

AN INQUIRY INTO THE IMPERIAL RUSSIAN  
MILITARY EXPERIENCE, 1701-1917

by

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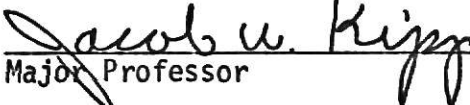
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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### Dilemma of 1917

The mutiny of the Petrograd garrison on 10 March 1917 marked the death of the Imperial Russian Army, long a historical anomaly. The professional soldier, having reviewed the events of those last years, cannot comprehend how such a military organization could change its loyalties during a major war. Historical studies of those last years further divides a military tradition between great captains, glorious battles and campaigns, and a history of suspicion, distrust, exploitation, and fear. Such are the poles around which the Russian military tradition has struggled for its existence and ultimate survival.

Between February and October 1917, the disintegration within the Imperial Army spread like an epidemic. Millions of men--desperate for leadership and information and suffering from acute shortages of food, supplies, and the sinews of war--surrendered to the enemy or deserted to return to the interior. The military hierarchy faced a crisis on two fronts--the battlefield and the political uncertainty behind the lines. In spite of the aim of the revolutionary forces to destroy the old army, the army at the front collapsed last. Units on the eastern and southern fronts maintained some semblance of military order and discipline until

their soldiers became convinced they were forgotten men or cannon fodder.

The Petrograd garrison, comprised of elite guard units, has usually attracted the greatest study of an army in decay. In actuality, the two regiments normally stationed in Petrograd were at the front and had been there during most of the war. Each regiment had a replacement battalion in Petrograd to receive, train, and process new recruits before shipping them to the parent unit. The acute shortage of officers and cadre in Petrograd resulted in untrained and poorly supervised soldiers who later participated in the riots. In reality, the trainees were soldiers in name only, and to them duty in Petrograd represented a means of avoiding the front.<sup>1</sup> They were mentally and politically unprepared for the chaos of the revolution. When placed at the front, they were militarily unprepared to face combat. When called upon to quell the workers, they refused to suppress the rioters. Guard officers, ordered from the front to Petrograd to aid the authorities, failed to regain control of the situation in Petrograd.<sup>2</sup>

The officer corps has represented the most crucial element. In a discussion of the October Revolution and the officers' role, one historian described the officers as a totally confused group and

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<sup>1</sup>A. M. Nikolaieff, "The February Revolution and the Russian Army," Russian Review 6, No. 1 (Autumn 1946):17-25.

<sup>2</sup>Allan Weldman, "The February Revolution in the Russian Army," Soviet Studies 22, No. 1 (July 1970):3-23.

discounted the traditional view that they were simply dispirited and war-weary. The situation was that the officers had become disgusted not only with the Provisional Government but also with the Red and White civilian leaders. A long-standing distrust of politicians had engendered an ambivalent attitude among the officers. They viewed the conduct of the Bolsheviks as criminally wicked and promoted by the disgusting ineffectiveness of the Provisional Government. The officers' relative inactivity in October resulted from a total disorganization of the command structure and a confusion of loyalties. Patriotism underwent a subtle psychological shift from the autocrat to the state. Consequently the officers *did not know what to do with the situation*. In the confusion they clearly established security of the front and order in the army as top priorities. The state of institutional confusion in the officer corps prompted many to desert and others to join the Red Army, an apolitical nationalist's natural response to side with the apparent victor.<sup>3</sup>

The antecedent for the disasters that occurred during the eight months between the Petrograd and October revolts came early in the war. The Russian Army had suffered several military disasters in the early stages of the war that culminated in a headlong retreat in 1915.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>David R. Jones, "The Officers and the October Revolution," Soviet Studies 28, No. 2 (April 1976):207-223.

<sup>4</sup>Daniel W. Graf, "The Reign of the Generals: Military Government in Western Russia, 1914-1915" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Nebraska, 1972), p. 44. (Ann Arbor, Mich., University Microfilm.)

Retreat after retreat fostered confusion within the interior and a loss of spirit.<sup>5</sup> Because of widespread incidents of rape, looting, and destruction of private property by the retreating soldiers, the army came to be viewed as an enemy of the people.<sup>6</sup> In retrospect, this conduct was not unexpected, for from the outset "the Russian military regime was marked by chaos and growing repressiveness."<sup>7</sup> Regimental commanders did as well as could be expected in holding down the barbaric conduct of the army considering the level of support from higher officers.<sup>8</sup>

### The Problem

Professor S. E. Finer, in his classic study of the military role in revolution, wrote:

The Armed Forces have three massive political advantages over civilian organizations: a marked superiority in organization, a highly emotionalized symbolic status, and a monopoly of arms. They form a prestigious corporation on Order, enjoying overwhelming superiority in the means of applying force. The wonder therefore is not why this rebels against its civilian masters, but why it ever obeys them.<sup>9</sup>

Finer's definition applies to a modern army. The Russian Army, after years of rebuilding following the defeats at the hands of the Japanese in 1904-1905, was considered by most of the world as a modern

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<sup>5</sup>Nicholas N. Golovine, The Russian Army in the World War (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1931), p. 231.

<sup>6</sup>Graf, p. 120.      <sup>7</sup>Graf, p. 45.      <sup>8</sup>Golovine, p. 129.

<sup>9</sup>S. E. Finer, The Man on Horseback: The Role of the Military in Politics (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1962), p. 6.

military force. That is to say, it was a "cohesive, hierarchical, and purposive instrument"<sup>10</sup> that was capable of accomplishing certain objectives. Yet, in spite of these attributes, there remained inherent weaknesses of a military within a modern society. According to Finer, "military organizations possess a technical inability to administer anything but a most primitive community" and, likewise, a "genuine lack of a moral title to rule."<sup>11</sup>

The features of an army are centralized command, hierarchy, discipline, intercommunications, and esprit de corps in conjunction with corresponding isolation and self-sufficiency.<sup>12</sup> However, these traits are not obtained overnight and there is not time to redefine and reform them in the few years between frequent wars. In the Russian case, the years between the Russo-Japanese War and the outbreak of war in 1914 may have given the Imperial Army time to convince itself that it enjoyed a resurrected military spirit and a capability equal to other powers. Historians of the period suggest that causes of the disintegration in 1917 lay in the post-1905 period.

The establishment of a modern army takes a considerable number of years. The process of establishing the features of an army that Finer identifies implicitly extends over long periods of time and may occur concurrently or even consecutively with each other. Centralized command implies time to train and educate staffs in the formal

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<sup>10</sup>Finer, p. 6.

<sup>11</sup>Finer, pp. 14 & 22.

<sup>12</sup>Finer, pp. 6-10.

procedures that are best suited to running the military organization in both war and peace. The efficacy of discipline is conditioned by the military's use of discipline in the past. Intercommunications connote an attitude of reinforcement within the army and an internal ability to examine errors of the past. The roots of esprit exist long before the current members are made aware of their own role in upholding that tradition and promoting that esprit.

In summary, the creation of any modern army is an evolutionary process which depends upon its architects and their helpers. Occasional failures may occur, but the manner of recovery from setbacks obviously has much to do with insuring institutional survivability. In the Russian Army the inability to understand the subtleties of a developing military tradition may have contributed to an inevitable collapse.

This paper assumes that the Russian Army of 1914 had every valid reason to proclaim itself a fighting force that was equal to other armies of Europe and capable of defending the autocrat and the state. Likewise, it is acknowledged that the Russian Army did not operate in a vacuum during the imperial years.

Using Finer's criteria, this study attempts to show the evolution of the Russian military tradition and presents an overview of the character and nature of the imperial military experience that led to the collapse of one army and the creation of another. The remainder of the report is divided into three chapters. Chapter II covers the period between the reign of Peter the Great and the end of the Napoleonic Wars.

In that "Golden Age," as historians often describe the period, great captains, such as Count Alexander Vasilievich Suvorov, led Russian armies to victories that expanded the empire and secured the preeminence of the Russian state in Western Europe. The 19th century, the period discussed in Chapter III, witnessed a struggle between the forces of professionalism and modernity and the advocates of tradition. Used as a force to consolidate the empire, the Russian Army suffered defeats in several major wars. Yet, those defeats became the catalyst for reform and aided in the advancement of professionalism. Chapter IV explores the duties of the Russian military in war and peace and the peculiar nature of its relationships with the state and briefly highlights the significance of the autocrat to the military experience.

#### Officers and Soldiers

Put simply, the principal ingredients of any military institution are the officers and the rank and file, but military studies often assume that readers understand the nature of the personnel of an army. A study of defeats and victories in battle shows the professional and technical competence of an army. Analysis of the struggle associated with a given reform movement may shed light on the polarization in military thinking at that time. However, an appreciation of the corporate personality of the officer corps and of the soldiers illuminates the spirit and will of an army in battle as well as one of the possible causes behind debates over reform.

In the Russian case, perhaps the difference in character between the officer class and the serf-soldier class is central to understanding the imperial Russian way of war. In both cases character was first a function of class origin and second a function of group experience within the institution. We must therefore examine briefly the 200-year evolution of the character of the officer and soldier in terms of origin, education, training, lifestyles, and reputation in war and peace.

Historically, there were three principal sources for officers. First, a generally complicated and unstructured system of military schooling produced the majority of officers for the Imperial Army. Training in the schools was roughly equivalent to cadet level and, as such, was held in high esteem. As a rule only members of noble families could attend. Second, families could buy commissions for young nobles who were incapable of completing some form of schooling. The parents accomplished this by volunteering the youth for service until such time as he qualified for commissioning. Last, but not least, a small number of men in service could earn a commission by advancement through the ranks.<sup>13</sup>

In the late 19th century and during the age of reform, the percentage of nobles serving as officers declined to less than one-half of the officer corps.<sup>14</sup> Technological advances and military setbacks

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<sup>13</sup>John Shelton Curtiss, The Russian Army Under Nicholas I, 1825-1855 (Durham, N. C.: Duke University Press, 1965), p. 176.

<sup>14</sup>Peter Kenez, "Russian Officer Corps Before the Revolution:

prompted the emergence of a new professional officer corps.<sup>15</sup> However, the corps continued to hold on to the traditional classification: guard officers, army officers, and staff officers. The officer corps took on a more heterogeneous makeup late in the 19th century, but throughout the 200-year experience the tsar and society viewed the guard officers as the most professional, yet elite, element of the Russian officer corps. Losses in war forced the consolidation of experienced guard officers in positions of the highest commands and staffs. Consequently, officer vacancies in the early years of World War I were filled with poorly trained, improperly indoctrinated, and hastily selected officers.<sup>16</sup> The inherent practice of self-classification by social origin or professional assignment created sharp divisions among officers of the Imperial Army.

Closely related to the source of officers was the education system. Cadet schools, which produced the better officers, were affiliated with elite guard units and thus maintained high standards of

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The Military Mind," Russian Review 31, No. 3 (July 1972):226-36; Oliver Allen Ray, "The Imperial Russian Army Officer," Political Science Quarterly 76, No. 4 (December 1961):576-92; and G. H. N. Seton-Watson, "Russia: Army and Autocracy," in Soldiers and Governments, ed. by Michael Howard (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1957), pp. 101-114.

<sup>15</sup> Raymond L. Garthoff, "The Military As a Social Force," in The Transformation of Russian Society: Aspects of Social Change Since 1861, ed. by Cyril E. Black (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1960), pp. 323-28.

<sup>16</sup> David R. Jones, "The Imperial Russian Life Guards Grenadier Regiment, 1906-1917: The Disintegration of an Elite Unit," Military Affairs 33, No. 2 (October 1969):289-302.

discipline. By the standards of the time, cadet schools offered a better education.<sup>17</sup>

The crucial problem with education in the Tsarist Army was not the initial training but how the officer maintained his competence. Wars, such as the Crimean, exposed the deplorable state of both training and theoretical education within the officer corps.<sup>18</sup> Nevertheless, throughout the 19th century, officers, instead of expanding their professional knowledge, developed a somewhat stagnant attitude toward improving the skills of their profession. After 10 or 15 years in service a sizable group of officers reached a stage of total ignorance and general incompetence.<sup>19</sup> Lieutenant General Nicholas N. Golovine, writing after World War I, implied that in the last years of the tsarist system professional study tended to lose its value because of the corporate failure to honor such work.<sup>20</sup> Whether the nature of education was at fault is not clear, but the officers' attitude toward their careers brought about their own demise, subsequently creating an officer who was virtually helpless in the face of political and military crisis.

No evidence has appeared to support a change in the view that the Russian Army's main weaknesses were the ignorance and incompetence

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<sup>17</sup>David Mackenzie, The Lion of Tashkent: The Career of General M. G. Cherniaev (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1974), p. 4.

<sup>18</sup>Forrestt A. Miller, Dimitrii Miliutin and the Reform Era in Russia (Charlotte, N. C.: Vanderbilt University Press, 1968), p. 21.

<sup>19</sup>Curtiss, p. 199.

<sup>20</sup>Golovine, p. 12.

of its officers.<sup>21</sup> Russian historians and junior officers, in retrospect, considered many senior commanders in the Crimean War unfit for their duties. The Russo-Japanese War demonstrated that Russian commanders lacked initiative and determination and were ignorant of tactical operations.<sup>22</sup> Many in the officer corps saw high command only as an opportunity to secure personal wealth.<sup>23</sup> Others sought duty and combat in unknown territories and against weak enemies to gain fame and fortune. Despite efforts that dated from Suvorov's time, the Russian Army failed to build a corps of capable higher commanders.<sup>24</sup> Moreover, it allowed officers to continue in positions of great responsibility long after they demonstrated motives that were not in the best interests of the service and long after they failed to redeem situations caused by pursuit of their own self-interests.<sup>25</sup>

Poorly educated officers tend to be poor leaders. Suvorov, as is discussed later, revolted against unfavorable outward appearances such as servants and special dress and practices of the officer class.

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<sup>21</sup>Eugene Tarle, Napoleon's Invasion of Russia, 1812 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1942), p. 77.

<sup>22</sup>A. N. Kuropatkin, The Russian Army and the Japanese War, 2 vols. (London: John Murray, 1902), II:28 & 61.

<sup>23</sup>Curtiss, p. 194.

<sup>24</sup>Peter H. C. von Wahlde, "Military Thought in Imperial Russia" (Ph.D. dissertation, Indiana University, 1966), p. 171. (Ann Arbor, Mich., University Microfilms.)

<sup>25</sup>Graf, p. 73.

He broke tradition by trying to get a closer bond between the soldier and his officer. Yet, Suvorov's style of leadership was the exception rather than the rule. In general, the leadership of the officer corps as a whole during the imperial years was considered below that of other great armies. General Anton I. Denikin, in his personal memoirs after World War I, wrote that he had "met many in both high and low posts who were absolutely courageous but who feared responsibility."<sup>26</sup> General A. N. Kuropatkin, in his account of the Russo-Japanese War, wrote of junior officers and commanders who failed to get to know their men after weeks of training and traveling together to the front.<sup>27</sup>

A more cynical aspect of the officer's leadership was his treatment of fellow officers. High-ranking commanders with a parade-ground mentality often insulted subordinates in front of the men they commanded. General Denikin also described a regimental commander who heaped unusual punishment upon officers.<sup>28</sup> Yet, in battle the Russian officer showed general indifference to danger. For example, during World War I, "for every two officers killed or wounded fewer than two were taken prisoners."<sup>29</sup> In a broad sense the officer had every justification to rebel against the severe state of his existence, yet some intangible force held his rebellion in check.

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<sup>26</sup>Anton I. Denikin, The Career of a Tsarist Officer, trans. by Margaret Patoski (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1975), p. 124.

<sup>27</sup>Kuropatkin, I:275.

<sup>28</sup>Denikin, p. 50.

<sup>29</sup>Golovine, p. 100.

Another side of the officer corps is sometimes overlooked. Tarle considered its corrupt nature a third major weakness.<sup>30</sup> Suvorov disapproved of officers' efforts to supplement their meager pay by enriching themselves at the expense of the troops.<sup>31</sup> Alexis Andreyevich Arakcheev, discussed later, chastised officers with responsibility to supply the army in the field for stealing not only from the soldier but also from the tsar. During the reign of Nicholas I, dishonest commanders stole funds set aside for the soldiers' needs and bartered equipment scheduled for units--all for personal gain.<sup>32</sup> That conduct, along with other infractions, helped to usher in an age of reform. Yet, in spite of such corrupt practices, Nicholas I continued to place unusual trust in army officers, which partly explains how they were able to get away with corrupt practices. Throughout the first 125 years of the Imperial Army, an officer's career consisted of transfers to remote stations, demotions for petty indiscretions, and barbaric discipline along with low pay and little incentive except social status, all of which makes a strong argument justifying corruption.<sup>33</sup> More significantly, the

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<sup>30</sup>Tarle, p. 28.

<sup>31</sup>Philip Longworth, The Art of Victory: The Life and Achievements of Field-Marshal Suvorov (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1966), p. 23.

<sup>32</sup>Curtiss, pp. 213-15.

<sup>33</sup>J. M. K. Vyvyan, "Chapter XVIII: Russia, 1789-1825," in War and Peace in the Age of Upheaval, 1793-1830, ed. by C. W. Crawley, Vol. IX of The New Cambridge Modern History (Cambridge, England: University Press, 1965), p. 505.

reputation of the officer corps up to World War I was permanently tarnished by practices of a generation long past.

In contrast to developing a profile of the officer, the soldier presented an altogether different problem. Being basically illiterate the entire 200 years, the soldier did not record memoirs of his service. One historian asserted that the peasant-soldier went through three major periods of socialization: the old serf army prior to 1855, the reform era, and the period after Alexander II.<sup>34</sup> For many years officers viewed the serf-soldier as good-natured, submissive, and without discomforts. Discipline was brutal and more often than not officers and the government exploited the soldier. Because of their universal illiteracy, the common troops were tools of the Church and the Tsar.

Educational programs during the reform era were designed to raise the soldier's level of technical competence since illiterate soldiers had trouble using new weapons. In general, the stolid serf-soldier lacked initiative and self-reliance. He was fundamentally helpless without his officers. Although he would not run in a deteriorating battle situation, without token leadership he would not fight. Well led, the soldier endured enormous hardship and at the same time demonstrated great enthusiasm for the fight at hand. Conditions of service declined after the reign of Alexander II and the departure of

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<sup>34</sup>John S. Curtiss, "The Peasant and the Army," in The Peasant in 19th Century Russia, ed. by Wayne S. Vucinich (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1968), p. 109.

Count Dimitrii Miliutin as Minister of War in 1881 and was accelerated by the defeats of the Russo-Japanese War. Mistreatment by the officers increased and effectively alienated the soldier from both his army and his country. Thus by 1907 the soldier possessed a latent hostility toward authority in general and the state in particular that remained dormant until the events of World War I.<sup>35</sup>

General Denikin used the following words in recalling the plight of the soldier during the last half of the 19th century:

Our soldiers lived in a harsh and austere setting . . . wooden bunks. . . . On them were straw mattresses and straw pillows without pillow cases, nothing more. . . . Company commanders dreamed about blankets for troops. . . . Not until 1905 was a reform introduced which provided troops with bed linens and blankets.<sup>36</sup>

General Denikin continued by describing uniforms that gave no protection from the harsh cold of winter and became a burden in the summer. The soldier's food was adequate but characterized by extreme frugality.<sup>37</sup>

In 25 years of minimum service, a soldier was almost completely separated from his family. In fact, the family of a serf selected for military service usually mourned his selection as one mourns the death of a loved one. There was nothing in Russian society that had an aura of total consummation of life like the military service.<sup>38</sup> Nonetheless,

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<sup>35</sup>Curtiss, "The Peasant and the Army," pp. 108-132.

<sup>36</sup>Denikin, p. 81.      <sup>37</sup>Denikin, pp. 81-82.

<sup>38</sup>Allan Douglas Ferguson, "The Russian Military Settlements, 1810-1866" (Ph.D. dissertation, Yale University, 1954), pp. 73-77. (Ann Arbor, Mich., University Microfilms.)

the Russian Army probably provided the means, however meager, to escape a harsher state of existence and may very well explain the view that while the Russian soldier in battle preserved order, discipline, and a fighting spirit, he nevertheless feared hunger and privation more than the bullet or grapeshot.<sup>39</sup>

The severe nature of discipline in the Imperial Army created within the soldier an attitude of fear and hatred for his officers. The most often used method of punishment was the knout, where a man ran the gauntlet of a thousand men. The consequence of this punishment was either death or a crippled life. The reform era tended to ease the practice of barbaric disciplinary methods, but the scar was too deep. The common soldier could expect a lengthy service of work, misery, and death. If he was lucky enough to escape death, a life of poverty and vagrancy awaited him when his service ended.<sup>40</sup>

### Summary

In 1917, the Imperial Army disintegrated. Throughout two centuries, the officers, in spite of a rather severe existence, displayed an almost unswerving loyalty to the autocrat. After the setbacks in the Crimean War the officer corps underwent a fundamental transformation that made it a more heterogenous group and a more professional but apolitical body. The officers entered the 20th century generally confused as to the object of their loyalty--nation, state, or autocrat--and

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<sup>39</sup>Tarle, p. 177.

<sup>40</sup>Ferguson, p. 76.

deceived of their true military capabilities and limitations. The peasant soldier, on the other hand, did not undergo any profound transformation. He led a harsh existence, was even exploited by his own officers. Despite an attempt at reform, the scars of the years past were too deep. What in the imperial experience led to such a climate of distrust and skepticism?

## CHAPTER II

### FORMATION OF A TRADITION

The imperial Russian military tradition started early in the 18th century. Admittedly, there were some antecedents from the previous century, but in this age of relatively limited warfare small nations became preeminent in world affairs in part because of their military power. States witnessed a greater sense of nationalism; military leaders, though generally unimaginative, rose in importance; and the rise of technology imposed new parameters on the art of warfare. Out of necessity nations generally kept pace with each other and adapted to change as they became threatened, but they had no inkling as to the long range consequences of the rise of world leadership. Russia was no exception. Forced by necessity early in the century to establish and defend vast lands, led by exceptional men of uncharacteristic military ability, and intoxicated with the rise of its own preeminence in European affairs following the defeat in 1815 of the age's greatest military genius, Napoleon, Russia failed to understand its own accomplishments and became falsely secure and accepted its image of the past as a prologue to the future.

Tradition, especially military tradition, can be most deceptive. As an institution, armies select only that element of their history that

helps accomplish their present-day objectives. This eulogizing the past can present a false image of progress and accomplishment. The net result may be an institution that imitates rather than understands the past. Imperial Russia was entitled to claim a glorious past for the accomplishments of Peter the Great, Count Alexander Vasilievich Suvorov, and their disciples. However, the nature of Russian society and the world it lived in preconditioned those accomplishments. As conditions change, however, traditions must be reevaluated and appreciated in the light of their own time in history.

#### Petrine Legacy

The history of the Russian army begins like a fairy tale: "Once upon a time," a young prince, kept by his sister away from the throne, occupied his long days in the country by playing soldiers with boys from nearby villages.<sup>1</sup>

The young prince was Peter I, who became tsar of Muscovy in 1689 after sharing the throne with his half-brother for more than 15 years. Peter ascended the throne in his own right by wiping out an abortive rebellion by warlords. Before examining his contribution to the military tradition, the previous condition of the army and the significance of Peter's "toy regiments" on his military philosophy must be reviewed.

No concept of state trade and industry and no civil power or security existed in pre-Petrine Russia. The military existed in name

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<sup>1</sup>Michel Garder, The History of the Soviet Army (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1966), p. 3.

only. The lack of any type of organization gave the head of state little sense of reliance on the military.<sup>2</sup> What military there was posted themselves in loose regimental bodies around the seat of authority and on the frontier as a response to external threats. More significantly, they resembled a militia force that was officered by foreigners as a check against the nobility. The force was principally infantry and was armed with anything from wooden clubs to privately owned muskets of questionable value. These ill-disciplined and ill-trained troops assembled only in time of war and were generally incapable of satisfactory service. They disbanded after an emergency subsided and returned to their villages. The cavalry arm existed only in time of military necessity, and its size related to its award of the officer's appointment. Understandably, the tsars had to hire foreign troops. In summary, there existed no military accountability except what could be raised as either a precondition of loyalty to the head of state or the size of the envisioned threat.<sup>3</sup>

While exiled to the country, a youthful Peter demanded some gratification of his military curiosity and was allowed to form his own unit. He first created a military company that grew progressively

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<sup>2</sup>Belinsky, [Vassarion G.], "The Miracle of Peter the Great," Pp. 145-47 in Peter the Great, ed. by L. Jay Oliva, Great Lives Observed Series, Gerald Emanuel Stearn (gen. ed.) (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1970), p. 146; and A. N. Kuropatkin, The Russian Army and the Japanese War, 2 vols. (London: John Murray, 1902), I:3.

<sup>3</sup>Manstein, [Christof H. von], "Into the Hands of Foreigners," Pp. 98-104 in Oliva, pp. 100-102.

larger as his personal recruiting brought in young men of noble and peasant stock. Voltaire claimed that Peter's ulterior motive was to build a military organization that was capable of breaking the power of the streltsy.<sup>4</sup> Regardless of purpose, the hobby affected him in three significant ways.

First, all members of Peter's units, including himself, had to pass through all ranks and had to undergo various tests of skill before they earned promotions. Peter himself advanced from drummer boy, soldier, and sergeant to lieutenant and thus established a precedent for promotion by merit rather than by class status.<sup>5</sup> Second, Peter relied on the council of foreign officers and fostered the loyalties of men who subsequently shared influence during his reign as emperor.<sup>6</sup> Third, under the guidance of his foreign officer-advisors, Peter organized war games--some as full scale battles with real artillery--in which he and his army learned how to maneuver and conduct tactical exercises.<sup>7</sup> The seeds for military standards of professionalism--training and promotion by merit--and universal service were thus planted by the experience of a teenage tsar at play.

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<sup>4</sup>Voltaire, [Francois Marie Arouet de], "Founder and Father of His Empire," Pp. 123-32 in Oliva, p. 126; and "Introduction," Pp. 1-20 in Oliva, p. 2, for "streltsy, the tsar's bodyguards created by Ivan the Terrible (1555-84) for the city of Moscow."

<sup>5</sup>Voltaire, p. 126.      <sup>6</sup>"Introduction," Pp. 1-20 in Oliva, p. 4.

<sup>7</sup>Jacques Boudet (ed.), The Ancient Art of Warfare, Vol. II: 1700 to Our Times, From Peter the Great to Eisenhower (London: Barrie and Rockliff; Crescent Press, 1966), p. 71.

Military crises at the beginning of the century catapulted Peter toward his principal occupation as a military tsar. The dismal campaign of the Azov in 1695, Peter's 1696-97 trip to observe Western Europe's institutions, his suppression of the streltsy revolt in 1699, and his defeat at Narva in 1700 by an understrength Swedish army--all of these impressed upon Peter the pressing need for military reform.<sup>8</sup> The only reliable military units were his two regular regiments and, while their loyalty and desire were not questioned, they did not perform as well as expected.

Historians generally agree that Peter started from the ground up and commenced a series of reforms that may not have insured success in battle but at least consolidated Russia's military might for ages to come. Defeat did not dampen Peter's zeal for change. After Narva he exclaimed:

I know the Swedes are going to win one or more victories over us, but it will be from them that we shall learn how to win victories over them.<sup>9</sup>

While historian Richard Hellie suggests in his short study on the Petrine Army that there was a strong institutional basis for the reform of Peter's army, sufficient evidence suggests that reform was more attributable to Peter's role as a military leader--a heritage the

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<sup>8</sup>Richard Hellie, "The Petrine Army: Continuity, Change, and Impact," Canadian-American Slavic Studies 8, No. 2 (Summer 1974):237-39; and Alexander M. Nikolaieff, "Peter the Great As a Military Leader," Army Quarterly and Defense Journal 80, No. 1 (April 1960):77.

<sup>9</sup>Nikolaieff, p. 77.

Romanovs became compelled to live up to. Reorganization of the army followed the example of Peter's "toy regiments." While its size stayed relatively the same, Peter unified the military command structure by creating one collegial body to oversee the military as a whole. He also instituted a general staff organization for tactical field commands. To create unit pride, Peter ordered distinctive uniforms for regiments. Technological innovations were not extensive, but the use of bayonets ushered in a philosophy of war that rejected the traditional and outmoded style of position and maneuver for a more concentrated and close combat method directed at the central purpose of annihilating the opposing force. Despite this relative tactical change in warfare methodology, Peter probably sent fewer men into battle than before. Artillery employment was another significant technological adaptation. Peter introduced horses to move the artillery around the battlefield and he created an artillery corps to centralize the employment of artillery. Hellie suggests that artillery became the glamour service in Peter's army.<sup>10</sup> For his army, Peter had important security missions on a rapidly expanding frontier. Size and transportation precluded the concentration of his military in one central location.

The reorganization and technological reform described above demanded a more professional attitude and more inspirational leadership from the officer corps and a correspondingly higher index of courage

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<sup>10</sup>Hellie, pp. 237-53.

from the soldiers. Peter, much as he had done with his "toy regiments," therefore instituted summer maneuvers as a testing ground for his units. Foreign officers continued to be used as a stabilizing influence, but Peter attempted to eliminate reliance on outside talent by establishing naval, artillery, and engineer schools. In continuing his imitation of the West, Peter even replaced the Russian rank system with the West European model. Peter toned down the severe disciplinary measures in a more just manner and lengthened the time of service to 25 years. In short, reform touched each and every aspect of the Russian military system.<sup>11</sup>

Between the setback at Narva in 1700 and the battle of Poltava in 1721, the Russian body politic exhausted its life blood on war. The army lost more than one-half of its battles but was never defeated. Historians have criticized Peter as having channeled a disproportionate share of the national material and human resources into the sinews of war.<sup>12</sup> Be that as it may, Peter acknowledged his and the Russian state's debt to the soldier. He made the point for those times and posterity that the Russian soldier was supreme in moral superiority and patriotic fervor. Peter framed his military institutions and practices on the spare bones of Muscovy and, in the process, he inculcated in the

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<sup>11</sup>Hellie, pp. 237-53.

<sup>12</sup>Forrestt A. Miller, "Historical Introduction," in Carl von Clausewitz, The Campaign of 1812 in Russia (n.p.: Academic International, 1970), p. iv.

Russian officer a desire to study war and the military art.<sup>13</sup>

### After Peter

Basically, the structure of the Russian Army changed little during the remainder of the 18th century. However, what followed Peter's death was a general state of dynastic confusion in which the foundation of the Petrine military system, the Guards, played a significant role.<sup>14</sup> Although obviously unintended by their creator, the Guards became a major political force. "Without the consent of the Guardsmen, no one could ascend the Russian throne so lately filled by their 'colonel.'"<sup>15</sup>

In a period of 37 years, several of the 7 monarchs came to the throne only after they granted special privileges to the military elites. Probably the most significant outcome of this growth of political influence was the discontinuance of compulsory military service, one of Peter's essentials.<sup>16</sup> The Petrine system had conditioned nobles, who comprised the overwhelming majority of the officer corps, to view things in a militaristic light, that is, centralization of national life under

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<sup>13</sup>Peter H. C. von Wahlde, "Military Thought in Imperial Russia" (Ph.D. dissertation, Indiana University, 1966), pp. 6-7. (Ann Arbor, Mich., University Microfilms.)

<sup>14</sup>Peter Putnam, Peter, The Revolutionary Tsar (New York: Harper & Row, 1973), p. 238.

<sup>15</sup>Pokrovsky, [Michael N.], "The Bankruptcy of Peter's System," in Oliva, pp. 168-72.

<sup>16</sup>Putnam, p. 239.

the framework of hierarchic authority. This dichotomy of interest in the elite of Russian society set the noble at odds with the state. While gaining freedom from personal service, the noble gained greater autonomy over the serf, the principal source for soldiers. Ideologically, the noble considered service to the state paramount, where, in reality, he tended to serve his own self-interests first. Consequently, one found the Russian Army critically short of officers and in a general state of demoralization.<sup>17</sup>

The mantle of Peter's military leadership generally fell to foreign officers. The most significant of victories under them was the one over Frederick the Great at Kunersdorf in 1759. Russian commanders after Peter's departure seemed to discard the Petrine principle of pursuing an action to the very end. More probably, however, the deficiencies reflect a general neglect of the military by Peter's successors. Empress Anne, concerned over the critical shortage of officers, set up military schools for the sons of nobles and exempted other members of noble families from which one member volunteered for military service. The conditions continued to deteriorate and culminated in the war with Turkey (1736-1739), in which great hardships and serious casualties were suffered.

When the guard regiments revolted against a weak Peter III, they brought Catherine II to the throne. In general she was considered a

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<sup>17</sup>Marc Raeff, "Home, School and Service in the Life of the 18th Century Russian Nobleman," Slavonic and East European Review 40, No. 95 (June 1962):304-305.

strong ruler, but she tended to "use personal favorites in positions of command and thereby reduce[d] the command structure of the armed forces to a series of bi-lateral links between the Empress and individual field commanders."<sup>18</sup> More than 500,000 men were under arms during her reign and "had to be ready to fight on three fronts--in the Central European plain, against Turkey, and against the tribes of the Caucasus."<sup>19</sup>

While officers enjoyed personal freedom equal to that of other nobles, the age of Catherine managed to produce great commanders whose performance and corresponding reputation embellished the Petrine principles of leadership. Men such as Field Marshal Peter Alexandrovich Rumyantsev and Suvorov perhaps deserve credit for overcoming the legacy of previous reigns and the feudal practices of commanders.<sup>20</sup>

Rumyantsev (1725-1796) was the first of the great captains and spiritual heir to the Petrine heritage. An allegation that he was the illegitimate son of Peter the Great<sup>21</sup> may have been more the consequence of Rumyantsev's military prowess. He has not been the subject of major historical studies. What is available on him as a general and later as

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<sup>18</sup>Miller, p. v.

<sup>19</sup>Alan Palmer, Russia in War and Peace (London: Weidenfeld, 1972), p. 105.

<sup>20</sup>Carl von Clausewitz, The Campaign of 1812 in Russia (n.p.: Academic International, 1970), p. 7; and Michael Jenkins, Arakcheev, Grand Vizer of the Russian Empire (London: Faber and Faber, 1969), p. 58.

<sup>21</sup>Garder, p. 6.

Minister of War must be ferreted from studies of the Imperial Russian military. Soviet military historian V. ye Savkin attributes the use of light infantry in extended formations to Rumyantsev.<sup>22</sup> His early reputation as a military commander of some note originated with his performance in the opening stages of the Turkish War (1769-1774). However, his refusal to cross the Danube River, as Catherine ordered, was attributed perhaps unfairly to a loss of nerve,<sup>23</sup> which may explain the strategic philosophy on which his reputation principally rests.

In keeping with the Petrine creed, Rumyantsev agreed that the objective of military strategy should be to crush the opposing force without risking destruction.<sup>24</sup> He advocated a war of movement rather than massive concentration of force in a restricted area. Movement was a means to concentrate force at the right time at the decisive place on the battlefield. "Rumyantsev advanced the principle: go separately but fight together."<sup>25</sup>

Suvorov, Russia's greatest general, had the responsibility of preserving the tradition under the new tsar when Rumyantsev and Catherine died in 1796. Under Paul I, the army became Prussianized, that is,

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<sup>22</sup>V. ye Savkin, The Basic Principles of Operational Art and Tactics (A Soviet View), trans. by the U.S. Air Force (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1972), p. 12.

<sup>23</sup>Philip Longworth, The Art of Victory: The Life and Achievements of Field-Marshal Suvorov (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1966), p. 74.

<sup>24</sup>Savkin, p. 13.

<sup>25</sup>Savkin, p. 13.

parade-ground drilling and martinet-type behavior became the order of the day. Although Paul I instituted a series of tactical classes to redirect Russia's military leaders from a dependence on columnar tactics, great friction arose between him and Suvorov. In spite of their differences of opinion, however, Paul's reforms had some salutary effects and are considered to have "brought Russia's military establishment and administration to higher levels than any time since the Great Northern War."<sup>26</sup> Part of the improvement may be attributed to General Alexis Andreyevich Arakcheev, who is discussed in Chapter III. At this time suffice it to say that the reign of Paul I was a transitional period between the last remnants of the tradition that began forming in the 18th century and the antecedents of a century of struggle yet to come.

### Suvorov

Alexander Suvorov (1729-1800) was Russia's most legendary and greatest military leader in the 18th century. His prominence in Russian military history is not without justification. In the process of leading Russian soldiers to 63 victories, the generalissimo became a national symbol to the European world. Suvorov broke with tradition by invoking a new style of leadership and introducing a more disciplined brand of military professionalism. He was the first to credit the Russian soldiers with his own success, thus keeping with the Petrine

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<sup>26</sup>Wahlde, pp. 16-17.

tradition. However, Suvorov deserves study for reasons other than the personal examples of his leadership that earned the unswerving devotion of officers and men who served under him. He also embodied the Petrine principle that promotions be based on merit only. For those interested in military thought of the period, Suvorov wrote two major works: a guide for commanders of units in the Russian Army and, later, a book that represents a compendium of his tactical and strategic thought.

Suvorov began his military career as did most sons of Russian nobles. His father enrolled him in the Semyonovsky Guards Regiment and conducted his early training until he reached age. After serving eight years in the ranks and several years on staffs of various commands, Suvorov became shocked at the pointless suffering of the soldier and the exploitation of the soldier by his officers. These early years created in Suvorov an intense disrespect of officers who were brave in battle because they desired awards and decorations but who in peace became impatient and callous toward caring about or preparing the soldier for battle.<sup>27</sup>

Historians may question the number of victories credited to Suvorov and his men, but there appears to be no disagreement over the fact that he was "undefeated in almost half a century of campaigning against the Prussians, Poles, Tartars, Turks, and French; and in most encounters his forces were outnumbered by his adversary."<sup>28</sup> As a

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<sup>27</sup>Longworth, pp. 61 & 91.

<sup>28</sup>Frederick C. Turner, "From Private to Generalissimo: Russia's

cavalry commander in the Seven Years' War, he demonstrated his "dash and indifference to fatigue."<sup>29</sup> His aphorism that "the head must not wait for the tail"<sup>30</sup> came during the Polish War of 1768 while his units conducted rapid forced marches over hundreds of miles. During Catherine's two Turkish Wars, Suvorov won striking victories by attacking at night and executing sweeping flank movements to surprise and rout enemy forces that outnumbered him more than three to one. He reestablished order after the Pugachev Rebellion in 1774 and surprised the Kosciuszko Insurrection of 1794. In his last campaign against the French, Suvorov led a coalition army of Austrians and Russians in 1799 in a masterful war of maneuver across the treacherous Swiss and Italian Alps.<sup>31</sup>

Suvorov, a physically small man, often became the object of ridicule by cartoonists and satirists because of his manner of dress and his personal temperament. He is said to have dressed like a tramp and behaved like an eccentric. In winter he wore threadbare clothing and in summer he ran around in only his underclothes. Nonetheless, his men adored him. He looked after their welfare, exercised humane discipline, and created a feeling of mutual trust. He broke a custom of tsarist

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Invincible Great Captain" (Student essay, U.S. Army War College, 13 November 1967), p. 2.

<sup>29</sup>H. Essame, "The Suvorov Legend," Military Review, January 1961, p. 16.

<sup>30</sup>Essame, p. 16; and Turner, pp. 3-4.

<sup>31</sup>Essame, p. 17; and Turner, pp. 4-5 & 16.

officers by eating with his troops and undergoing hardships similar to theirs. He even gave large sums of money for the redemption of debtors and the care of soldiers' families. He displayed an enormous thirst for victory and was sharply critical of the Prussianization of the army that Paul I advocated.<sup>32</sup> Time and again the Russian state relied on this most unusual military giant.

Suvorov's two works, Regimental Regulations and Science of Victory, not only provide an insight into the philosophy of war of an accomplished military leader but also represent the underpinnings of the Russian military tradition. The latter, of course, is of most concern here. Written about 1765, when Suvorov commanded the Suzdal Regiment, Regimental Regulations contains one element that is altogether characteristic of Suvorov's leadership, an overriding concern for the well-being of the men under him. He exhorted each company commander to "have a true love for the men under him, care about their worries, and see that their needs were satisfied!"<sup>33</sup>

Suvorov, unlike many commanders who espouse leadership principles, was not one to rest on an abstract example of leadership. He demanded of both himself and his subordinates concrete manifestations of these principles. For example, "to create a bond between officer and private soldier, captains were instructed to learn the name of every man in their companies and to know their capabilities."<sup>34</sup> Russia's

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<sup>32</sup>Essame, p. 19; and Turner, p. 14.

<sup>33</sup>Longworth, p. 34.

<sup>34</sup>Longworth, p. 34.

officership dishonored this basic tenet of leadership during the Russo-Japanese War.

Suvorov had the advantage of commanding his regiment in a region that was isolated from the mainstream of social life in Imperial Russia. Although this freedom obviously gave him a great opportunity to innovate, that should not detract from any acknowledgment of his originality as a commander. His practical side was much too obvious for that. Simply stated, Suvorov's view was that the "function of a soldier was to fight, so his regiment had to be trained accordingly."<sup>35</sup>

Regimental Regulations is directive in nature in that it outlines administrative and leadership responsibilities for each soldier. It is prescriptive in that it outlines a course of training for each soldier and unit. Suvorov's training programs included the simplest movements of units done slowly, then faster, then under fire and over different terrain--a practice Peter used, although probably not as extensively.<sup>36</sup> Suvorov's objective was to induce in his subordinates the confidence to make rapid and unexpected decisions on the battlefield. He must have been confident in his own work, for a mark of his fighting leadership was turning the battle over to his subordinates so he could go forward with his men. He knew his personal presence would inspire extraordinary effort on the part of his officers and men.

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<sup>35</sup>Longworth, p. 30 (the quotation); and Turner, p. 7.

<sup>36</sup>Longworth, p. 92; and Turner, p. 7.

The regulations were a military catechism which listed responsibilities of every NCO [noncommissioned officer] and officer in the regiment. Subjects included guard duty, hygiene, uniform regulations, close order drill, choice of firing positions, concentration and accuracy of fire, rapid displacement, actions of infantry in the assault and cavalry in reconnaissance, and execution of converging flanking attacks.<sup>37</sup>

After 30 years of success on the battlefield but prior to his last campaign against the French, Suvorov wrote Science of Victory. Published several years after his death, it did not enjoy any professional respect until military historians at the academy began to take interest. On several occasions it was required reading for all officers of the Imperial Army. One historian wrote that it "remains a singular expression of Russian ideals of war as inherited from Muscovy and shaped by the eighteenth century."<sup>38</sup>

Suvorov, in Science of Victory, demonstrated the importance of having all men in the army understand the art of warfare. The text's language and style were comprehensible to the soldier and thus parts were required to be memorized. Suvorov emphasized the relationship between the musket and the bayonet by imploring soldiers to "fire seldom but accurately" and claiming that the bayonet would win the fight in the end. This argument implicitly conceded the limitation that technology of the period imposed on the soldier but, at the same time, it relied on the soldier's moral courage to carry the momentum of the

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<sup>37</sup>Turner, p. 7.

<sup>38</sup>Turner, p. 8; and Wahlde, p. 27 (the quotation).

attack. Suvorov assured the soldier that everlasting honor and glory come to the soldier on the battlefield. On a more pragmatic note, he warned against the abuse of civilians, the potential source of food and supplies for the army. If the practical logic of this rule could not be understood, Suvorov appealed to the sense of spirit in a soldier by declaring that plunder and pillaging were unsoldierly conduct,<sup>39</sup> a fact the army forgot in 1917.

Suvorov described the three methods of attack his army was to use in open battle. The best was an attack against a weak flank and the worst was against the enemy's strength or center. Although he conceded the merit of attacking from the rear, he admitted it was a difficult maneuver to carry off. Column-shock attacks with the spirit of the bayonet showed their advantage over linear attacks. Other instructions included how to storm a fort and the like.<sup>40</sup>

The most significant part of Science of Victory deals with three principal tenets of military art: the estimate of the situation, speed of movement, and hitting power or violent attack. With the first, Suvorov expected the soldier to have a clear understanding of the enemy's position, his unit's route, and place of attack, and he expected that generals would not scorn an opponent but would learn his method of operation and his strengths. Suvorov's own professional conduct

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<sup>39</sup>Longworth, pp. 216-17.

<sup>40</sup>Longworth, p. 217; and Savkin, pp. 13-14.

reflected this idea, for he studied both his enemy and military history extensively. He abhorred any soldier who did not know or did not at least make an effort to know what he was about. The second tenet, which consists of the principle of swiftness, unrelenting pursuit, and impact, was the soul of genuine warfare to Suvorov. Simple movements and avoidance of static warfare keep the attacker at a decided advantage. Violent attack was Suvorov's third art of warfare. The combination of the second and third tenets facilitated the concentration of forces in the axis of attack.<sup>41</sup>

Conspicuous by its absence is any reference to retreat or withdrawal in battle. However, although Suvorov discouraged retreat, he would not risk his units before a superior force. Thus he acknowledged that superior military skill minimizes loss and keeps the army, the standard of the nation, alive for an ultimate stroke of victory.<sup>42</sup> A Suvorov disciple, Marshal Michael I. Kutuzov, eventually demonstrated this principle in the 1812 campaigns against Napoleon. Later military theoreticians were to argue that this example of military writing set a precedent for theoretical military thinking.

Obviously there was more to Suvorov than is presented here. In addition to a ranking among the greats of the period, he deserves more extensive study. One historian summarized his impact as follows:

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<sup>41</sup>Longworth, pp. 218-19; Savkin, pp. 15-17; and Turner, p. 9.

<sup>42</sup>Turner, p. 12.

He bequeathed a double legacy to Russia: a belief in a particular way of waging war; and a school of generals, who had served under him against the Turks or against the French and who were confident that the tsar's army must follow his teachings if the Napoleonic threat was to be overcome.<sup>43</sup>

### Suvorov's Disciples

Suvorov died what may be described as an anti-hero's death because of unjustified jealousy by Paul I. Suvorov's principles were opposite to and in conflict with the emperor's military views. Yet, Suvorov's disciples in the field, generals such as Kutuzov, Peter Ivanovich Bagration, and others, continued his tradition and conducted their business of soldiering under the momentum and principles of the Suvorovian model. In garrisons and around the centers of Russian imperial society, Paul I and his henchman Arakcheev were reviving some of the worst aspects of the 18th century military system--wigs, uncomfortable and impractical uniforms, harsh and unjust discipline, and parade-ground training.<sup>44</sup> In retrospect, Russia's good fortune was that Paul I passed from the scene shortly after Suvorov did.

Alexander I, the new ruler, relied on Arakcheev in running, first, the military and, ultimately, the total state bureaucracy. Arakcheev presents a confusing problem in interpreting the Russian military tradition and, as previously indicated, his contribution to or detracting from the military heritage is discussed later. In essence, Alexander I continued many of the practices Paul I had instituted.

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<sup>43</sup>Palmer, p. 118.

<sup>44</sup>Palmer, p. 103.

The impact was a state of deteriorating morale in the officer corps and a decline in the level of training in the army as a whole and the school system. These declines can be attributed to excessive centralization and uniformity, capricious promotions, and enforced retirement of senior officers who had been trained in the Russian Petrine-Suvorov manner.<sup>45</sup> Defeats at Austerlitz in 1805 and Eylau in 1807 might have brought some men back to their senses, but the Russian leadership hardly did anything except keep the army alive. Where were the Suvo- rovs? Three in that mold were Bagration, Michael Bogdanovich Barclay de Tolly, and Kutuzov.

Prince Bagration (1765-1812) descended from a high-ranking Caucasian family. Suvorov considered Bagration one of his best pupils, one who possessed a natural and heroic tendency in battle. His magnetic personality with the troops overrode the criticism that he was nervous and prone to lose his temper in battle. On the other hand, General Barclay de Tolly (1761-1818), a Frenchman by birth, did not enjoy a respectful reputation among the officer corps. That situation may partly explain the growing prejudice toward non-Russian officers. Yet, throughout his career, Barclay demonstrated a knack for military administration and a strategic sense. Tactically, he was a cautious man and was prone to retreating against an overwhelming enemy.<sup>46</sup> However, history appears to have grown much kinder toward Barclay's 1812 decision

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<sup>45</sup>Palmer, p. 116.

<sup>46</sup>Palmer, pp. 119-22.

to avoid a fight with Napoleon's army and, instead, to use the immense Russian land mass in a plan to bring about Napoleon's inevitable defeat. For example, Russian historian Eugene Tarle recognized a Suvorovian trait and wrote: "Barclay's conscience bade him save his troops, and he had enough firmness and strength of will to carry out the task systematically."<sup>47</sup>

Kutuzov (1745-1813) was Suvorov's most significant disciple. Although their styles of leadership differed considerably, Kutuzov's bravery and tactical accomplishment earned Suvorov's highest praise. Alexander I did not care for the aging and obese Kutuzov because he failed to annihilate the French early in the war at Austerlitz. When all others also failed to do so, Alexander I could not deny that Kutuzov, a Russian, was a remarkable strategist and had the army's unswerving loyalty. Carl von Clausewitz, who served under him, described the excitement and optimism in the Russian Army when Kutuzov assumed command before Borodino. Kutuzov's reputation as a strategist and tactician this late in his age and career may have been suspect, but he represented a symbol of spirit that began with Peter and was embellished by Suvorov. Kutuzov's respect within the army first dropped when he ordered withdrawal after Borodino, which essentially was no different from Barclay's scheme. It dropped again when he subsequently gave up Moscow without a fight. However, history has proved that Kutuzov was

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<sup>47</sup>Eugene Tarle, Napoleon's Invasion of Russia, 1812 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1942), pp. 83-85 (quotation on p. 85).

wise, and it has not been kinder to any other general in retreat.<sup>48</sup>

Were Kutuzov's withdrawals in keeping with the dictum to preserve the army at all costs or were they a mark of his own genius? The explanation can go either way. The acts themselves preserved the army and thus the nation. Above all, Kutuzov's acts welded within the Russian military tradition an awareness or perception that the spirit of the Russian people coupled with the vastness of Russian soil and the might of the army had somehow convinced the nation that under the greatest odds, which Napoleon represented, Russia was indestructible and would survive.

At the time of the loss of Moscow, Russian military leaders were convinced of the correctness of their accidental strategy to avoid general engagement. Physical elements had beaten the French Army. While the tsar and the majority of his military advisors desired to trap the French invaders in Moscow, Kutuzov knew the real condition of the Russian Army, that it was in no shape--no matter how spent the enemy was --to go into battle. As a result, Kutuzov held to his objective to avoid battle. Instead, he chose to keep his own weak army nipping at the heels of the French and thus avoid any engagement that could further weaken his army. What he had done was hold to the same purpose of his withdrawal or defense strategy by disguising it in a potential counter-offensive strategy. The really only significantly offensive aspect of his post-Moscow strategy was the partisan or guerrilla type of warfare.

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<sup>48</sup>Clausewitz, pp. 139-40; Jenkins, p. 165; and Tarle, p. 169.

The entire operation is a classic representation of a situation where the enemy beat himself and where the victor stayed close at hand to make sure the enemy would not or could not change his mind. This victory, despite the manner in which it was achieved, relieved the Russian people of any doubt of their own military prowess. This is not to suggest that Kutuzov was of secondary importance, for he had in the end reconfirmed the dependence of the Russian military on a central military figure.

### Summary

The history of the Russian state and its military were profoundly affected by Peter the Great. When he passed away, "great captains" such as Alexander Suvorov, with a controversial style of command, became the symbol of Russian military prowess. While Suvorov exemplified the spirit of the offensive in Russian doctrine, Michael Kutuzov, in his 1812 campaign against Napoleon, became the proponent of defense and counter-offensive strategies. Both men established the dependence of the Russian military tradition on "great captains" and exhorted the virtues of the undefeatable Russian soldier.

## CHAPTER III

### BETWEEN TRADITION AND PROGRESS

The epic of 1812, with the catastrophic French defeat, can be ascribed to a number of factors: the fighting spirit of the Russian Army, Kutuzov's wise decisions, Napoleon's crucial mistakes, and Alexander's determination to continue the war.<sup>1</sup> The Russian Army emerged unvanquished and confident of its capacity to fulfill its traditional Petrine role as the bulwark of the nation. Yet, in forging that reputation and fulfilling that role, the army had placed enormous demands upon the Russian political and social orders and upon the state's financial, technological, and productive resources.<sup>2</sup> Beneath the confident and optimistic spirit that emerged from those first hundred years ran a deep, sometimes unconscious, struggle between tradition and progress which its advocates identified with systemic reform.

"On the whole the Russian military exhibited no glaring defects or superiorities with respect to other European forces of the day."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Nicholas V. Riasanovsky, A History of Russia, 2d ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1969), p. 377.

<sup>2</sup>Alfred J. Rieber (ed.), The Politics of Autocracy (Paris: Mouton & Co., 1966), p. 23.

<sup>3</sup>D. A. West, "The Russian Military Under Alexander I," New Review 11, Nos. 2-4 (Special; December 1971):56.

While this statement is essentially accurate, it implicitly overlooks the basis for that superiority or parity--as the case may be, a basis the traditional conservative failed to acknowledge and the progressive-liberal in the military understood but could not change without a tragic setback. The purpose in this chapter, then, is to look at the two elements of this struggle. They are the traditional-noble officer who had grown dependent on the social power of the army and the economics of the Russian state and the professional-liberal who arrived at a comparative realization that in the long run the contemporary military structure would weaken Russia both economically and militarily. To the reformers the obvious solution rested in social change and a commensurate increase in the professionalization of the army.

#### Arakcheev and the Decembrists

The first explicit evidence of an emerging struggle came on the heels of victory over Napoleon. Tsar Alexander I, preoccupied with the war and its direction and later with securing a dominant Russian role in the rebuilding of Europe, needed a substitute ruler to oversee the government in St. Petersburg. While the army prosecuted the war, Alexis Arakcheev directed the state bureaucracy in St. Petersburg. Although Arakcheev had resigned the position of Minister of War in 1810 because of a conflict with Speransky, he continued to act as the emperor's principal liaison to the Council of Ministers. This role as prime minister without portfolio and his great influence with the tsar earned for Arakcheev some of history's sharpest criticism and, more

importantly, incited great jealousies within the state and military bureaucracies. In contrast, Arakcheev's modern-day biographers, while admitting to obvious flaws in his personality, have nonetheless found many reasons to praise him as both a soldier and a significant figure on the imperial scene. An obvious question before looking at the contributions and controversy surrounding this individual is: How did he come to such a prominent place in Russia's imperial regime?

Arakcheev started his state service with cadet schooling, as did other prominent military figures. His military notoriety began when, as artillery drill master, he was eventually posted to Gatchina, the tsar's summer residence, where the elite guard units were often trained and billeted and where he began to experiment with new artillery techniques. More importantly, he earned the confidence of Paul and Paul's son, Alexander, with whom he had spent his young and formative years, also at the summer residence. At Gatchina, Arakcheev lived up to his early cadet reputation of being unpopular and feared by his peers but exceedingly capable of imposing strict discipline in the name of loyalty to, and favor from, the royal household.

At Gatchina the emperors-to-be experimented with their ideas of military affairs. In particular, Paul, enamored with the Prussian system, continued to transform his units into a miniature model of the army of Frederick the Great. Examples of these practices were Prussian-style uniforms, powdered wigs, parade-ground drill, Prussian tactics of the line, and Prussian-style officer schooling. The influence was so

significant that Paul ordered Prussian regulations redrafted after the Prussian examples. To Arakcheev, agreeing or disagreeing with these practices was not as important as fulfilling the desires of the royal household. This experimenting at Gatchina played a key role in shaping Russia's military future.<sup>4</sup>

When Paul became emperor, "a wave of the imperial wand had transformed Arackcheev overnight from a poor and unknown colonel to a major general, a close confidant of the Emperor, and a substantial landowner."<sup>5</sup> Significantly, Arakcheev became a sort of alter ego for Tsar Paul I and, to the military, a bitter symbol of the parade-ground training that senior officers, such as Suvorov, had violently opposed. As commandant of St. Petersburg in 1796, Arakcheev enforced his old love of cleanliness and orderliness, but nowhere was this obsession more strikingly displayed than at his own estate, Gruzino, a gift from Paul in 1796 for loyalty in service. In his few years with Paul, Arakcheev displayed military and technical competence and unswerving loyalty, yet he managed to cause his own resignation from the service on two separate occasions, 1797 and 1800, because of his conduct among his fellow officers.<sup>6</sup>

Crucial to understanding Arakcheev was his relationship with Alexander, the wartime tsar. Alexander, threatened by war from the

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<sup>4</sup>Michael Jenkins, Arakcheev, Grand Vizer of the Russian Empire (London: Faber and Faber, 1969), pp. 42-48.

<sup>5</sup>Jenkins, p. 55.      <sup>6</sup>Jenkins, pp. 56-57 & 63.

west, realized the need for a modern and efficient army and called Arakcheev from retirement. Appointed Chief Inspector of Artillery in 1803, Arakcheev began at once to reorganize. After several months of observation, he concluded

that the artillery must be separated from the infantry; given its own chain of command and lines of supply; and made to feel that it was no longer simply the handmaid of the infantry regiments.<sup>7</sup>

Arakcheev fought the objections of military traditionalists and ultimately won a reorganization that enjoyed great support from artillery officers. Later, at Eylau, Napoleon commented on the surprising effectiveness of Russian artillery. In short, Alexander's confidence in his military agent was renewed to such an extent that he appointed him Minister of War in 1808.<sup>8</sup>

As Minister of War, Arakcheev was given broad powers to build up the army. In the process of doing so he began to invade the domain of generals by attacking the stifling nature of the General Staff, the apparent low state of discipline and efficiency in the army, and overall corruption in the logistical system of the Russian Imperial Army. At one time he even assumed direction of the military campaign in Finland, where Russian generals had failed. One historian concluded: "At every task with which Alexander in his turn instructed him, he [Arakcheev] succeeded triumphantly."<sup>9</sup>

As long as the tsar felt compelled to fulfill a Petrine heritage to lead his own army in war, he needed a "substitute tsar." There is no

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<sup>7</sup>Jenkins, p. 100.

<sup>8</sup>Jenkins, pp. 98-108.

<sup>9</sup>Jenkins, p. 14.

doubt that Arakcheev was the tsar's personal confidant, but it can also be argued that he was more "the ruler" in his scope of authority. The generals were obviously disturbed and jealous of the apparently unrestricted power bestowed on this man. Arakcheev was omnipresent. He advised the tsar, aided generals in Poland in reorganizing an army, supervised training of the army as a whole, and was involved in virtually every aspect of imperial bureaucracy. Throughout all of this, however, no one could deny his devotion to the tsar and his tireless labor, but his almost tyrannical method of dealing with every man and agency earned him the severest enmity of his peers and history.<sup>10</sup>

"The historical symbol of Alexander's collaboration with Arackcheev was the institution of military colonies."<sup>11</sup> A large standing army tended to drain off Russia's most valuable commodity, manpower, at great cost to the treasury. Thus Alexander's problem was twofold: how to get enough men without crippling the nation and how to pay for the upkeep of so large an army.<sup>12</sup>

The original principle of the military colonies was to combine military and agricultural activities so that the army could be self-supporting, while a greater number of soldiers than could be

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<sup>10</sup>Jenkins, pp. 166-78.

<sup>11</sup>J. M. K. Vyvyan, "Chapter XVIII: Russia, 1789-1825," in War and Peace in the Age of Upheaval, 1793-1830, ed. by C. W. Crawley, Vol. IX of The New Cambridge Modern History (Cambridge, England: University Press, 1965), pp. 517-18.

<sup>12</sup>Allan Douglas Ferguson, "The Russian Military Settlements, 1810-1866" (Ph.D. dissertation, Yale University, 1954), p. 63. (Ann Arbor, Mich., University Microfilms.)

maintained in barracks enjoyed a more settled existence with their families.<sup>13</sup>

The military colonies also offered a means whereby the state could control the "graft and corruption" that was crippling the military. Yet, once again, historians are sharply divided on the matter of ultimate success. The need for cross-training in war and agrarian skills and the initial insufficient housing were obvious drawbacks. Views that the military settlements were shameful, vicious, and a black mark in Russian history are countered by one historian who concluded they were successful as a means of accomplishing the social goal of improving the serf-soldier's life and reducing the empire's overall cost of the military establishment.<sup>14</sup>

Alexander, impressed with the efficiency and regimentation of Arakcheev's own Gruzino, chose his "Grand Vizer" to oversee the creation of the military colonies. Discipline was harsh. At one time Arakcheev used extreme brutality to suppress a peasant revolt caused by the poor living conditions. Yet the settlements paid their way, returned a profit, and, compared with other institutions, demonstrated extraordinary industry and economic efficiency.<sup>15</sup>

"Nonetheless, Arackcheev's personality and his unique position were enough for the ills of the reign to be laid at his door."<sup>16</sup> Clausewitz, who knew him when the Prussian was in the tsarist service,

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<sup>13</sup>Jenkins, p. 141.

<sup>14</sup>Ferguson, pp. 253-54.

<sup>15</sup>Ferguson, p. 260; and Vyvyan, p. 518.

<sup>16</sup>Jenkins, p. 18.

described him as a "Russian in every sense of the word, of great energy and cunning."<sup>17</sup> Two Russian generals turned historians described him in a somewhat different light. To one, he was "distinguished by his exceptional cowardice."<sup>18</sup> The other noted that "all ranks had been deeply bitter[ed] by Arachcheev's view of military science."<sup>19</sup> This last accusation underpins the symbol of struggle between Arakcheev and his contemporaries. He was not only an outsider to the traditionalists and senior commanders of the army but also a cause for antagonism within the liberal movement in the army in the 1820s.

The struggle within the military during Paul's and Alexander's time was not easily reconciled given the army's greater concern for the impending threat of war. Likewise, the army, except for a few surgical military encounters such as the Balkan Campaign and Suvorov's Italian campaign, had not conducted military operations outside Russian borders. The slightest hint of change from the Petrine way prompted a suppressive response from within.

Yet there arose two liberal military tendencies. One was the start of military theoretical writings, which, although inspired by the writings of great field generals, are not to be confused with those

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<sup>17</sup>Carl von Clausewitz, The Campaign of 1812 in Russia (n.p.: Academic International, 1970), p. 9.

<sup>18</sup>Eugene Tarle, Napoleon's Invasion of Russia, 1812 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1942), p. 279.

<sup>19</sup>A. N. Kuropatkin, The Russian Army and the Japanese War, 2 vols. (London: John Murray, 1902), I:13.

non-theoretical regulatory writings. The first military theoretician worthy of any note was General A. I. Khatov (1780-1846), who "stated soundly that the principles of military art change as weapons and military institutions change."<sup>20</sup> He tended to embellish the Suvorov and Kutuzov tradition, but he was nonetheless suspicious of their real skill. He pointed out in one study that fortune plays a large part in military victories. Khatov represented Russia's emergence into modernity. He was "indicative of growing dissatisfaction and pressures behind the facade of Russian stability and vulnerability."<sup>21</sup> However, officers, typically urging reform within accepted military channels, were not capable of emphasizing or activating change without the impetus of a cataclysmic event.

The Russian Army marched through Europe on the heels of Napoleon's army and was accorded a hero's welcome in Paris even though it did not participate in his final defeat. For the first time, Russian officers and soldiers saw other armies in operation and other societies and thus introduced the second liberal military tendency. Some 18,000 officers and men remained in Paris almost 4 years. The officers, in addition to seeing with their own eyes liberal institutions at work,

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<sup>20</sup>V. ye Savkin, The Basic Principles of Operational Art and Tactics (A Soviet View), trans. by the U.S. Air Force (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1972), p. 28.

<sup>21</sup>Peter H. C. von Wahlde, "Military Thought in Imperial Russia" (Ph.D. dissertation, Indiana University, 1966), p. 42. (Ann Arbor, Mich., University Microfilms.)

acquired "ideas of liberal political institutions through their acquaintance with foreign literature and with the revolutionary movements in Western Europe."<sup>22</sup> Officers began to join secret societies, such as Freemasonry, as an outlet for expressing their new-found liberal views and spirit of nationalism.<sup>23</sup> When the Russian officers returned to their homeland and witnessed administrative chaos, official abuse, and widespread bribery and when the Russian soldier returned to the depressing serf-soldier existence, the military came to sense the ultimate futility of the reform struggle.

In response to a need for reform, liberal educators and army officers formed secret societies that provided leaders for the Decembrists' insurrection of 1825. Officers who had served in France comprised the majority of members and actively discussed military affairs at their meetings. Those officers and their civilian cohorts displayed an "unswerving belief in the ideal of the military leader and in military art and the dominance of human qualities in war and their thrust for reform and modern military systems."<sup>24</sup> The target of their criticism was the tsar, but more explicitly the figure of Arakcheev, for he represented the repression they opposed. While he advocated the end of

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<sup>22</sup>Anatole G. Mazour, The First Russian Revolution, 1825: The Decembrist Movement (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1937), p. 54.

<sup>23</sup>Michel Garder, The History of the Soviet Army (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1966), p. 8.

<sup>24</sup>Wahlde, p. 45.

corruption and administrative incompetence and argued for meaningful training, his association with the military colonies and his advocacy of harsh and tyrannical discipline conjured up to them all that was evil in the system. However, the disgruntled and liberal-thinking officers could create a mass organization. Even at the death of Alexander in December 1825, an opportune time to change the existing legal order, their own disorganization predicated failure for their movement and assured years of regressive military practices in the succeeding reign.

Another reason for the Decembrists' action at this time can be attributed to their disenchantment with the new tsar and his reputation as another harsh conservative martinet. While Nicholas had no part in the military campaigns of 1812 or those that followed, he did participate with his oldest brother, Alexander I, in the pomp and splendor of the victory. His early years were like all the Romanovs before--a sound orientation in the military arts. This training coupled with his idolization of his brother's military prowess gave him a definite view of the world in military terms. After the Napoleonic Wars he was given command of a division of the Guards, but his martinet treatment of officers and soldiers had incurred the hostility of liberal elements fresh from Europe. His reputation as a malicious and vengeful commander and his fondness for drill and strict regulations convinced the conspirators that reform would not be forthcoming. For them, time was now.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>25</sup>John Shelton Curtiss, The Russian Army Under Nicholas I, 1825-1855 (Durham, N. C.: Duke University Press, 1965), p. 11.

Nicholas I and the Crimean War

The new tsar, Nicholas I (1825-1855), wanted to avoid bloodshed, but the confrontation in Senate Square gave him no choice. The consequences of that day occupied his personal concerns throughout his reign. He loved the army because it represented order and legitimacy, but any movement to change past practices, as advocated by the Decembrists and liberal reform societies, was looked upon as a form of revolution. Personally, Nicholas's physical impressiveness enhanced his own military image of himself, but like his predecessors he had identified drilling his own units as the essence of military affairs. He developed a junior officer mentality.<sup>26</sup> That may explain why, throughout his reign, he affectionately addressed a general of questionable ability as the "Father-Commander." Nicholas's obsession for military discipline and the shock of the Decembrists' revolt convinced him that he needed an army of unquestioning subordination and blind obedience.

Although Nicholas came to devote almost every thought and deed to the army, he created no substantial improvement or modification in the Prussianistic practices of the preceding two reigns--a point of great concern to the surviving liberal element. A former tsarist officer remembered his own father's tales that, in spite of autocratic concern, "the time of Nicholas was a period of drab, harsh life for the

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<sup>26</sup>Nicholas V. Riasanovsky, Nicholas I and Official Nationality in Russia, 1825-1855 (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1961), pp. 8 & 33.

soldier, a time of severe discipline and cruel punishment."<sup>27</sup> Decay in the army was not easily detected, however, because the military record of four major successful campaigns was misleading. One historian concluded that the victories were more "the result of the prowess of the Russian troops and not of the insight of the high command."<sup>28</sup>

Nicholas's measures to police the officer corps following the Decembrists' revolt and success on the battlefield sanctified the practices and principles--right or wrong--of the era. As a result, decay became indistinguishable and the army began a period of relative stagnation. Russian commanders disregarded realistic training, and staff officers had hardly any role except to wallow in the corrupt mundane military administrative procedures of the past. The Russians made no effort to improve their artillery or anything else after 1800.<sup>29</sup>

While European armies were experimenting with maneuver, the Russian Army was concentrating on the marching capabilities of its soldiers.<sup>30</sup> The basic lack of concern for new training methods and the failure to improve weapons, coupled with the generally oppressive

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<sup>27</sup>Anton I. Denikin, The Career of a Tsarist Officer, trans. by Margaret Patoski (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1975), p. 4.

<sup>28</sup>Gardner, p. 8.

<sup>29</sup>Curtiss, p. 103; and E. R. Goldstein, "Military Aspects of Russian Industrialization: The Defense Industries, 1890-1917" (Ph.D. dissertation, Case Western Reserve University, 1971), p. 23.

<sup>30</sup>Curtiss, p. 113.

control of officers, tended not to foster any leadership skills in junior officers in the army. Antiquated tactics and weapons were not the concern of officers and generals who relied on punishment to motivate their soldiers.

Field Marshal Ivan F. Paskevich's performance in war and his relationship to the tsar illustrate what was typical of the nature of military leadership of the era. Although Paskevich led the Russian Army to victories in Hungary, Persia, Poland, and Turkey,

his jealous, suspicious nature demanded unthinking obedience of his subordinates, with the result that the whole Russian army was stamped with his [and the tsar's] pedantic, parade ground training and unreasoning fulfillment of orders.<sup>31</sup>

Paskevich's victories were hollow at best, for they were against poorly led, ill-equipped, and outnumbered troops. The entire experience blinded at least the tsar himself, if not the entire regime.

While Nicholas dampened officers' interest in political affairs, he almost unconsciously contributed to the rise of their study, reflection, and speculation on military affairs. In October 1829, he appointed Baron Henri Jomini to chair a commission of generals to discuss the problems of military education. Jomini wanted broad theoretical training, but the generals, reflecting their own autocrat's view toward scholarship and the fear of liberalism and revolution, advocated formation drill and parade-ground routines. They rejected all of Jomini's views except a recommendation for formation of the Nicholas

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<sup>31</sup>Curtiss, p. 95.

Military Academy. The old ways continued and Russia fell farther behind. Yet, within the academy designed to perfect the Nicholian system, there emerged "a class of influential military intellectuals--scholars, commanders, and leaders--who addressed themselves to the study of military history."<sup>32</sup>

Nicholas V. Medem (1790-1870) was the most prominent military thinker in the early years of the Nicholas Military Academy. In keeping with the Nicholian tradition, the academy stressed tactics. It fell to Medem to be the spokesman for the Nicholian way of war, and he recalled ideals Peter and Suvorov had personified, ideals with which the Russian military machine had become successful. Medem, who advocated a large standing army, emphasized human qualities in addition to leadership and tactics that relied on movement to bring a superior force to bear on an enemy and thus defeat him. He "rejected the suggestion that tactics are subject to theoretical generalization."<sup>33</sup> However, Medem was not important for his own immediate contribution, for there were times when he and Nicholas were not in agreement and the generals paid little heed to whatever was said at the academy. Medem's real importance resulted from his survival during the Nicholas era and the manner in which his own students and co-workers subsequently carried on a tradition of military thinking in the second half of the 19th century.

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<sup>32</sup>Curtiss, pp. 104-106; and Wahlde, p. vii (the quotation).

<sup>33</sup>Wahlde, pp. 56-58; and Peter von Wahlde, "A Pioneer of Russian Strategic Thought: G. A. Leer, 1829-1904," Military Affairs 35, No. 4 (December 1971:149 (the quotation)).

Martinet soldiering did not deprive the soldier of his natural ability. Yet the Crimean War (1854-1856) brought on a deep question of the spirit of the army and a rejection of its hallowed tradition by reform-minded officers. Russian commanders reached a level of ineffectiveness and incompetence and soldiers and officers no longer considered themselves capable of matching their opponents. In short, the war exposed the scandalous shortcomings throughout the military organization. The causes of this military failure--the "chaotic condition of the military supply system, the obsolescence of the Russian weapons, the shortage of ammunition, the timidity of military leaders, and overall abuses at all levels of administration"<sup>34</sup>--were directly attributable to Nicholas, who died before the tragic consequences of the Crimean War were realized.

The Russian Army's reputation crumbled in the Crimea. Not only was Russia's international reputation at stake, but clearly the entire Russian military and economic system were not capable of meeting the demands of modern warfare. Heavy casualties had forced the army to depend on raw recruits who were incapable and unprepared for the rigors of heavy warfare. A severe shortage of officers had left the army poorly and inadequately led. The technological developments of modern warfare such as improved ordinance and weaponry lagged critically behind

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<sup>34</sup> Sergei Pushkarev, The Emergence of Modern Russia, 1801-1917, trans. by Robert H. McNeal and Tova Yedlin (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1963), pp. 121 & 155.

the rest of the world and henceforth Russia seemed never to reach a level of technological parity with her opponents. The cost in time and money to educate and train officers and to refurbish vital war industries to halt the spread of war was almost beyond the short range capacity of the Russian economy. Nicholas never had to face this grave situation, but for Alexander II there was no choice other than to sue for peace.<sup>35</sup>

### Reform Era

The crisis, defeat in the Crimea, coupled with change in leadership, Nicholas I to Alexander II, accentuated the need for a new direction not only within the overall order of the Russian state but also in the Russian way of war. The need for a modern mass army and professional military system was greater than ever before. Tsar Alexander II and his deputies perceived clearly that the major obstacle to modernization was serfdom and understood that the generally incoherent military system had significantly retarded the army's professional development. Yet there remained a conservative fear that "army democratization, loss of noble rights to serve as officers and other privileges"<sup>36</sup> would preclude any significant improvement in the unique Russian way of war and would affect both the army and society unfavorably.

What was required in Russia was a major realignment of the

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<sup>35</sup>Rieber, pp. 17-21.

<sup>36</sup>Wahlde, "Military Thought in Imperial Russia," p. 85.

social order. Mass conscript armies were the order of the day, but in Russia the institution of serfdom precluded mobilization. To change that social order required an unusual style of leadership from the autocrat. In 1861, the serfs were liberated and the way became clear for numerous reforms throughout Russian society.<sup>37</sup> Included, of course, was the military, whose deplorable performance five years earlier brought to attention the state of Russian arms.

Too inflexible to meet the demands of modern warfare, the Russian Army simply had nearly broken the Russian state financially. Other nations had relied on small standing armies to hold down the cost. Russia's traditional view of a large army had straitjacketed its economy and military capability, but the institution of serfdom had remained firmly entrenched as the major obstacle to economic and military recovery. Alexander depended on the image of the Russian Army to restore some prestige in the world, but the existing outdated military system would not be able to do that as long as it remained serf-dependent. Dimitrii Alexander Miliutin, while Chief of Staff of the Caucasian Army, analyzed the two weaknesses of the Russian military system as being an absence of a territorial organization and a large expensive peacetime army because of a poorly trained reserve.

The latter weakness clearly was a product of the institution of serfdom. In the past Russian recruitment had been on a per capita basis

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<sup>37</sup>W. E. Mosse, Alexander II and the Modernization of Russia, rev. ed. (New York: Collier Books, 1962), p. 71.

for a term of service of 25 years. It had forced the army into a situation where it could not build a strategic reserve. Except for the requirements to support one huge mass army, there was no other impact on the economy by virtue of the loss of the recruit for a long period of service. In addition, after this period of service ended, the serf-soldier earned his freedom when he mattered little to the economy. To the military, the problem of reserve forces was paramount. On the other hand, the idea of reducing the term of service and releasing untrained but "free" serfs on the society presented a dilemma to the tsar of maintaining public order and providing jobs for an unskilled labor force. In retrospect, one sees that the military colonies avoided this problem but never satisfied the necessity of having a strategic reserve. It is no surprise that Miliutin and, later, Alexander II concluded that "Russia could not create a trained reserve which was the backbone on a modern European army [and was to be the backbone of the new Russian Army] without abolishing serfdom."<sup>38</sup>

Alexander directed the reorganization of all aspects of the military establishment--recruiting to the powers of the Minister of War. This meant he had to overcome the resistance of the nobles and traditionalists, whose past record of support to the state and leadership in war had insured success. He called on Miliutin, among others, to lead the reform movement. While Alexander II would have appreciated great

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<sup>38</sup>Rieber, pp. 24-29.

cooperation from the noble-officer class, their objections would not deter him from achieving a stable government--one defined primarily in these military terms: "maintain domestic order, obtain unquestioning obedience; secure the frontiers; and earn glory for the state."<sup>39</sup> The tsar knew he could not achieve this without a military power that was comparable to those in the west. Thus Alexander II freed the serfs in 1861 to create, with the able assistance of Miliutin, a modern army and hopefully divert another disaster such as the Crimea.

After leading the military reform movement in support of the abolition of serfdom, Miliutin (1861-1881) was appointed Minister of War in 1861. He held the post for the next 20 years. No other figure in Russian military history in the 19th century had as great an impact on the army's military organization. Although historians have considered his appointment a high mark in the modernization of the Russian military system, the conditions of his departure were typical of the Russian experience and marked a low point for reform and a precursor of the tragedy yet to befall the imperial system.

Miliutin's career began long before the Crimean tragedy and his appointment as Minister of War. As a young officer, he had become disgruntled over the pedantic formalism of the army, with its saber and parade-ground drills and mundane housekeeping chores. He had written articles that attacked the sterile nature of contemporary military

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<sup>39</sup>Rieber, p. 96.

training and education. In 1845 he was appointed professor at the Nicholas Military Academy, where he developed an interest in military history and worked under leading military thinkers such as Medem. While at the academy, Miliutin concluded "that increasing complexities of warfare and of maintaining armed forces made mandatory improved methods for preparing, conducting, and sustaining war."<sup>40</sup> He called for unprejudiced knowledge in the study of the military record. Further, as a result of delving into the glorious Russian past, he wrote critical studies on Suvorov. In addition to establishing standards for historical writing, Miliutin confirmed the long-standing duality of the Russian military art: the material and the spiritual traditions.<sup>41</sup>

More significant than Miliutin's own accomplishments in the realm of military history was the relative importance of the personal contacts he made while at the academy. When he became Minister of War in 1861, his associates, "overwhelmingly composed of bureaucrats and officers from the general staff"<sup>42</sup> and intellectuals, became known as the Miliutin group. His own brother, Nicholas, and leading military theoreticians such as Generals Michael I. Dragomirov and George A. Leer were in the group and represented the heart of the reform movement.

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<sup>40</sup>Wahlde, "Military Thought in Imperial Russia," p. 69.

<sup>41</sup>Forrest A. Miller, Dimitrii Miliutin and the Reform Era in Russia (Charlotte, N. C.: Vanderbilt University Press, 1968), p. 11; Mosse, p. 84; and Wahlde, "Military Thought in Imperial Russia," pp. 69-70.

<sup>42</sup>Miller, p. 170.

Miliutin's reforms proceeded in two directions: military modernization and increasing the role of the Minister of War in foreign policy. This study is concerned with the first. With the problem of serfdom at least minimized, he began by reorienting the functions of the office of Minister of War in the direction of general supervision and policy formulation. This move reflected in part Miliutin's experience as Chief of Staff in the Army of the Caucasus in 1856-1859. His career alternated between assignments in the Caucasus and other high-level staff and faculty assignments at the academy, but the Caucasus played a large role in shaping his ideas of the military situation--particularly his disappointment with the direction from St. Petersburg--and was also instrumental in bringing his talents to the notice of his superiors. Miliutin noted that the officers on the frontier were not inclined to develop their minds. He and his commander tried to settle the unrest in the region once and for all, but they were hampered by uninformed and sluggish direction from St. Petersburg. Poor centralized planning nearly brought about another military disaster. Miliutin and his commander penned to the emperor specific reform proposals that became the model for changes in the army. These proposals likewise influenced Miliutin's selection as Minister of War. Three principles came out of this experience. They were the need for a rationalized chain of command, greater initiative at the local commander's level, and combat training for all units.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>43</sup>Miller, pp. 22-25 & 47; Rieber, pp. 64-67; and Wahlde,

Miliutin "created a system of military districts whose commanders were invested with full control of their districts."<sup>44</sup> The district chiefs became involved in every facet of the military life--a greatly expanded disciplinary authority, training, and mobilization of units located in their districts. The districts conducted their operations according to broad uniform policy that was developed by a technically competent general staff which worked under Miliutin's direct supervision. In adopting this system, Miliutin eliminated the corps in peacetime. That was another effort to streamline the army and give it greater elasticity. The corps were not at full complement in peace and, in actuality, they relied on the divisions to do most of their work. Their utility, in Miliutin's view, simply did not justify their existence. More often than not this extra command layer had been the cause of logistical failure and wartime misdirection. Under the new system divisions had a practical relationship with military districts.<sup>45</sup>

The initial changes in policy were designed to improve first the lot of the soldier and second the quality of the officer corps. Miliutin "began by reducing the term of military service from twenty-five to sixteen years and by abolishing the more cruel forms of corporal

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"Military Thought in Imperial Russia," pp. 80-81.

<sup>44</sup>Edward C. Thaden, Russia Since 1801: The Making of a New Society (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1971), p. 190.

<sup>45</sup>Miller, pp. 34-35 & 41-42; and Pushkarev, p. 156

punishment." While the district commanders were encouraged to be more humane in their administration of justice, Miliutin took no chances. He recommended the creation of an independent military court system and urged the civil leadership not to use the military service as a form of punishment.<sup>46</sup>

For the officer, training and education needed significant overhaul. Essentially, the old cadet-type schools--a source of education for society in general, but where the prerequisite for entry was social standing--were transformed into rigid military schools, and only boys qualified for military service were allowed to attend. The second level or higher grade "junker schools" became a type of higher officer candidate school where graduates of the restructured cadet schools or "gymnasiums" could attend. The new schools were strictly military in course content and discipline, and graduates were commissioned as army officers.<sup>47</sup> Both programs reflected Miliutin's concern for the soldier and interest in securing the best in talent and ability for the army.

Miliutin's greatest reforms were measures to provide for a mass reserve army. He recognized the limitation Russia's enormous size and economic backwardness imposed on the military and also the pressing reality of Russia's security. Manpower being Russia's most valuable commodity, Miliutin recognized the obvious impact on the Russian

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<sup>46</sup>Miller, pp. 73-74; and Mosse, pp. 84-85 (the quotation).

<sup>47</sup>Miller, pp. 102-103 & 123; Mosse, p. 85; and Pushkarev, pp. 156-57.

economy. Therefore he introduced all-class universal military service. General uncertainty regarding the size of the new all-class army frightened hardened conservatives and advocates of noble privilege and brought objections from them. Miliutin argued accurately that the army, as large as it appeared in peacetime, was not large enough to satisfy wartime demands. He saw the answer in drafting soldiers, training them for a short time, sending them back to their livelihood, and assigning them to reserve units as was the practice in most European armies. He wanted only a skeleton force of cadre personnel for training, only one active tactical element, and only one reserve tactical element. "The active forces would be deployed only in the frontier districts" and would maintain the military structure for expansion in war. The reserve forces would have a large variety of functions, among which were training recruits and providing for internal security.<sup>48</sup>

The implementation of Miliutin's reforms spanned several years and cost much money and time. How successful they ultimately were is another question. They may not have been revolutionary innovations when compared with other military systems, but for the Russians they required a major shift in traditional ideology and conception of the military art. Evidence of change is probably best measured in two areas: military thought and the ultimate test of any military war. Because his efforts affected the Russian Army so basically, they prompted a sharp

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<sup>48</sup>Miller, pp. 33 (the quotation) & 185; and Pushkarev, p. 157.

objection from the traditional side. Conservative hostility meant failure for reform in the long run, as was Miliutin's experience. Like all reform movements, the reformers needed time to purge the system of outdated practices and time to enforce success. Russia did not have either ingredient.

Along with Miliutin, two other generals virtually ruled the Russian Army and Russian military thought during the last half of the 19th century. The first was General Dragomirov who, although closely associated with Miliutin, was somewhat of an antiquarian in his own military concept. His rise to prominence closely paralleled Miliutin's own career. Dragomirov became a professor of tactics at the staff academy in 1860, the same year Miliutin was selected for the post of Minister of War. Dragomirov generally underestimated the importance of new weapons technology and its effect on the battlefield. He rejected almost every technical advance in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. He believed "the method of warmaking" was "determined not by equipment, but by the spiritual forces of the nature of man." Thus originated his label as the leader of the Back-to-Suvorov movement. Dragomirov had a long-term influence on the officers he led, especially after his success as a division commander in the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-78. His views came to dominate tactical principles for more than three decades. His own book on tactics served as a code of training and dealt with peacetime training, combat and outpost qualities of troops, and determination of local influence of the terrain on the troops.

"Dragomirov represented the values of the old 18th century and pre-reform era."<sup>49</sup>

General Leer, on the other hand, reflected the modern spirit of Miliutin and as such became the theoretical spokesman of the reformists. While acknowledging the importance of great captains as a moving force in history, he insisted that the approach to the study of war must be on scientific grounds. Leer was convinced there existed a science of the military art that provided a means of codifying principles for conducting battle and waging war. He eventually developed 12 principles of warfare that, in his own mind, provided a starting point for conducting war. He also made a significant contribution to strategic thought of the period, concluding that "while strategy is the highest form of warfare, no single strategy can claim finality."<sup>50</sup> Leer epitomized the struggle within the military. Although he agreed in principle with Miliutin, he was still unable to convince his peers of the applicability of his doctrine. Perhaps their rejection of him, in contrast to the acceptance of Dragomirov, indicates the state of military mind in Russia in the last years of the 19th century. In any case, competition between the advocates of the two views delimited progress toward increased

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<sup>49</sup>Goldstein, p. 21; Savkin, p. 33 (the first set of quotations); and Wahlde, "Military Thought in Imperial Russia," p. 117 (the last quotation).

<sup>50</sup>Savkin, pp. 30-32; Wahlde, "A Pioneer of Russian Strategic Thought," p. 150 (the quotation); and Wahlde, "Military Thought in Imperial Russia," p. 97.

professionalization of the military.

Miliutin and the whole reform movement did not avoid criticism from the old reliable camps. Typical of the traditional animosity toward reform was that demonstrated by General M. G. Cherniaev, a frontier general who commanded "small forces in brief, audacious campaigns" and who harbored a vicious jealousy for any who proposed change, especially Miliutin. Cherniaev and men like him argued that universal conscription would undermine the influence of the gentry and that liberalism and all its trappings of less harsh disciplinary measures and increased education of soldier and officer were not compatible. They agreed "that the army, instead of being a civilianized force, must be able to defeat Russia's enemies and be the reliable instrument of its commander. Morale and leadership, not education, produced victory." Unlike many of his conservative fellow officers, Cherniaev left the service and became a symbol to both factions in the struggle. The conservative's view was that the military establishment had persecuted him; the liberal's view was that he was a reactionary and had created internal disorder and weakened the Russian ship of state.<sup>51</sup> There were probably more of his type than any other in the service.

In the last four years of Miliutin's reign as Minister of War, Russia became involved in war with Turkey, a war Russia did not want and

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<sup>51</sup>David Mackenzie, The Lion of Tashkent: The Career of General M. G. Cherniaev (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1974), p. xviii, p. 105 (the second quotation--"that the army . . . produced victory), and pp. 241-42 (the first quotation).

one for which Miliutin knew she was not prepared. There had not been sufficient time to work out arrangements for mobilizing the army. Because of conservative prejudice against innovation, the army was suspended between old and new practices. This condition, coupled with lagging technological change such as refurbishing Russia's rail net, created conditions in which the plans Miliutin's new staff devised could not be carried out successfully. Miliutin's officer training program had not yet eliminated unqualified aristocrats who, at the outbreak of the war, were commanding regiments and using that command for personal gain. The district system had not refined its staff procedures and consequently the soldiers once again received no supplies and suffered inexcusably. The suffering Russian soldier remained a long-standing tradition.

The battles in the Balkan convinced everyone that tactical training had not kept pace with the changing total nature of warfare. The question raised at the time was who was to blame. Historians have subsequently agreed with Miliutin that there had not been enough time and that as a consequence the old "spit and polish" mentality was still around. Military schooling had improved, but one sharp deficiency was that it had failed to teach flexibility and improvisation. Miliutin's warning before the war had come true. The effects of losses in the Balkan were to be felt for the next three decades. The war drained Russia financially and left her stunned. Miliutin was in the midst of efforts to correct the mistakes evidenced in the war, but he left office

when the new tsar, Alexander III, came to the throne. In the end the army still could not mobilize or be relied on to fight a major war.<sup>52</sup> For more than 20 years Alexander II and Nicholas II resisted any further attempts at reform.

### Japan and the End

The next two decades were uneventful by comparison. Traditional conservatives, capitalizing on the dilemma of crisis, appeared to have won an overwhelming victory. Russia needed reform but her statesmen could not or would not forge change. In the absence of great captains, the military implicitly blamed its failures on a system which gradually undercut the importance of the autocrat. Dragomirov and his dogmatic doctrine of tactics and the spirit of the soldier caused a major rift between the officer corps and the intelligentsia. There was some industrial progress under the direction of the Minister of Finance, Count Sergei Witte, but the army returned to the tired practices of the distant past. Battalion and regimental commanders who failed in the Turkish War became generals in divisions and districts, and staffs became quagmires of bureaucratic inertia. In short, the military became more alienated from society and the government even more so.

The reign of Nicholas II brought with it a war that once again found the army ill-prepared and a nation that generally did not understand or support the war. The Japanese War brought home to the army the

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<sup>52</sup>A. L. Smith, "The Russian Army in the Balkans, 1877-1878," New Review 11, Nos. 2-4 (Special; December 1971):151-61.

realization that it needed to train command personnel. Prior to this conflict officers progressed by demonstrating more social skill than professional skill. "Generally the only criteria [sic] for appraisal of an officer was the way his soldiers behaved on maneuvers, and even then mistakes were easily forgiven."<sup>53</sup> Soldiers, the target of socialistic and radical agitation at the turn of the century, entered the war poorly led and poorly equipped. Yet, surprisingly, both the world and the tsar thought Russian armies would easily defeat the Japanese.

The Russian defeats were unnecessary and could have been avoided had commanders obeyed orders and withdrawn. The officers were convinced the "Russian troops in Manchuria would have been victorious if only the war had been continued." The army's abandonment of Miliutin's professional command structure resulted in failure in planning and execution. The morale of the army and the nation as a whole was affected. Procrastination by high level commanders, indifference to public opinion, and generally poor leadership and performance by junior officers characterized the entire war. The mechanistic spirit and the general mistrust of strong initiative that were characteristic of the era of Nicholas I still prevailed and the outcome, as in the Crimea, was disastrous in Manchuria.<sup>54</sup>

The Russian Army had failed the first large scale test of its

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<sup>53</sup>Denikin, p. 178.

<sup>54</sup>Denikin, p. 170; Garder, p. 10; Kuropatkin, II:67 (the quotation); and Wahlde, "A Pioneer of Russian Strategic Thought," p. 93.

mass army, and the War Ministry was compelled to begin a massive reform program in the army in 1906. This became particularly difficult since the autocrats defended the military and thus made it the target for social activists. "At the end of 1905 and the beginning of 1906, a series of military mutinies broke out."<sup>55</sup> In response, orders directed the establishment of educational programs to broaden the knowledge of the soldier and exercises to prepare corps and armies, particularly their commanders, for mass warfare. This practice, coupled with the stigma of failure in the Russo-Japanese War, prompted a mass exodus of officers--primarily traditionalists who, despite failure of their own techniques, had no faith in the new.

What emerged was once again a repeat of bygone years--a false assessment of the technical and tactical skill of the army, a new breed of soldier and officer, an old warhorse to command a large military institution that was more divorced than ever from the political realities of Russian life. Only this time, instead of siding with the deposed autocrat, the army stood immobile while disintegration and confusion neutralized its effectiveness.

#### Summary

In summary, the 19th century was a turbulent period for the Russian state and its military arm. Following the victories over the French, two fundamental events changed the military's image of itself.

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<sup>55</sup>Denikin, p. 170.

First was the introduction of liberal tendencies into the army by virtue of its exposure to the politics of Western Europe. Second was the rise of military theoreticians who began to examine critically the Russian past and to affect military training and education. The former conflicted with the autocrat's personal image as a military figure and how the tsar viewed the army. The last tendency manifested itself in the reforms executed under Minister of War General Dimitrii A. Miliutin. Defeat in the Balkans in 1878 and the social unrest in the last years of the reign of Alexander II drove the Russian traditionalists away from professionalization toward antiquated practices in defense of the old social order. The performances in Manchuria in 1904-1905 and the years up to 1914 left the army poorly led and falsely optimistic.

## CHAPTER IV

### RUSSIAN ARMY IN PERSPECTIVE, 1701-1917

So far the discussion has covered major personalities in the Russian military experience, their influence, and their place in the struggle between tradition and reform to mold the Russian Army. The remaining discussion examines the army's record from 1701 to 1917 and its peculiar relations to the development of the Russian state and the autocracy.

Geographical size and the multinational composition of the empire imposed unusual requirements on the Russian Army. Two of its three recurring roles were explicit while the other was inherent in the nature of the society. Most obviously the mission of the Russian Army, like all other armies, was to provide for the defense of the country from an external aggressor. The army could rightfully claim its greatest laurels as defender of the Russian state, especially during the expulsion of the French armies. In the process of defending the state, the army became the primary symbol of Russia as a great power.<sup>1</sup>

Peter I began another traditional army role: that of expanding

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<sup>1</sup>E. R. Goldstein, "Military Aspects of Russian Industrialization: The Defense Industries, 1890-1917" (Ph.D. dissertation, Case Western Reserve University, 1971), p. 265.

the empire, with its corresponding requirement for security of the vast frontier it forged. General A. N. Kuropatkin suggests that the Russian frontier was fixed with the end of the Turkish War in 1878. Consistent with the requirement for frontier security was the requirement to guard the polity against internal disruption. Among the diversity of Russian people only the army, however corrupt, could keep the peace.<sup>2</sup>

As important as these explicit missions, the army represented the means of effecting social changes upon the Russian society. Scientific, technical, intellectual, and humanitarian advancements were often undertaken in the name of defense or were at least promoted by the military.<sup>3</sup> The complex nature of the historical requirements placed on the army predicated confusion when performing these various roles. It seems the tasks were so broad the army organization was never quite able to coordinate combat and non-combat roles.

General Kuropatkin, in his apologetic book on the Russo-Japanese War, said of the army's 200-year record:

Within the same period [1692-1900] peace reigned in Russia for 71 2/3 years. During the remaining 128 1/2 years there were thirty-three foreign and two internal wars, which can be classified, according to the political objects for which they were fought, in the following order:

1. For the expansion of the Empire--twenty-two wars, lasting

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<sup>2</sup>Goldstein, p. 265; and A. N. Kuropatkin, The Russian Army and the Japanese War, 2 vols. (London: John Murray, 1902), II:1 & 57.

<sup>3</sup>Peter H. C. von Wahlde, "Military Thought in Imperial Russia" (Ph.D. dissertation, Indiana University, 1966), p. vii. (Ann Arbor, Mich., University Microfilms.)

about 101 years.

2. In defense of the Empire--four wars, lasting 4 1/4 years.
3. In the interests of the general European politics--seven wars and two campaigns, taking 10 years.
4. Civil wars--two wars, lasting 65 years.
5. For the suppression of revolts--6 years of military operations.<sup>4</sup>

Exclusive of the loss of life resulting from causes common to peace and war, the army's casualty rate doubled from the beginning of the Imperial Age to the end of the regime of Tsar Nicholas II. Early on, Kuropatkin asserts, the army was quite capable, in spite of lack of training, of meeting other armies on equal terms. However, the lagging development of technological means of waging war brought inevitable destruction. The quality of officers failed to improve over the years. General officers represented the weakest link in the officer corps. The decline in quality of their training was at least in part the result of a struggle between the two competing philosophies within the officer corps. Often the tsars sided with the traditional concepts of the army, but when they did object outwardly to conservative views, they lacked a sufficient understanding of military affairs or will to change outdated practices. Finally, the War Ministry failed to adjust to the complex nature of modern war and failed to manage the resources for the divergent missions.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>Kuropatkin, II:37.

<sup>5</sup>Kuropatkin, II:96-103.

Each war offered to the Russian Army lessons that warranted assessment and change in the army and its command structure. Prior to the Crimean War, Russia enjoyed relative success, but the army failed to understand the victories for what they were and gave itself more credit than it justly deserved. Most striking was the failure of the Russian military to ask why the strong spirit of the Russian soldier carried battles in spite of the lack of effective leadership or to reorganize the limits of that spirit in the face of technologically superior opponents. Part of the dilemma was the continuing reliance on an indispensable military figure. This quest for a "great captain" had the effect of robbing the army of any introspective ability. After the Crimean War, the Ministry of War overlooked the importance of thoroughly trained commanders, technological advancement, and improved organization. The sources of innovation planted by Miliutin needed nurturing, but in its social crisis in the late 1870s and early 1880s the army recoiled into its once glorious but now tarnished past.

The Russian Army brought the consequences of backwardness on itself. Considerable evidence shows widespread corruption in the army, particularly up to the Crimean War.<sup>6</sup> Even the excuse that officers were poverty-stricken, as some historians argue, did not justify their stealing at the expense of the soldier. At least 80 per cent of the soldiers were peasants, and a small improvement in their lifestyle would have won

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<sup>6</sup>John Shelton Curtiss, The Russian Army Under Nicholas I, 1825-1855 (Durham, N. C.: Duke University Press, 1965), p. 231.

a high degree of loyalty--something Suvorov probably understood better than his heirs. Yet, in spite of the corruption, the army presented very viable means of social improvement.

Arakcheev designed the military colonies to reduce the army's economic burden on the state in the post-Napoleonic era while improving the lot of the soldier.<sup>7</sup> The Russian Army, confident of requirements of modern warfare, clearly contributed to the agitation in society by calling for the abolition of serfdom. In education it also played a progressive role in promoting mass literacy among its recruits.<sup>8</sup> The problem of increased military technology promoted improvement in Russian industry, but even there the tendency was for the "generals to view the problems in [strictly] military terms"<sup>9</sup> and thereby impede progress to a great degree. The army as an instrument of tsarist policy became the principal means of aiding Russia in ridding herself of a great weakness --the failure to develop human resources.

While some in the government viewed the army as an institution of security and social improvement, the army nonetheless came to represent an agent of repressive government to other parts of society. Each

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<sup>7</sup>Allan Douglas Ferguson, "The Russian Military Settlements, 1810-1866" (Ph.D. dissertation, Yale University, 1954), p. 254. (Ann Arbor, Mich., University Microfilms.)

<sup>8</sup>Forrestt A. Miller, Dimitrii Miliutin and the Reform Era in Russia (Charlotte, N. C.: Vanderbilt University Press, 1968), p. 90.

<sup>9</sup>Daniel W. Graf, "The Reign of the Generals: Military Government in Western Russia, 1914-1915" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Nebraska, 1972), p. 65. (Ann Arbor, Mich., University Microfilms.)

ruler in pre-reform Russia used the army to achieve "greater rationality in the functioning of the administrative machinery"<sup>10</sup> of the central government. The military enjoyed broad and definite responsibilities in the civil administration and was seen as a tool for professionalizing the government bureaucracy, especially under Paul I and Nicholas I. This dependence on the rationality of the military often backfired to the detriment of both the government and the military. Officers, attempting to avoid harsh military duty in the provinces, secured civilian assignments in the central government. The process of discarding necessary skills to flounder in the milieu of government caused many to view the military as servile, formal, brutal, shortsighted, and stupid. These explicit faults of its civil administration were often unjustly laid at the feet of the military.<sup>11</sup>

Army leaders in the interior and away from the seats of bureaucratic power found it possible to use the army against the people of Russia. They performed, for example, quarantine services against disease and guard duties in towns, collected taxes, and suppressed any public expression of discontent by workers or peasants in the harshest manner.<sup>12</sup> Throughout the 19th century and the early 20th century the army's domestic authority gradually expanded. In the frontier area and in the theater of operations, commanders governed travel and trade,

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<sup>10</sup>John L. H. Keep, "Paul I and the Militarization of Government," Canadian-American Slavic Studies 7, No. 1 (Spring 1973):3.

<sup>11</sup>Keep, pp. 3 & 13.

<sup>12</sup>Curtiss, p. 273.

industry and labor, prices, censorship, transportation, and punishment. The most critical aspects of life were under supervision, if not direct control, of the army. It is no wonder that the army eventually became the target of revolutionaries and the symbol of an empire in decay.

A discussion of the Imperial Army cannot end without a comment about a unique aspect of its role and relationship with the tsars. The role of the head of state in leading his army in battle and using military men as key advisors, as described above, may, with slight modification, fit other armies. However, in no other state has the head of government been so influential in purely military matters over such an extended period of time.

When Peter I raised his own regular troops, he transformed his kingdom into a military state<sup>13</sup> and forged a powerful nation with the sword. His role as a military tsar was a heritage later Romanovs felt compelled to follow but were incapable of fulfilling. Without exception, the major figures in the Romanov dynasty had regiments of soldiers as toys for their amusement and foreign officers to advise them in their youth. Through these experiences they came to depend on the structured and well-ordered lifestyle of the military. Peter I made this early orientation pay off; on the other hand, Paul I immersed the government into military processes almost as if he was commanding his own

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<sup>13</sup>Eugene Tarle, Napoleon's Invasion of Russia, 1812 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1942), p. 80.

regiment.<sup>14</sup>

The obsession of Alexander I to be a great military captain confused his generals and nearly caused Russia's defeat at the hands of the French in the first decade of the 19th century. Only the military advisors whom Alexander had faith in--advisors who recognized that Alexander, like all the other Romanovs, did not understand war--could play to his vanity and convince him to stay away from the war.<sup>15</sup> Nicholas, like those before him, not only "thought of himself as a military man" but he looked the part.<sup>16</sup> The Crimean War proved to be the undoing of the Romanovs as military men.

While Nicholas I played to the sympathies and fears of the "old" army following the Decembrist revolt in 1825, Alexander II, despite more obvious lessons from the Crimean War in 1856, could not rectify the struggle between change and tradition. Perhaps the pedantic formal orientation of the Romanovs had failed to keep pace with the changing world about them. Alexander II was no different from his predecessors. He was secure in the heritage but insecure of the future, and in crisis he was incapable of resolving the difference. The reforms he and Dimitrii A. Miliutin attempted only opened the way to more confusion in the inflexible military mind of the subsequent rulers. Defeats in Turkey, Japan, and Eastern Europe left the Russian rulers and people more

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<sup>14</sup>Michael Jenkins, Arakcheev, Grand Vizer of the Russian Empire (London: Faber and Faber, 1969), p. 59.

<sup>15</sup>Tarle, pp. 71-78 & 254.

<sup>16</sup>Curtiss, p. 46.

vulnerable and the state's inherent weaknesses more exposed. There were no Miliutins in the first hundred years and no Suvorovs in the second hundred years, and no ruler possessed the capacity to bridge the gap.

### Conclusion

The beginning of this report refers to Professor S. E. Finer's description of the ingredients of a viable military organization. The subsequent discussion spanned a long continuum of military history by evaluating personalities and the problem of tradition and progress. This conclusion responds to questions that Professor Finer raised implicitly.

Had the Russian military achieved a degree of progressive modernization? No. In the long run the Russian armies did not establish a cohesive nature. Rather, as time wore on, the Russian military became embroiled in internal disputes and disintegration and was weaker than when it emerged under Peter I. Peter, with good reason, built a Russian state totally immersed in a military framework, but successive rulers could not break the government's reliance on military support in its daily administration of the empire and thus failed to provide a cohesive and indigenous consciousness in the military itself. Times of great achievement and unified effort under specially gifted leaders, such as Suvorov, were followed by eras of decay. The great figures of the 18th century more often than not acted independently of the military superstructure. In the 19th century, the administrative structure strangled any initiative or independence.

When the Decembrist and liberal movements merged with the military, the government felt threatened and rejected them as a more modern cohesive spirit. Organizationally, the nucleus of a functional hierarchy existed after 1701 but was generally undermined throughout history by political favors and special access to rulers and high-ranking commanders. While the threefold purpose of the army changed little after the reign of Peter I, the nature of these missions underwent significant modification--particularly as the nature of the external and internal threats worked technologically and demographically.

There is little doubt the Russian Army possessed the prerequisites of a superior military organization, but social privilege and abuse within and without destroyed its ideological basis. The records of men such as Peter I, Suvorov, and Michael I. Kutuzov as great captains presented a sense of false security and hope that within the Russian character were other great men to lead an invincible Russian Army. In the early years the arms belonged not to the army but to those who provided the men to man the army, and by the Age of Reform Russian arms were so antiquated that efforts to close the gap with the west appeared almost futile. Its peasant cadre, likewise, hardly seemed equal to the task of overcoming a fallible organization, an artificial spirit, and an insecure base of technology and innovation.

At the outset this study recognized that the features of a modern army are centralized command, hierarchy, discipline, intercommunications, and esprit de corps. Further, it also acknowledged that the

development and establishment of a meaningful tradition requires years. In the Russian experience the tsar's right to command was never questioned, but his judgment and capacity to understand military affairs were. Those in the high command failed to examine themselves and to avail themselves of time to train and perfect their own technical competence. They elected to rely on the indomitable spirit of the Russian soldier. Harsh discipline, coupled with the nature of war, had a corrosive effect on the army in the long run. Esprit de corps was more the product of self-image of small exceptional units and leaders than of a corporate will of the army as a whole. In summary, the Russian Army possessed all of these characteristics in varying degrees, but not to the extent to be relied on for reinforcing success or recovering from defeat.

The cause of corporate deficiency in the Russian Army was twofold. First, as has been mentioned several times, the Russian military always seemed to be either unready or short of time. Tragically, Suvorov's philosophy of speed on the battlefield could not inspire a sense of urgency in the army as a whole toward refining and perfecting the military institution. Second, the Russian military seemed never able to recover from setbacks but, rather, searched the past for something that succeeded then.

Russia was intoxicated with success after the Napoleonic experience. From that point on those who should have been concerned almost never acknowledged military defeat. Those whose voices were the loudest

returned to the principles and practices that had won Russia her "Golden Age." The net effect was an aversion to self-examination that retarded any attempt to understand events in their current light. As we have seen, the most striking examples of this historical tendency are those of Arakcheev and Miliutin. Although essentially opposite in philosophy as to the means and purpose of change and reform, both men were essentially the target of the same rigid traditional view. This unconsciousness toward reality prevailed to the bitter end, when officers were mentally and politically unprepared for the chaos of the revolution.

## APPENDIX A

### BIBLIOGRAPHICAL ESSAY: ENGLISH LANGUAGE SOURCES ON THE IMPERIAL RUSSIAN ARMY, 1689-1917

The history of the Imperial Russian Army constitutes "the classical heritage" of the Soviet Army<sup>1</sup> and thus deserves the attention of students of the Soviet military. Contrary to lay conceptions, certain practices of the Soviet Army today did, in fact, originate during the imperial era. It follows that a knowledge of the 18th and 19th century period and origins of this imperial heritage provide a deeper understanding of Soviet military institutions than a study of the Soviet era conducted in isolation. However, for the history student or the military officer interested in the Russian military heritage, several hurdles exist. First and most obvious are language barrier and relative paucity of primary sources in English. Second, the relatively few available scholarly studies are in journals that are not readily accessible or are known only to the experts. There is a signal lack of bibliographies on the Russian and Soviet military. Thus locating and acquiring useful and satisfactory works become a continuing problem. Last and equally important is creating a workable methodological

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<sup>1</sup>Michel Garder, The History of the Soviet Army (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1966), p. 27.

approach to the study of the Imperial Army. Because of these reasons, serious students of military history overlook studying the fascinating development of the Russian imperial military heritage.

This appendix presents a summary of some English language works that are accessible and may be considered "minimum essential" in conducting additional study on the Russian military experience. Our interest is especially on leadership, education, professionalism, and societal functions of the Imperial Army. This review is not limited to published books and articles. It takes into account cogent unpublished scholarly material.

The campaigns of the Russian Army are beyond the scope of this essay, for the army was at war for almost 130 of the 200 years of tsarist rule. Any good military encyclopedia, such as R. Ernest Dupuy and Trevor N. Dupuy, The Encyclopedia of Military History (New York: Harper and Row, Inc., 1976), can provide a fairly accurate chronology of the wars and campaigns and, in fact, should be an initial step for further study of this aspect.

There seemed to be three acceptable approaches to the problem of organization and presentation of literature on the Imperial Army. The ultimate selection depended on the failure of two of them to provide a larger overview of the 200-year period in question. For example, first considered was the technique of looking at major historical works and/or leading historians, but there are no overall studies of the imperial military such as John Erickson's The Soviet High Command (London:

Macmillan & Co., Ltd., 1962) or Raymond L. Garthoff's Soviet Military Policy: A Historical Analysis (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1966). Several historians with definite interests and expertise in particular aspects of the imperial military are beginning to emerge, but to date they have failed to generate any significant impact or even to expand their own historical coverage to encompass the broad questions.

A second approach was to periodize the review: 1689 to 1796, from the ascendancy of Peter I to the coronation of Paul I; 1796 to 1855, covering the reign of Paul I, the Napoleonic Wars, and Russian defeat in the Crimea; and 1856 to 1917, the Age of Reform and subsequent disintegration and defeat in Japan and World War I.<sup>2</sup> This method would also have included selected autobiographies and reports of military observers. While this treatment generally follows the typical historiographical method of writing history, it, too, did not lend itself to the overriding concern of continuity and change over the long continuum of the imperial reign.

The final choice, the method used in this essay, was a topical approach that addressed broad areas of concern such as the army in war, the roles of the tsars, military thought and its development, military biography, the army in society, and the army and revolution, with some mention of non-scholarly studies such as reports of foreign military observers and autobiographies of Russian personalities. This technique

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<sup>2</sup>Garder, pp. 6-10.

provided a greater degree of flexibility in presentation and in recommending subjects worthy of further study. In any approach there will be some overlapping, for history cannot be compartmentalized cleanly. All events and circumstances implicitly affect the outcome of history. Once again, the purpose at the outset was to accentuate the matters of major concern through the 200 years of the Imperial Russian Army's history.

Research and study of the Imperial Army should begin with two types of works: general surveys of the imperial period and studies of the Soviet military. From the first type one can gain an appreciation of military interactions within the society as a whole. Two recent general survey works are J. N. Westwood's Endurance and Endeavor: Russian History, 1812-1971 (London: Oxford University Press, 1973) and Edward C. Thaden's Russia Since 1801: The Making of a New Society (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1971). An excellent work edited by Sergei Pushkarev, The Emergence of Modern Russia, 1801-1917, translated by Robert H. McNeal and Tova Yedlin (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1963), is a survey by various Russian historians.

Mentioned earlier were the sweeping studies of the Soviet military in which authors usually devote several opening chapters to the imperial tradition. In The History of the Soviet Army (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1966), Michel Garder discusses the origin, growth, evolution, and end of the Imperial Army and the beginning of the Red Army. The same may be said for John Erickson in his study of the Soviet High Command, which concentrates mainly on the tsarist army's final

days. The opening chapters in B. H. Liddell Hart (editor), The Red Army (New York: P. Smith, 1956, delineate a definite link between Soviet military practices and the imperial heritage. The major contributors--German officers and historians and Russian historians--give a broad introduction to the Imperial Army and lay the foundation for more specific study.

The basis for subsequent discussion is the army, which took on a somewhat modern form under Peter I. Richard Hellie, in an article entitled "The Petrine Army: Continuity, Change, and Impact," Canadian-American Slavic Studies 8, No. 2 (Summer 1974):237-53, argues that the Petrine Army took shape on Muscovite antecedents. Other studies on the Petrine Army itself are almost non-existent except as integrated into studies on Peter I himself. There seems to be a large gap in information on the Imperial Army from the time of the death of Peter I to the beginning of the Napoleonic Wars. This may be attributable to either the dominance of great field generals during that period or the emergence of other national issues on the Russian scene.

It should be no surprise that there is a plethora of material on the Napoleonic Wars. For seminal works on the Russian Army, two are highly recommended: Carl von Clausewitz, The Campaign of 1812 in Russia (n.p.: Academic International, 1970) and Eugene Tarle, Napoleon's Invasion of Russia, 1812 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1942). Both provide good first-hand accounts and analysis of the plight of the Russian Army and the merits of the strategy the Russian leadership

implemented. While these works concentrate on the campaign, to gain broader understanding of administrative aspects of the army during the time of Alexander I and the evolution of the military ministerial system one should read D. A. West, "The Russian Military Under Alexander I," New Review 11, Nos. 2-4 (Special; December 1971):45-58.

The best work on the next period of the Russian Army is John Shelton Curtiss, The Russian Army Under Nicholas I, 1825-1855 (Durham, N. C.: Duke University Press, 1965). Curtiss addresses almost every aspect of the military question and is must reading because the army's overconfidence ushered in the Age of Reform. The Crimean War marked the end of an archaic system and heightened the struggle between tradition and progress. The next major war after 25 years of relative peace was the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-78. A good article on the problems encountered when time ran out on reform efforts is A. L. Smith, "The Russian Army in the Balkans, 1877-1878," New Review 11, Nos. 2-4 (Special; December 1971):151-63.

The army did little to improve itself after the Turkish War and was thus unprepared for the Russo-Japanese War. General A. N. Kuropatkin, The Russian Army and the Japanese War, 2 volumes (London: John Murray, 1902), while defending the army leadership, admits to a relative state of unpreparedness and general deficiencies. He maintains to the very end that the army was not defeated, a not surprising opinion from a former Minister of War and field commander in Manchuria.

The greatest amount of material is on the army's performance in

World War I. Lieutenant General Nicholas N. Golovine, The Russian Army in the World War (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1931), discusses at length the composition and professional qualities of the army and problems associated with taking the army of a troubled society into war. A more recent study is Norman Stone, The Eastern Front, 1914-1917 (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1975), and it is the only study usefully addressing the problems the army faced at the front. Arguing that Russia mobilized on outdated plans is Alexander M. Nikolaieff, "The Mobilization of the Russian Army in 1914," Army Quarterly and Defense Journal 86, No. 2 (July 1963):229-35. From a political perspective, the problem of the Russian generals' war authority expanding into the civil sector with disastrous consequences on the Russian society is discussed in Daniel W. Graf, "The Reign of the Generals: Military Government in Western Russia, 1914-1915" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Nebraska, 1972). Of more importance is the enormous lack of coordination between the civil and military sides of the Russian Government.

Since the time of Peter I the Russian Army has comprised different levels of units in terms of officer composition, professional competence, and corresponding stature within the society. The "guard" units were the elites and were considered the foundation of the Russian military. Historian David R. Jones has researched some of these units. His article "The Imperial Russian Life Guards Grenadier Regiment, 1906-1917: The Disintegration of an Elite Unit," Military Affairs 33, No. 2

(October 1969):289-302, discusses the strengths of the officers and dependence of the army on elite units and shows how the high number of combat losses among these officers marked the beginning of the end of the army. There is need for further study on the development and role of elite units in the army and the society in general.

The two major components of any army are the officer corps and the rank and file. Borrowing from his own work on the army of Nicholas I, John S. Curtiss offers a succinct overview of the peasant-soldier in "The Peasant and the Army," pages 108-132 in The Peasant in 19th Century Russia, edited by Wayne S. Vucinich (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1968). Curtiss contends that as a soldier, the peasant went through three periods of socialization and to the end remained essentially dependent on his officers even though he believed they exploited him. The conditions of service promoted a latent hostility within the soldier. Marc Ferro, "The Russian Soldier in 1917: Undisciplined, Patriotic, and Revolutionary," Slavic Review 30, No. 3 (September 1971): 483-512, presents a picture of soldiers torn between preserving the army and rebelling for improvement in the climate of service. The officer held the soldier's allegiance if he would only speak out for the needs of the soldier. When he did not, the soldier revolted.

Three articles on the officer corps are worthy of mention. Oliver Allen Ray, "The Imperial Russian Army Officer," Political Science Quarterly 76, No. 4 (December 1961):576-92, covers the entire imperial period and manages effectively to highlight the major transformations.

David R. Jones, "The Officers and the October Revolution," Soviet Studies 28, No. 2 (April 1976):207-223, investigates the dilemma officers faced during the Petrograd troubles and presents a picture of a totally bewildered group. Peter Kenez, "A Profile of the Prerevolutionary Officer Corps," California Slavic Studies 7 (1973):121-58, provides some statistical insight into the changing composition of the officer corps in the years between defeat at the hands of the Japanese and the outbreak of World War I. However, information on the soldier and the officer corps prior to the Napoleonic period must be retrieved from other studies.

The most direct approach to study of a particular institution is through biographies and the Russian case is no exception. However, historians have not begun to scratch the surface of military personalities who were significant in molding the military tradition or who were typical of the Russian experience. Only three men have consistently attracted the attention of historians: Arakcheev, grand vizer of Alexander I and architect of the military colonies; Suvorov, the field marshal who led Russian armies to 63 victories and no defeats in the last half of the 18th century; and Dimitrii A. Miliutin, Minister of War and architect of reforms during the middle part of the 19th century. The beginnings of their military careers and their personal influence on the heads of state demonstrate key similarities.

Philip Longworth's The Art of Victory: The Life and Achievements of Field-Marshal Suvorov (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston,

1966) is the only English-language biography on this symbol of the offensive spirit and includes Suvorov's contributions to Russian military thought. Major General H. Essame, in a short article entitled "The Suvorov Legend," Military Review, January 1961, pages 14-23, provides a quick appraisal of Suvorov's basic contributions to the Russian way of war.

Arakcheev is the individual whose contribution to the Russian military creates the greatest controversy. Discussions by men close to the Russian scene are bitter, but Michael Jenkins, Arakcheev, Grand Vizer of the Russian Empire (London: Faber and Faber, 1969), and Allan Douglas Ferguson, "The Russian Military Settlements, 1810-1866" (Ph.D. dissertation, Yale University, 1954), present Arakcheev in a more favorable light. They claim that he made significant contributions to improving the army and that he was extremely loyal to the autocrat and the army. They also agree that the military colonies were more a success than a failure.

A most scholarly biographical study is Forrestt A. Miller, Dimitrii Miliutin and the Reform Era in Russia (Charlotte, N. C.: Vanderbilt University Press, 1968). A more recent paper is the W. Bruce Lincoln article, "General Dimitrii Milyutin and the Russian Army," History Today 26, No. 1 (January 1976):20-47. Both of these writings highlight the struggle between the conservatives and Miliutin's liberals. After reading them one may conclude that Miliutin was far ahead of his time.

In conjunction with the autobiographies of former tsarist officers now being published, one of a few independent studies of Russian generals is David Mackenzie, The Lion of Tashkent: The Career of General M. G. Cherniaev (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1974).

Cherniaev is important because he represents the traditional resistance to Miliutin's efforts to reform the military. Also, Anton I. Denikin, who started as a peasant youth in the cadet school and worked his way to tsarist general who led the last remnants of the Imperial Army against the Red Army is discussed by Peter Kenez in "A. I. Denikin," Russian Review 33, No. 2 (April 1974):139-52.

The dearth of biographical studies should be corrected. Some men deserving of further study are Peter A. Rumyantsev, who was a field general between the Petrine era and the rise of Suvorov, the generals who led the Russian armies against the French, Ivan F. Paskevich, whom Nicholas I referred to as "Father-Commander," and generals who led the armies against the Japanese and in Eastern Europe.

While military personalities may provide some indication of the state of mind of the officer corps, there remains a need to explore the question of military thought in Russia. Suvorov and other generals prepared guidance for conducting military operations and training the soldier, but historical study in Imperial Russia did not have a significant advocate until Miliutin's personal efforts at historical writing, prior to the Age of Reform. Modern historiography on the Russian military is quite similar. A study of the origins and development of

military thought in Imperial Russia did not exist until Peter H. C. von Wahlde prepared his Ph.D. dissertation, "Military Thought in Imperial Russia" (Indiana University, 1966). He talks about the contributions of officers who made reputations in the academic side of the military rather than in war. Some of those men eventually led Russian armies in battle but, in addition, had a significant impact on their students, future army leaders, with their tactical and strategic thoughts. He weaves men such as A. I. Khatov, Michael I. Dragomirov, and George A. Leer into the complex Russian military experience and shows that the polarization of their schools of thought sapped the army of its vitality in the late 19th century. This work is another must for any serious student of Russian military history and should, as well, be a model and basis for further studies.

In conjunction with Wahlde's work, the U.S. Air Force has a program for translating and publishing works on current Soviet military thought. One that fits in well with the area of interest in this essay is V. ye Savkin, The Basic Principles of Operational Art and Tactics (A Soviet View) (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1972). The initial sections of this work are devoted to imperial military thought. Significantly, Wahlde's work attempts to treat the subject of military thought over the 200-year period rather than to single out particular periods and individuals. His type of analysis and presentation is what this writer finds lacking in current historiography on the Russian Imperial Army.

Historians are careful not to declare a particular phenomenon unique. Yet, for the Russian military experience, the relationship of the tsars with the army and their use of the military organization may be an exception. The autocrat was not unique in his role as the military leader, but his persistence in maintaining the tradition of military leadership without commensurate qualifications is. British historian G. H. N. Seton-Watson, in "Russia: Army and Autocracy," which appears as the fifth chapter in Michael Howard (editor), Soldiers and Governments (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1976), declares that the Russian officer was an obedient servant to the autocrat and only with the change of the social composition of the corps did the tsar begin to lose his grip on the army. Peter Kenez, reviewing a monograph by a Russian historian, P. A. Zaionchkovsky, "Autocracy and the Russian Army," Russian Review 33, No. 2 (April 1974):201-205, asserts that the neglect of the Imperial Army, the microcosm of the nation, was directly attributable to the autocrat.

By far the greatest amount of literature is on Peter the Great. A start is the volume L. Jay Oliva edited, Peter the Great, for the series entitled Great Lives Observed, Gerald Emanuel Stearn (gen. ed.) (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1970). An adequate article is Alexander M. Nikolaieff, "Peter the Great As a Military Leader," Army Quarterly and Defense Journal 80, No. 1 (April 1960):76-86. Orest Subtelny, "Peter I's Testament: A Reassessment," Slavic Review 33, No. 4 (December 1974):663-78, gives a sense of the explicit

militaristic intent in Peter as demonstrated by his controversial yet "apocryphal" plan for Russia.

Little extensive work has been done on the military role of the tsars between Peter I and Paul I, but John L. H. Keep, "Paul I and the Militarization of Government," Canadian-American Slavic Studies 7, No. 1 (Spring 1973):1-14, highlights the autocrat's need of the military as a means of controlling and modernizing the basic structure of Russian Government.

Two works by John Shelton Curtiss, The Russian Army Under Nicholas I, 1825-1855 (Durham, N. C.: Duke University Press, 1965) and "The Army of Nicholas I: Its Role and Character," American Historical Review 63, No. 4 (July 1958):880-89, need a companion piece to give a better feel for an abstract side of Russian history, the spirit of nationalism. An excellent study that should be read in conjunction with the Curtiss works is Nicholas V. Riasanovsky, Nicholas I and Official Nationality in Russia, 1825-1855 (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1961). An article that also sheds more light on various uses of the military under Tsar Nicholas I is John P. Ledonne, "Civilians Under Military Justice During the Reign of Nicholas I," Canadian-American Slavic Studies 7, No. 2 (Summer 1973):171-87.

The reform era was mentioned in the discussion of Miliutin and Cherniaev, but the era simply could not have transpired without a change in the autocrat's character and personality. The basic study that reveals this change is W. E. Mosse, Alexander II and the Modernization

of Russia, rev. ed. (New York: Collier Books, 1962). However, the very best discussions on tsarist politics in the Age of Reform are the two essays by Alfred J. Rieber in a volume he edited, The Politics of Autocracy (Paris: Mouton & Co., 1966). Rieber focuses on the problems facing Tsar Alexander II after the Crimean War and convincingly argues that the decisions to free the serfs and a policy of patience and caution toward Europe and Asia were based on the firm conviction that only a strong army, which Russia did not have after the Crimea, could preserve the Russian Empire. Numerous other works on the various Romanovs only implicitly refer to the military questions. Nonetheless, they should not be overlooked.

Laymen, when first thinking of Russia, recall both revolution and social unrest. The volatile nature of the Russian society, which the military in part influenced, adversely affected internal military stability. The classic study of revolutionary fervor in Russia in the early 19th century is Anatole G. Mazour, The First Russian Revolution, 1825: The Decembrist Movement (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1937). Mazour discusses the emergence of liberalism in the officer corps and the influence and role of secret societies.

In spite of the preponderance of officers participating in the liberal movement, they were surprisingly disorganized when called upon to rise to the occasion. The first revolution in 1825 was a pivotal event in the military heritage, but almost from that time forward the officers' newly found political role was gradually neutralized. In

addition to the studies by David R. Jones and Peter Kenez that have already been mentioned, Allan Weldman, "The February Revolution in the Russian Army," Soviet Studies 22, No. 1 (July 1970):3-23, confirms the opinion that the officers were unprepared to handle the situation and the soldiers were initially frightened over the uncertainty of disobedience. In a generally apologetic vein, A. M. Nikolaieff, "The February Revolution and the Russian Army," Russian Review 6, No. 1 (Autumn 1946): 17-25, attempts to dispel the historical view that the guard units and officers, the backbone of the Russian Army, were the first to fall and lose control of the situation. All of these studies implicitly address the one overriding question: Why did the Russian Army fail to suppress the revolution?

The army provided a direct and reliable means of transforming Russian society from a backward nation to a modern nation. Raymond L. Garthoff, "The Military As a Social Force," pages 323-28 in Cyril E. Black (ed.), The Transformation of Russian Society: Aspects of Social Change Since 1861 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1960), explains that the practice of changing the Russian officer corps and influencing social change in society was carried forward into the era of Soviet rule. Two cogent sketches of the imperial society and the counter influences between that society and the military are Cyril E. Black, "The Nature of Imperial Russian Society," Slavic Review 20, No. 4 (December 1961):565-82, and Marc Raeff, "Home, School and Service in the Life of the 18th Century Russian Nobleman," Slavonic and East European

Review 40, No. 95 (June 1962):295-307.

A most significant period for the military emerged when Alexander I attempted to reduce the burden of the military on the society by creating totally independent military colonies. This phenomenon is expertly handled in Allan Douglas Ferguson's previously discussed study of the military settlements. Ferguson concludes that the settlements were more successful than historians acknowledge. Another view is Richard Pipes, "The Russian Military Colonies, 1810-1831," Journal of Modern History 22, No. 3 (September 1950):205-219.

Another aspect of the interdependence of military and society concerns the use of religion as a force for discipline and cause for loyalty in an oppressed institution. Historian Hryhorij Fil', "Religion and the Russian Army in the Nineteenth Century," New Review 11, Nos. 2-4 (Special; December 1971):23-33, highlights aspects of the religious question that other historians often take for granted.

There is no doubt that the state leadership envisioned the military as a catalyst for change. J. G. Purves, "Nineteenth Century Russia and the Revolution in Military Technology," New Review 11, Nos. 2-4 (Special; December 1971):7-23, explains that military technology tended to drive the changes in society from above. Because of the lack of modernization in Russian factories, the military tended to get directly involved, as explained in E. R. Goldstein, "Military Aspects of Russian Industrialization: The Defense Industries, 1890-1917" (Ph. D. dissertation, Case Western Reserve University, 1971). Such was the

complex nature of the Russian military and its society, a complexity demonstrated by the diversity of studies on the subject.

Two other sources that are readily accessible to the student of the Russian military remain to be mentioned briefly. By modern criteria they are not scholarly studies, but they can make a significant contribution to one's understanding. The first of these sources comprises the reports of military observers and attachés. During the 19th century the United States sent observers to the war zones in Europe to report on the art of war by the various opposing forces. In particular, military observers from the United States reported on three wars in which Russia was a major participant. The first of these wars was the Crimean War (1854-1856), reported in Report on the Art of War in Europe in 1854, 1855, and 1856; By Colonel R. Delafield, U.S.A., and Major of the Corps of Engineers, From His Notes and Observations Made As a Member of a "Military Commission to the Theater of War in Europe," Under the Orders of the Hon. Jefferson Davis, Secretary of War (Washington: George W. Bowman, 1861), Report of the Secretary of War, Communicating the Report of Captain George B. McClellan, (First Regiment United States Cavalry,) One of the Officers Sent to the Seat of War in Europe, In 1855 and 1856 (Washington: A. O. P. Nicholson, 1857), and Military Commission to Europe, In 1855 and 1856: Report of Major Alfred Mordecai, Of the Ordnance Department (Washington: George W. Bowman, 1860). Next observed was the Russo-Turkish War (1877-78), reported by Francis V. Greene, Sketches of Army Life in Russia (New York: C. Scribner's,

1881). While not a report on the Russo-Japanese War, of particular interest is John T. Greenwood, "American Military Observers of the Russo-Japanese War (1904-1905)" (Ph.D. dissertation, Kansas State University, 1971). As a rule the reports mentioned do not contain assessment and appraisal of the conduct of the wars. Rather, they present extensive statistical data on the composition, training, and structure of the armies concerned.

An increasing number of translated biographies of former tsarist officers comprises the final source that is available to the student of the Russian military. Typical of these works is Anton I. Denikin, The Career of a Tsarist Officer, translated by Margaret Patoski (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1975). Such works give background and training of the officer concerned and first-hand accounts of the conditions in the army. One should not expect a similar contribution from the rank and file because they were basically illiterate throughout the 200-year period of the Imperial Russian Army.

The preceding has called attention to only a few of the works on the Russian military. There are certainly many more and still much that has yet to be written. Implicitly the discussion has emphasized places to look, but there are certainly other areas, including foreign journals and Soviet literature. As long as the Soviet military continues to play a dominant role as one of the two military poles around which other military systems are modeled, it seems inconsistent to disregard the historical origins of that institution.

Given this need, certain recommendations appear in order.

First, history departments in colleges and service schools should encourage Russian and Soviet military studies and pursue all means to get more archival material out of Russian hands and into historians' hands for translation and synthesis. Second, experts on the Russian military should expand their horizons and strive toward the production of larger survey studies on the order of John Erickson's work on the Soviet military or Wahlde's study of military thought. Lastly, one is always amazed at the quantity of historical journals with limited distribution, the source of many items in this very essay. The amateur historian and military officer simply are incapable of retrieving this information under the current situation. Perhaps there is a need for another journal that addresses only Russian and Soviet military articles. It would be tragic for the United States military to make an assessment of the Soviet military without some awareness of the degree of continuity and change in the Soviet military experience.

## APPENDIX B

### THEORETICAL PROFILE OF THE IMPERIAL RUSSIAN MILITARY EXPERIENCE

While the implicit intent of this study was to arrive at a broad understanding of the Imperial Russian military experience, it was nonetheless begun without an explicit sense of what lay ahead in this inquiry. Having searched the literature and correlated the judgments of historians, this writer proposes a profile of this period and subject as another means of visualizing the historical evolution and struggle in the Imperial Russian military (see Fig. 1). This paradigm should not be construed as an end in itself, but, rather, should be looked upon as a basis for more empirical study by comparative analysis. Some of the unanswered subjects that lend themselves to this sort of comparative analysis are military expenditures versus civil expenditures, officer and soldier densities, changes in military education, decline of war industries and rise of business and civil industries, the evolution of military technology, and so on.

Yet, in addition to the unanswered questions, some conclusions may be drawn from Figure 1. Up to 1825, the key figures in the Russian military were field generals, but after 1825 the military came to be controlled by soldier-administrators. While this represented a general

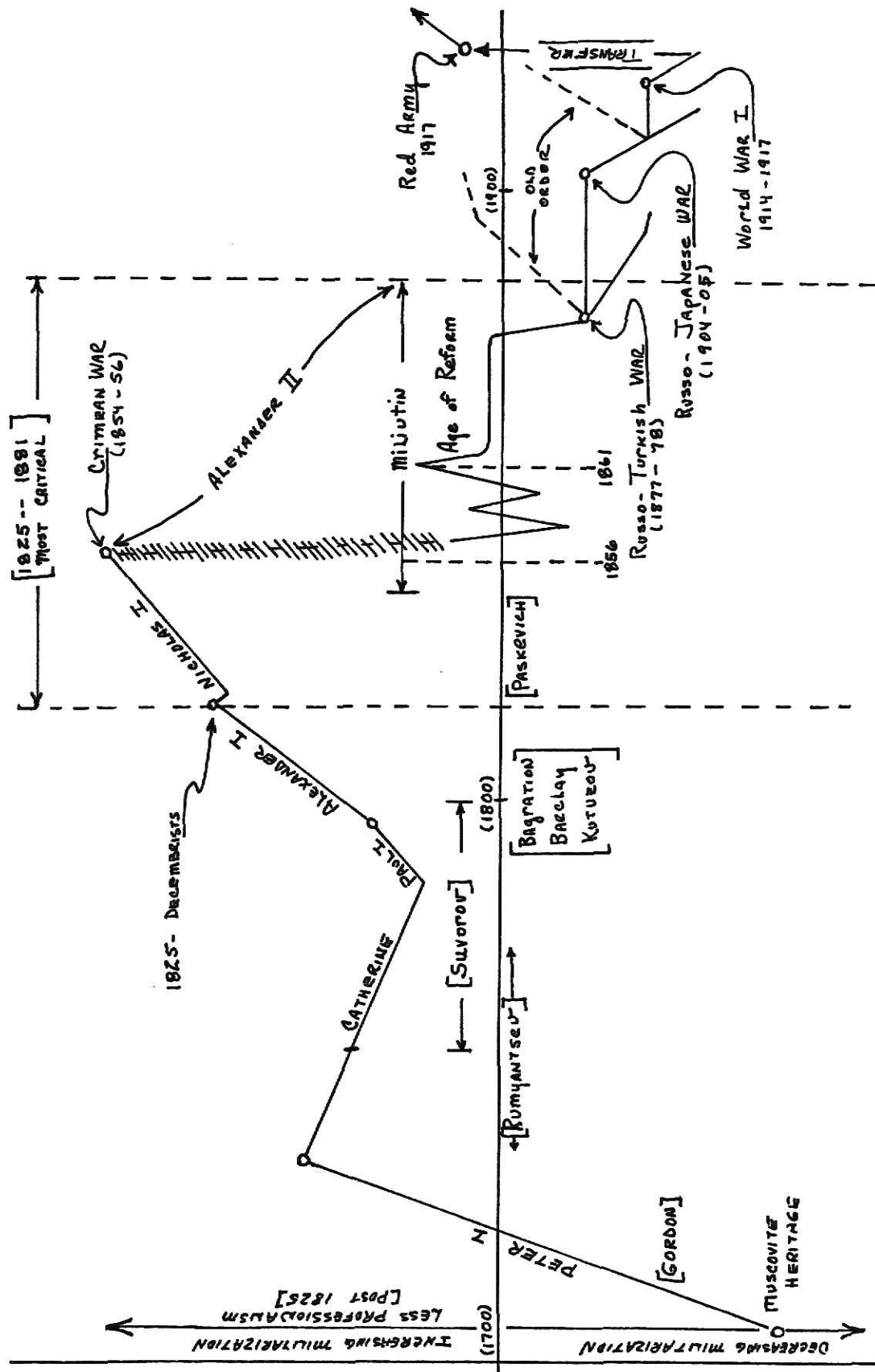


FIGURE 1  
APPENDIX B: THEORETICAL PROFILE OF THE IMPERIAL RUSSIAN MILITARY EXPERIENCE

shift and the rise of a new power group, it did not eliminate the old order altogether. Ever since the Russo-Turkish War, remnants of the old traditionalists continued to resist reform and change in society and the army. Clearly the consequences of war have been the catalyst for change. One may only speculate on what the nature of Russian society might be had the Age of Reform not been interrupted by frequent military setbacks. Since in the first 125 years the Russian society was a militaristic society, one may ask why and how there seems to be a slight decline between the reign of Peter I and the ascension of Paul I to the throne. While these and other questions remain unanswered, the most significant conclusion to be drawn from this report is that the whole nature of the Russian society and its military heritage present a fertile field for the historian today.

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AN INQUIRY INTO THE IMPERIAL RUSSIAN  
MILITARY EXPERIENCE, 1701-1917

by

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AN ABSTRACT OF A MASTER'S REPORT

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This report concerns the Imperial Russian military experience from the reign of Peter the Great to the collapse of the army in 1917. During the first century (1701-1815), major figures dominated the military heritage in forging a national army resting principally on serf-recruits. During the last century of its existence, a struggle between tradition and progress in the name of professionalization within a military bureaucracy ended inconclusively in the collapse of the Imperial Army in World War I. This work does not focus on battles and campaigns. Rather, it concentrates on the broader problems of army organization and mission within Russian society. These issues are the influence of great captains, the military self-image of the tsar, the professionalization of the Russian Army, the role of the military as a socializing institution, and the influence of theoretical thought in the transformation of the army following the Crimean War. This report is based solely on works in English by historians and selected accounts of former tsarist officers now available in English.

In 1917, the Imperial Army disintegrated. Throughout the two centuries, the officers, in spite of a rather severe existence, displayed an almost unswerving loyalty to the autocrat. After the setbacks in the Crimean War the officer corps underwent fundamental transformation that first made it a more heterogenous group and then a more professional but apolitical body. The officers entered the 20th century

generally confused as to the object of their loyalty--nation, state, or autocrat--and deceived of their true military capabilities and limitations. On the other hand, the peasant soldier did not undergo any profound transformation. He led a harsh existence and was even exploited by his own officers. Despite an attempt at reform, the scars of the years past were too deep. The question asked is: What in the imperial experience led to such a climate of distrust and skepticism?

The history of the Russian state and its military was profoundly affected by Peter the Great. When he passed away, great captains such as Alexander Suvorov, with a controversial style of command, became the symbol of Russian military prowess. While Suvorov exemplified the spirit of the offensive in Russian doctrine, Marshal Michael I. Kutuzov, in his 1812 campaign against Napoleon, became the proponent of defense and counter-offensive strategies. Both men established the dependence of the Russian military tradition on great captains and exhorted the virtues of the undefeatable Russian soldier.

Following the victories over the French, two fundamental events changed the military's image of itself. First was the introduction of liberal tendencies into the army by virtue of its exposure to the politics of Western Europe. Second was the rise of military theoreticians who began to examine critically the Russian past and to affect military training and education. The former conflicted with the autocrat's personal image as a military figure and how the tsar viewed the army. The other tendency manifested itself in the reforms executed under

Minister of War General Dimitrii A. Miliutin. Defeat in the Balkans in 1878 and social unrest in the last years of the reign of Alexander II drove the Russian traditionalists away from professionalization toward antiquated practices in defense of the old social order. The performances in Manchuria in 1904-1905 and the years up to 1914 left the army poorly led and falsely optimistic.

While synthesizing historical views, the study raises questions that have been inadequately addressed in terms of their broader implications. Many have flatly been ignored by historians and are deserving of further study. In support of this view, this writer included a bibliographical essay on sources in English on the Imperial Russian military and defined a methodological approach to the study of the Russian Army.