de France. See Walicki, op. cit., 18–35.

80. Herzen, op. cit., 64–5, 74, 201 and 62.

81. Aleksandr Herzen, *From the Other Shore & The Russian People and Socialism* (London 1956).

82. Aleksandr Herzen, *El Desarrollo de las Ideas Revolucionarias en Rusia* (México 1979), 91.

83. Some of the Polish believers in the 'Slavic idea' played an important role in some of the French socialist movements, such as Ludwik Królikowski — a strong influence in Etienne Cabet's ideas and himself an important leader of the Icarian movement — or Jaroslaw Dabrowski and Walery Wróblenski — Polish leaders of the Commune of Paris in 1871. See Walicki, op. cit., 16–17.

84. It is worth noting that the concept of 'Eastern Europe' was still unusual in France in those days; in fact, Robert was one of its main popularizers.

85. Cyprien Robert, 'Le Monde Gréco-Slave', *Revue des Deux Mondes* (1/2/1842, 15/6/1842, 1/8/1842, 15/12/1842, 1/3/1843, 1/5/1843 and 15/7/1843), 381–4.

86. lbid., 422 and 420.

87. See, for example, his 'Le Monde Gréco-Slave. Le système constitutionnel et le régime despotique dans l'Europe Orientale', *Revue des Deux Mondes* (1/2/1845), 418 and 441.

88. See Leszek Kuk, '*La Pologne* jako nieoficjalny organ prasowy obozu ks. A.J Czartoryskiego (1848–1851)', *Kwartalnik Historii Prasy Polskiej* 22 (1982), 43–7 and Leszek Kuk, 'Unbekannte Briefe Cyprien Roberts an Fürst Adam Jerzy Czartoryski', *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas,* 43–3 (1995), 347–63.

89. *La Pologne* (I/6/1848), 1–2.

90. Ibid., (1/2/1849), 23.

91. Cyprien Robert, *Le monde slave, son passé, son état présent et son avenir* (Paris 1852), Vol. l, 1–4.

92. Ibid, 15–16 and 33–5.

93. Cyprien Robert, 'Les Deux Panslavismes', *Revue des Deux Mondes* (1/11/1846).

94. Cyprien Robert, *Le monde slave . . .,* op. cit., 152, 175 and 285–9.

95. See André Mazon 'Une Correspondance: Mickiewicz, Victor Cousin, Cyprien Robert', *Revue de Littérature Comparée*, 1, (Janv.–mars 1934), 555–64; Rudolf Maixner, 'Cyprien Robert i grupa oko "Slavenskog Juga"', *Grada za povijest knjievnosti hrvatske* (Zagreb), 19 (1950), 145–62; Nikola Pribic, 'Cyprien Robert i Nikola Tommaseo. Prilog uz neobjavljenu prepisku', *Slavistična: Revija*, 5–7 (Ljubljana 1954), 297–301 and Nikola Pribic, 'Društvo srpske slovesnosti' und Cyprien Robert (Drei unveröffentlichte Briefe)', *Die Welt der Slaven. Vierteljahrsschrift für Slavistik,* 8 (1963), 80–91.

96. Jean-René Derré, *Lamennais, ses amis et le mouvement des idées à l'époque Romantique 1824–1834* (Paris 1962), 291, 398, 246–7 and 492–7.

97. See Guido Verucci, *Félicité Lamennais, dal Cattolicesimo autoritario al radicalismo democratico* (Napoli 1963), 197 and 235; Paul Bénichou, *Le temps des prophètes. Doctrines de l'âge romantique* (Paris 1977), 196–7.

98. See Louis Leger, *Russes et Slaves* (Paris 1890–1899), Vol. 2, 237–41.

99. Rudolf Maixner has denied this possibility by means of two arguments. First, Robert could not have gone to join Cabet's Icarian community, since Cabet died in 1856 and by that time his movement in France was almost dead. However, towards 1857 the community that he had founded in Nauvoo — after splitting —

was still successful; it doubled its membership between 1849 and 1859, reaching the number of 500 settlers. The Cabetist communes in the USA subsisted until 1895. In a similar way, Considerant's phalanstery in Texas started having problems in 1857; until 1857, however, its population increased, reaching the number of 300 members and it was only dissolved definitively in 1875 (See Robert Fogarty, *Dictionary of American Communal and Utopian History*, Westport, NY 1980, 195–209 and 159–60). Maixner's second argument is that, according to Barbier's *Dictionnaire des Ouvrages Anonymes,* Robert published anonymously three texts supporting 'Panlatinism', all of them in 1860; therefore — Maixner assumes — he must have been in France at that time. However, Maixner failed to notice that the same texts were later reprinted twice, signed by Prosper Vallerange. Besides, the whole idea of Panlatinism seems completely opposite to Robert's previous statements. See Rudolf Maixner, 'Du Panslavisme au Panlatinisme. La disparition de Cyprien Robert en 1857', *Revue de Littérature Comparée,* XXXI–4 (Oct.–Dec. 1957), 513–28.

100. See Carl Guarneri, *The Utopian Alternative: Fourierism in Nineteenth-century America* (Ithaca, NY 1991), 332, and Michel Vernus, *Victor Considerant 1808–1893* (Dole 1993), 168–70. It must be said, however, that Robert's name cannot be found in the 'Partial list of the Settlers' of Considerant's phalanstery established by W. and M. Hammond, *La Réunion, a French Settlement in Texas* (Dallas, TX 1958), 117–25.

101. Christopher Johnson, *Utopian Communism in France: Cabet and the Icarians 1839–1851* (Itaha, NY 1974), 49–50.

102. See Léopold Wellisz, *Une amitié Polono-Suisse. Adam Mickiewicz, Juste et Caroline Olivier et l'Episode Lèbre-Towianski* (Lausanne 1942), 71–161, and Juste Olivier, 'Notice Biographique sur Adolphe Lèbre', in Adolphe Lèbre, *Œuvres* (Lausanne and Paris 1856).

103. Adolphe Lèbre, 'Mouvement des Peuples Slaves, leur passé, leurs tendances nouvelles. Cours de M. Mickiewicz', *Revue des Deux Mondes,* Vol. 4 (1843), 956–93. Although he was not French but Belgian, it is worth adding that in 1851 Eugène Osswald published his 'Études sur la Russie. La Commune Rurale. Avenir de la Russie' in the Parisian periodical *La Liberté de Penser* (Vol. 7, Nos 40 and 43) in which he praises Herzen's ideas on the Russian peasant commune. On the providential role of the Slavs see also the article by Julian Klaczko, 'Le Congrès de Moscou et la propaganda Panslaviste', *Revue des Deux Mondes* (1/9/1867).

104. Unlike Lèbre or Robert, Reclus does not seem to doubt that the West is best. For example, in his *Hégémonie de l'Europe* (Édition de la Société Nouvelle, 1894, 11–12) he celebrates the fact that the world is 'Europeanizing' and that the Occident is 'annexing' the Orient into 'civilization'.

105. EIisée Reclus, *Nouvelle Géographie Universelle*, Vol. V: *L'Europe Scandinave et Russe* (Paris 1880), 277-83.

106. Marcus Levitt, 'An Antidote to Nervous Juice: Catherine the Great's Debate with Chappe d'Auteroche over Russian Culture', *Eighteenth-Century Studies,* 32–1 (1998), 54.

107. EIisée Reclus, *Nouvelle Géographie*, op. cit., 886 and 891–2.

108. EIisée Reclus, *A mon frère le paysan* (Genève n.d.), 8–9.

109. Marie Fleming, *The Anarchist Way to Socialism. Elisée Reclus and Ninteenth-century European Anarchism* (London 1979), 38, 160, 202–11.

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