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**LIBERALISM AND NATIONALISM IN RUSSIA.  
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Two important historical events coincided with the development of liberalism in Russia: The death of tsar Nicholas I in 1855 and Russia's defeat in the Crimean War (1854-56). These events changed the framework for public life and created scope for the reformulation of central concepts and the introduction of new ideas. Most importantly, they created an opportunity for change. The demise of the tsar also meant that the gap between the educated elite and the government that was caused by the Decembrist revolt might be overcome. Nicholas I was a formidable despot who held his country in an iron grip for thirty years. He saw as his mission the elimination of all forms of political opposition. As a consequence of his policies, intellectuals left politics and turned inward to philosophical speculations and abstract thinking (Riasanovsky, 1976; Malia, 1960; Saunders, 1992; Lincoln, 1978; Lieven, 1992). With the accession of the new tsar, Alexander II, freer discussion of social problems became possible. Slowly, these discussions moved out of private salons and secret circles to public institutions, such as the gentry assemblies and the periodic press. Issues that had not been on the agenda since the failed Decembrist revolt were now being brought back to discussion (Lincoln, 1990; 1982; Emmons, 1968; Field, 1976; Polunov, 2005). However, in contrast to the Decembrists, who acted in secret and did not make any efforts to incorporate conservatives, the early liberals wished to address a wider audience, consisting of both conservative and progressive groups, and containing both intellectuals and state officials. Most importantly, they did not wish to alienate the tsar or his reform-inclined ministers by proposing too radical changes (Hamburg, 1992: p. 11).

The second event that created conditions for change was the military defeat in the Crimean War. The defeat shocked both the government and the educated elite. In a flash, it seemed, Russia lost its great power status and appeared as a weak, backward state. Enlightened bureaucrats and intellectuals alike realised that something had to be done. In order for Russia to keep her prominent position in the European system of states, the government had to introduce modernizing reforms. As usual Russians looked to the West for inspiration. The model that appeared most successful at the time was the European nation-state. This was an era when the nation-state was becoming the most successful political form both in terms of international relations and economic and political development. In the words of the liberal economist, Walter Bagehot, nation-making was the 'essential content' of nineteenth-century social evolution (Hobsbawm, 1993: p. 23). All states had to prepare themselves for an emerging world of nations competing not only on the military battlefield but economically as well. The second half of the nineteenth century was thus a fertile era for reform in the structure of governments.

In the middle of the nineteenth century, processes of nation-building were at work all over the world. These processes were characterized by a combination of nationalist thought and concentration of central state power (Gellner, 1993; Greenfeld, 1993; Hobsbawm, 1993; Bender, 2006: 141-150; Tilly, 1975; Bayly, 2004). There was a desire for a more effective administration, and for state intervention on behalf of modernization and progress. Economic and technological development, modern warfare, democratization and international competition forced the state to adapt to new conditions and meet new demands. One of these demands was the state's capacity to mobilize its own citizens for war and economic development. For this to succeed citizens had to be integrated into the state so that they felt a willingness to contribute to the common good. There was a call for civic spirit and patriotism. The common way to integrate the people was through national education, conscription in the army, and political participation, either through an independent public opinion and a free press, or through representative institutions. The granting of civil liberties and the creation of an independent civil society were seen as tools that could solve problems of legitimacy in traditional states. In this way, liberal reforms could create civil loyalty and transform the passive subjects of the autocrat into the active citizens of the nation-state. By integrating state and society and enlisting the cooperation of the people, citizens came to identify with the state rather than feel alienated

from it (Hobsbawm, 1993: pp. 82-85, 89; Tilly, 1975; Rokkan, 1999; Bender, 2006).

This was exactly what the Russian government hoped for when it launched its reform project. According to Geoffrey Hosking the choice of the nation-state as a model for Russia's reform efforts entailed a divided strategy. In the beginning the government engaged in a civil strategy, which in the 1880s was replaced by an ethnic strategy. The objective of the civil strategy was to create loyalty to the state through liberal reforms. These reforms were part of a general plan to form a nation from above and thus entailed a break with the longstanding Russian tradition of bureaucratic despotism and noble privileges. In fact, Richard Pipes has argued that the whole purpose of the Great Reforms in the 1860s was 'to bring Russian society into closer participation in shaping the life of the country and to transform it from a body of passive subjects into one of active citizens' (Pipes, 1972: p. 68).<sup>1</sup>

Hence, nation-building was related to the development of liberalism. But liberalisation was not only a prerequisite for nation-state formation. It was also the case that liberalism in this era entailed nation-making. Liberalism was a way of organizing society in a manner that promoted its harmony, prosperity, and power in a world of independent states. According to liberal ideology the nation constituted the phase reached by human development by the mid-nineteenth century and it was assumed that people realised themselves in the establishment of a nation-state. Thus, the nation-state was considered the most progressive form of state (Bender, 2006: p. 126; Hobsbawm, 1993: p. 39; Suny 2001: pp. 354-55). That there is a connection between liberalism and nationalism, as well as between nationalism and modernization in the West is well-known. This article draws attention to the relationship between liberalism, nationalism, and modernization in Russia. Because nationalism in Russia has commonly been seen as cultural, conservative, and utopian rather than political, liberal, and progressive its link to the emergence of liberalism in the 1850s has not attracted much attention (Kohn, 1945; Plamenatz, 1973; Smith, 1991; 1998; 2001; Greenfeld, 1993; Ignatieff, 1994; Sugar, 1995; Rabow-Edling, 2008; Malinova, 2000).

The fact that the 1860s was the period in Russian history when liberal ideas had the greatest influence on politics is an indication that the nation-building strategy of the regime corresponded with the strategy of the liberals. In fact, the Russian state's nation-building project coincided to a great extent with the program of the early liberals from the mid 1850s. To early Russian liberals emancipation of the serfs was the central issue and a prerequisite for a modern nation-state. This goal was reached in 1861 when serfdom was abolished, and was followed by reforms of central institutions fully in accordance with the liberal program. Like governments in other modernizing countries, the Russian government tried to integrate the population through education, the army, and local administration (Akman, 2004).<sup>2</sup> The new policy of taxation was supposed to create civic spirit (Kotsonis, 2004: p. 222). Higher education was opened up to former serfs and academic control was relaxed. Universal conscription was introduced and education rather than social origin determined form of service in the army. Regional councils (*zemstvos*) were formed. The government thus made elective local self-government possible for the first time in modern Russian history. In addition, the diminishing role of the censors and the reduced control of academic research and communication created a public sphere, where a public opinion could be formulated. This was also an institution that shaped civic spirit. It formed a link both between citizens and between society and the state. Through it, the voice of the nation could be expressed and the opinion of its citizens be represented. Thus, public opinion served as a form of political participation.

To a certain extent then the state satisfied liberal demands for civil rights. In addition, calls for the rule of law and transparency in exercising state power were partly met. The state budget was published and civil and criminal courts were opened to the public. Furthermore, the concept of the law as impersonal and impartial was institutionalised. The judiciary was given complete independence from the administration and the same legal system was now valid for all estates, except the peasantry, for whom a special body of law was created (Blum 1961; Emmons 1968; Lincoln, 1990; Eklof *et al.*, 1994).

## II

Modern research tells us that early Russian liberalism developed in the middle of the 1850s. Although liberal ideas can be found already at the end of the eighteenth century, it was not until this period that liberalism took a programmatic form as well as a clear middle stance between radicals to the left and conservatives to the right (Shneider, 2006; Hamburg, 1992). Early Russian liberals wished to prevent the return of despotism but at the same time avoid both popular and aristocratic rule. Their goal was to reform and modernise Russia while preventing revolution and anarchy. To accomplish this they needed the state,

or so they felt. Hence, in contrast to earlier reformists, these liberals chose to cooperate with the state instead of working against it (Herzen and Ogarev, 1856-1860, vol. 1: pp. 9-36). There were several reasons for this approach, besides the intellectual influence of Hegel. Perhaps the most significant was the tsar's explicit willingness to implement liberal reforms. It was important not to frighten or alienate the tsar so that he would abandon his reform plans. There were lessons to be drawn from the failed Decembrist revolt that led to thirty years of despotism and stagnation (Mazour, 1961; Raeff, 1966; Riasanovsky, 1976). In their program these liberals dissociated themselves from revolutionary movements and explicitly stated that they did not form a secret society striving to remove the monarchy. Instead, they portrayed themselves as trustworthy citizens, patriots working for the common good, in contrast to socialists, who undermined the state, and conservatives, who used the state to pursue private interests (Herzen and Ogarev, 1856: pp. 10-11). Another motivation behind the liberal approach was the increasing alarm they felt at the spread of radical ideas and their concern about disintegration and revolution, a fear that was not altogether unfounded (Kahan, 2003; Lyons, 2006).<sup>3</sup>

This article focuses on the formative years of Russian liberalism in the immediate post-Crimean period, before disagreements arose inside the liberal camp concerning Chicherin's steadfast belief in the rationality of the state (Hamburg, 1992).<sup>4</sup> During this period in Russian history, liberalism was most clearly related to civic nation-building.

Early Russian liberalism has its origins in a political campaign, initiated by Konstantin Kavelin, whose aim was to urge the new tsar to depart from the despotic policies of the previous regime. Due to censorship this reformist campaign took the form of privately circulated anonymous manuscripts, critical of Nicholas's despotism and the institution of serfdom. Subsequently, this 'manuscript literature' was published in London by Alexander Herzen's Free Russian Press in an anthology called *Voices from Russia* [*Golosa iz Rossii*]. It was in the anonymous introduction to this volume that a liberal program was formulated and signed by a 'Russian liberal'. Half of it was written by Kavelin and the other half by Boris Chicherin (1828-1904), who became the most prominent liberal theorist in Russia (Herzen and Ogarev, 1856: pp. 9-36).<sup>5</sup> The first major contribution by Chicherin to the manuscript literature is his abolitionist article, 'On Serfdom' [*O krepostnom sostoianii*], published in volume II of *Voices from Russia*. (Chicherin, 1856, II: pp. 127-229). In the fourth volume of *Voices from Russia*, his first political article, called 'Contemporary Tasks of Russian Life' [*Sovremennye zadachi russkoi zhizni*] was published (Chicherin, 1857b: pp. 51-129). Here, Chicherin develops his ideas on liberalism, formulated in the first program and it is believed to be the clearest formulation of early Russian liberalism. While 'Contemporary Tasks' presents Chicherin's positive prescriptions for reform, 'On Aristocracy, Especially the Russian Aristocracy' [*Ob aristokratii, v osobennosti russkoi*] is concerned with one of the negative messages of the liberal program (Chicherin, 1857a: pp. 1-113). Chicherin wrote 'On Aristocracy' at a time when liberals worried that the old aristocracy had enough power to thwart progressive reforms. In this article he urged the government not to replace despotism with aristocratic rule.<sup>6</sup> The other negative feature of the program was his criticism of socialism and rejection of popular rule, which he commented on in the anonymous introduction to the manuscript literature. Chicherin exhorted Russians to be patient about reforms, because they had to be controlled and moderate in order to succeed (Herzen and Ogarev, 1856: pp. 9-36).<sup>7</sup>

The only work used here that did not belong to the Kavelin collection is Chicherin's *Essays on England and France* [*Ocherki Anglii i Frantsii*]. This is a compilation of reviews on European politics written by Chicherin for various journals between 1856 and 1858. The article is of special interest to the theme of nation-building and liberalism because it considers the pros and cons of centralisation and decentralisation (Chicherin, 1858b).

Chicherin was born into a rich noble family in the Province of Tambov. He studied law and history at Moscow University, as did Kavelin. Here, he came under the influence of Hegel. He was also inspired by his history teacher, the moderate Westerniser Timofei Granovsky. Scholars have mainly been interested in determining whether Chicherin was a conservative or a liberal (Kelly, 1977: pp. 195-222; 1998: pp. 221-44; Walicki, 1992; Hamburg, 1992; Benson, 1975; Lampert, 1965; Zorkin, 1984; Osipov, 1996: pp. 81-106; Prilenskii, 1995: pp. 206-306; Itenberg and Shelokhaev, 2001: pp. 85-113).<sup>8</sup> Depending on how one defines these concepts, which texts one looks at, and which tendency in his thought one focuses on, it is possible to find ample support for either interpretation. On the one hand, the assessment of Chicherin's thought depends on whether his ideas are seen in the context of classical Anglo-Saxon liberalism aiming at individual liberty, or in the context of post-revolutionary European liberalism, seeking a balance between

liberty and stability. On the other hand, the assessment also depends on how one interprets the impact of Hegel. Should Chicherin be seen as a Right Hegelian, and if so, what does this imply ideologically? Is he even more conservative than Hegel himself? Does he in fact try to fit contemporary Russia into Hegel's scheme, i.e., does he find an incarnation of Hegel's *Rechtstaat* in the contemporary Russian autocratic state, or is this an ideal to be realized in the future? (Kelly, 1998: pp. 221-244; Yevlampiev, 2009: pp. 113-121).

The purpose of this article is not to define Chicherin's thought as liberal or conservative, but to point to the importance of nation-building to his early liberal project and show how he combined liberal ideas with notions of nation-building and the nation as a modernising phenomenon.<sup>9</sup> Seen in this context, his concern with a strong state makes more sense. Although the young Chicherin might have appreciated liberal values *per se*, at least in the 1850s, he had a somewhat instrumental approach to liberalism. It served a specific purpose – to integrate the people and shape a community of active citizens so that Russia could modernise. Nation-building was a prerequisite for progress and in order to realise it, liberalisation was needed. According to Chicherin, being a liberal was equivalent to being a patriot, because liberalism alone could 'awake Russia to new life and provide the opportunity to develop the nation's slumbering potential' (Chicherin, 1857b: pp. 125-6). Hence, to him, liberalism was above all a means to get Russia out of its backwardness. Chicherin was concerned with the formation of a modern nation-state rather than the establishment of popular rule or political rights.<sup>10</sup> In this sense his thinking fits well into what Ayhan Akman has called modernist nationalism. Modernist nationalism is a state-driven project of modernity, where the nation is seen as the container of the project for the attainment of modern civilization. It differs from civic nationalism mainly through its suspicion of, and restrictions on, popular participation (Akman, 2004: pp. 24-26). Akman argues that this is a nationalist project which becomes relevant in non-European states without any experience of direct colonial rule, such as Turkey and Russia. Without making any further comparisons between the Turkish and Russian case, I would like to emphasise here that, just as in Russia, the initial spur for modernising reforms among the Ottoman state elites was the need to re-establish military parity with European powers, to ensure the survival of the state, and to make it competitive in the European inter-state system, in which the Ottoman state operated (Akman, 2004: pp. 33-34).<sup>11</sup>

### III

One of Chicherin's basic concerns in his early writings was Russia's standing in international politics. The disastrous military performance in the Crimean War came as a shock to him, just as it did to most Russians who still had a vision of their country as the invincible conqueror of Napoleon. How could one of Europe's great powers fail so completely? The answer seemed to lie in backwardness. Russia had not developed concurrently with other European powers. While the flourishing European countries were characterized by free and law-abiding citizens with a patriotic concern for the common good, Russian society lacked both liberty, the rule of law, and civic spirit. Instead, it was characterized by oppression, lawlessness, discord and indifference. Chicherin was convinced that the root to this problem was found in the conservative ideology of the government, an ideology that allowed the people neither liberty nor autonomy. A country without liberty could not develop, he argued, because in such a state there was no incentive to progress, nor were there any feelings for the common good (Chicherin, 1857b: pp. 51-2, 75-94, 103-108). In order to get out of its backwardness Russia needed liberty and nationalism.

The Crimean war had made it clear to Chicherin that political power in the new Europe of emerging nation-states depended not only on the government's military resources, but on its citizens' intellectual and economic activities (Chicherin, 1856: pp. 127-229). He believed that a modern society needed both an effective state and the cooperation and active participation of the people. Russia could not compete with other states if it stuck to its traditional way of rule, i. e., a bureaucratic autocracy with passive subjects. It needed to shape active citizens who were working for the common good. Previously in Russia, the only actor on stage had been the government; now, Chicherin insisted, the people should be allowed to play their role as well (Chicherin, 1857b: p. 110). It was time for the government to grant 'political life' to the people, because 'the people are that very society for whose sake all governmental institutions exist'. Thus, it would contradict good sense to deprive them of the opportunity to participate in their own affairs (Ibid: pp. 70-71, 127-29). But, more was at stake than good sense. Chicherin argued that in the contemporary world a government could not implement modern reforms without the cooperation of the people. It could not even bring about elements necessary for a full life without letting the people discuss political issues in the public arena. In fact, no enlightened state could survive without involving the people in its political life (Ibid: pp.

107-110, 129). Furthermore, Chicherin maintained, collaboration with the people to achieve the common good would benefit the government. It would generate public support and then the government would find in the people its best ally (Ibid: pp. 67-71, 119-121). It would seem that involving the people in Russia's political life meant that they would be given political rights, but as we have seen Chicherin was against popular rule at this stage. He argued that while the Russian people were not ready for political rights yet, they had to be given civic rights. Then they would lend their support to the state.

However, it was not only the government that had to change its course. Russian society needed to be transformed as well. It was divided and lacked concern for the common good. Chicherin singled out the lack of civic spirit as one of the most important problems in contemporary Russia. Without it, a national community could not be formed and without a national community, active citizens could not be shaped and Russia could not develop. He claimed that compared to the rest of Europe, civic spirit was very poorly developed among the Russian people. They were all estranged from each other and did not care about common needs and interests. This criticism was above all directed towards the aristocrats, who according to Chicherin were corrupt and selfish and pursued their own personal interests, unconcerned for the public good. This lack of public interest, this indifference to the common cause prevented the Russian people from developing. Russia could only modernize if its population felt part of a common destiny and worked for the common good (Chicherin, 1857b: pp. 56, 64-67; 1858a: pp. 236-39; 1857a: pp. 11, 74).<sup>12</sup> Thus, to Chicherin, nation-building was imperative.

The transformation of Russia into a unitary state, founded on equal citizenship, was essential to this nation-building project. Chicherin believed that if the people were granted equal civil rights and obligations, without concern for class, birth or religious belief, then individual interests would be governed by the interest of society as a whole (Chicherin, 1857a: pp. 1-113). It may appear curious that Chicherin could talk about the national unity of a multiethnic empire like Russia. One should bear in mind, however, that nineteenth-century liberal nation-builders paid scant attention to cultural differences. In fact, contemporary European liberals argued that the rule of one liberal nation over other nations was justified if it served to develop the subject nation's capacity to become a self-governing people, made up of self-governing individuals. In J. S. Mills words, when a nationality was 'originally an inferior and more backward portion of the human race the absorption [in another] is greatly to its advantage' (J. S. Mill, *Considerations on Representative Government*: p. 300). To Chicherin the Russian empire consisted of a more or less homogeneous mass of people. Only the Ukraine was seen as a distinct entity with a character of its own (Chicherin, 1857b: p. 55). It was possible for Chicherin to disregard questions of ethnicity because to him national unity had to do with the creation of unitary laws and equal rights, rather than with a unitary culture.<sup>13</sup> National unity concerned the establishment of equal citizenship and the removal of special privileges and rights pertaining to social groups or local regions.

The two most glaring impediments to the realisation of Chicherin's vision of a unitary state were aristocratic privileges and serfdom. Aristocratic privileges were also the most obvious impediment to liberal reform in general and so early Russian liberals feared that the old aristocracy would gain influence and thwart liberal reforms. In 'On Aristocracy' Chicherin launched his attack against privileged nobility. His main argument was that the aristocracy had outlived its historical role and was now inimical to progress. A modern state should not be partial towards one estate and further this estate's interests before those of others. To the contrary, the modern state should be neutral and work for the benefit of all. It should promote the welfare of society by subordinating particular demands to universal interests. Noble privileges, Chicherin declared, were sanctioned neither by God, nor by nature, because all men were equal before God. Hence, these privileges could not be accepted and the aristocracy should not be allowed to play a dominating role in the new order (Chicherin, 1857b: p. 56; 1857a: pp. 1-113). Like Hegel before him, Chicherin believed that the state alone was capable of drawing together all estates and reconciling contradictory aspirations of various social groups, because only the state was placed above specific interests representing common interests (Chicherin, 1858b: pp. 223-24).<sup>14</sup> The removal of noble privileges was one crucial factor in the unification of Russia. The liberation of the serfs was another factor.

Serfdom was a major impediment to the realisation of a unitary state based on equal citizenship. Chicherin argued that this institution could not be accepted in a modern state, where every citizen should be equal before the law and enjoy the blessings of civic life equally. If people were equal before God, some people could not own others as slaves. To illustrate the archaic and illegitimate nature of serfdom, Chicherin compared the relationship between serf and master to that between a despot and his subjects.

Both were unequal, characterised by the same kind of omnipotent and irresponsible mastery and both were unlawful. Neither the person nor the property of the serf/subject was immune from the master's arbitrariness (Chicherin, 1857b: pp. 115-119; 1858b: p. 278; Herzen and Ogarev, 1856: pp. 22-24).

According to Chicherin serfdom reflected the erroneous conservative ideology that dominated the whole country. It was an antiquated institution which, like noble privilege, was part of the old order. Its continued existence hampered Russia's progress towards a modern political order by preventing vital social, economic and military reforms. Furthermore, the fact that the serfs carried the whole burden of the financial system, while they were deprived of every right, threatened the social harmony that was vital to Chicherin's vision of a modern integrated state (Chicherin, 1857b: pp. 92-105; 126-131; 1856: pp. 127-229). Hence, both noble privilege and serfdom had to be abolished.

The forming of a unitary state, based on equal citizenship was an aspect of Chicherin's nation-building strategy. It was supposed to bring the people together and shape national unity. However, if the people were to form public interests and a concern for the common good, they had to become both equal and rights-bearing citizens. They had to be given civil liberties. Chicherin believed that if they were granted civil liberties they would realize their duty towards their native country, because civil rights entailed certain obligations towards the common good, and the general wellbeing of the state. Thus, the freedom of the people was intertwined with their patriotism. This link between civil liberties and civic spirit lies at the root of Chicherin's calls for civil rights to the Russian people. In his view, only proper citizens with genuine rights felt civic duty. Hence, the government should let each Russian regard himself as a citizen of his fatherland, called to contribute to the common cause.

If, on the other hand, the people were denied civil rights, they would see no reason to contribute to the common good. Chicherin argued that this was precisely what had happened in Russia. Here, the people regarded themselves as slaves, 'who for each oppositional word' could 'be seized and subjected to arbitrary punishment,' rather than as citizens (Chicherin, 1857b: pp. 119-20). The government considered itself a substitute for the rest of society. It had suppressed freedom of thought and speech so that the people had become alienated from and opposed to the state. Deprived of the right to talk or even to think freely, the Russian people did not feel that they had anything in common with the government. According to Chicherin, this was the main reason for their apparent indifference to public affairs: 'if one forbids [the people] to speak, if one strives to create harmony by force, it... walks away from the government in secret and refuses to cooperate with it (Ibid: pp. 94-99). Hence, the Russian state had lost the trust and active support it so badly needed in order to make viable reforms and modernise Russia. The only possible solution to this predicament, Chicherin maintained, was for the government to grant liberty to the people. The silent obedience of the subjects, which Chicherin found so destructive, had to be replaced by the freedom of speech of the citizens. At that moment, civic spirit would be formed among the people and they would work together for the common good of their country. Free speech was also a prerequisite for public opinion, an institution that Chicherin regarded as crucial to nation-building.

#### IV

Already at the beginning of the nineteenth century European liberals had emphasized the role of public opinion in the creation of a modern nation-state (Fontana, 1991; Craiutu, 2003; Kahan, 2003). The general view among these liberals was that a free public opinion enabled the people to participate in public life and thus made it possible for them to formulate public interests. The impersonal voice of the nation replaced local networks or family ties as the basis of communication. This created a feeling of belonging to a community and a concern for the general good of this community. (Craiutu, 2003: p. 197; Fontana, 1991: pp. 38-39, 82, 88). Chicherin emphasized this unifying and integrating function of public opinion. He saw it as an institution that created civic spirit and thus could shape an active citizenry in support of the state in its struggle for reform and its fight against revolution. Through a free public opinion the Russian people could develop a genuine understanding of social issues and educate their political instincts. This would increase their interest in public issues and concern for the common good (Chicherin, 1858a: pp. 236-39; 1857b: pp. 94-97; 101-102; 119-21).

To European liberals public opinion was not only a means to form civic spirit. It was also seen as an indicator of the condition and level of development of society. More specifically, it informed the government of the dominant ideas and interests of the nation and of its spontaneous progress. If the government listened to public opinion it would know which reforms that suited the current stage of development and

would not pursue obsolete goals. Thus, the government would be warned against the shortcomings of its policies. Problems connected with the implementation of laws and policies would be brought to the attention of the government so that it could make better decisions (Kahan, 2003: pp. 62-3; Fontana, 1991: p. 85; Craitu, 2003: p. 262). For this reason, the government had to listen to public opinion and to act on it. Otherwise, it would fail in its reform effort and would instead alienate the people.

Chicherin recognised this other side of public opinion as well. He emphasized its capacity both to form a concern for the common good among the people, and to form a link between the people and central government (the state). The Russian government should not fear the power of public opinion to expose the shortcomings of laws and abuses of rulers. Instead, it should try to benefit from public opinion as an independent and legitimate source of power in order to correct these irregularities. In this way the government would attain the support of the people in its reform effort. 'A people that is outwardly silent but inwardly resentful is of little use to the government.' What it needed, according to Chicherin, was a people that joined it with trust, and in order for such a trust to form, public expression of opposing views had to be allowed (Chicherin, 1857b: p. 129). Chicherin argued that the government had to make political opposition legal so that terrorism and revolutionary activities could be counteracted. A free public opinion made such an opposition possible in the first place. It provided a legal channel for expressing the now suppressed aspirations of the people, something that would prevent their alienation from the state. Furthermore, public opinion offered an outlet for opposing views. According to Chicherin, a nation's political life consisted of debate between conflicting perspectives (Ibid: pp .119-21, 87-88). This was something the government needed to accept in order to transform Russia into a modern state with an active citizenry.

Unfortunately, the Russian government under Nicholas I had pursued a destructive policy in this respect. The exercise of the freedom of public opinion had become more and more restricted and the government had become 'all-encompassing, dominating everywhere, penetrating everywhere.' People no longer dared to speak the truth. Instead everyone had to 'bow silently before the government (Chicherin, 1858a: pp. 236-39; 1857b: pp. 76-80, 87-88, 94-97, 119-21, 101-102). The voice of the nation had been silenced and the vital link between state and people had been broken. The suppression of public opinion had disastrous consequences for Russia. It deprived the government both of a useful check on officials and of the possibility to learn of the people's actual condition. Most importantly, it deprived the government of the people's trust and alienated them from public affairs and common concerns. This destructive politics destroyed national unity and was the reason why Russia now was found in such a dismal state of backwardness. Hence, Chicherin urged the new tsar to leave this ideology behind in order to give Russia a chance to develop into a modern state. The only way for Russia out of this predicament was to reinstall a free public opinion. Only then could the government regain the trust of the people and concern for the common good evolve among them.

Nineteenth-century liberals held that a precondition for the function of public opinion as a check on authority was transparency of public life. According to Benjamin Constant, the public good could not exist without publicity, that is, the transparency of the actions of public authorities. It was the necessary precondition for the control of the conduct of government (Fontana, 1991: p. 81). Chicherin agreed. He stressed that the people would not be able to take part in political life without publicity. Hence, the formation of an active citizenry in Russia required transparency in the matters of state. The Russian people should know what was happening in central government, because public business was the people's own business, and a government that genuinely cared about the people's welfare could not fear publishing a record of its actions. Indeed, one of the central demands of the liberal program, listed in 'Contemporary Tasks,' was that all government activities should be published. The publication of the budget, of state revenues and expenditures was imperative. In contemporary Russia, Chicherin argued, the alienation of the Russian public was so strong that it did not even occur to the people that the treasury actually existed for their benefit. The interests of treasury and people were so different that they resembled two opposing parties that secretly tried 'to play on each other as many dirty tricks as possible (Chicherin, 1857b: pp. 124, 96-7).

But, transparency in legal matters was equally important. Another central principle of the early liberal program was that legal proceedings should be public. How else could public opinion serve as a check on corruption and administrative arbitrariness? How else could the rule of law be upheld and the civic rights of the people guaranteed. How else would the old despotism and tyranny be forever left behind? In his article 'Ocherki Anglii i Frantsii,' Chicherin suggested that Russia learned from the English system to build a society which respected the rule of law and valued publicity. He argued that publicity constituted

the basis of all public life in England, and that it served as the most reliable buttress of the legal order. As a consequence, it was difficult for English officials to conceal their abuses, since 'every Englishman stands on guard, thinking himself the natural guardian of the laws of his fatherland, and each violation of them he brings before the court of public opinion (Chicherin, cited in Hamburg, 1992: pp. 168-69). Chicherin believed that one reason for the sorry state of legality in Russia was the suppression of public opinion which, in his view, had contributed to the spread of lawlessness and capriciousness. Without a free public opinion, the law, which should defend the people, served only as a means for enriching officials and the power entrusted to the authorities became an instrument of oppression (Chicherin, 1857b: pp. 88-90). Chicherin was convinced that if public opinion was equally valued in Russia as it was in England, it would be possible to eliminate the innumerable abuses 'now hidden under the cover of darkness' so that fair verdicts and speedy trials could be guaranteed. Publicity would protect plaintiffs and defendants against oppression and encourage judges to render just verdicts. Furthermore, publicity would elevate the judiciary in the eyes of both government and people to its 'rightful place' as one of the most important branches of government. In addition, Chicherin believed that the daily spectacle of trial and punishment would nurture in the citizenry a respect for rights and legality that, in his view, was the ultimate basis of rational public life but which was unfortunately declining in contemporary Russia (Ibid: p. 125).

Chicherin's ideas about education were also very much formed by his desire to turn Russia into a modern nation-state. In the liberal program, he called for the liberalization of education. Only by providing a public education could the government integrate the people; only by making education independent could the people be trained to take an active part in forming public opinion and work for the common good. Regrettably, the Russian government had not realised that the state benefited from the largest possible number of educated people. Neither had it understood the necessity of academic freedom and so, education was curtailed by a number of prohibitions. This, Chicherin warned, held negative consequences both for the possible modernisation of Russia and for her international status. A state with a government that suppressed education was doomed to backwardness, because education was the backbone of the modern state. Moreover, such a government would never gain anyone's respect, especially not that of enlightened countries. To counter this negative development Chicherin argued for the importance of academic freedom. He stated that scholarship had to develop independent of the government and that education should be based on liberal principles. The government's attempt to control scholarship was futile because science and the arts were free by nature. They did not 'bend to the government's prescriptions.' The government might very well destroy them, but could not 'direct them in an arbitrary fashion (Ibid: pp. 100-104, 124).

Chicherin especially objected to the disregard for science visible in the government's attitude to education and scholarship. He argued that this approach had disastrous consequences for Russia's economic development and ability to compete with the powerful states of Europe. The government's disregard for science was reflected in the primitive condition of industry in Russia. As industry could not get along without science and science could not get along without liberty, there could be no industrial growth without liberalism. Thus, liberty was the first requirement for the successful development of industry, but not only because it promoted science. Industrial growth required an active, energetic population and freedom provided the opportunity for people to use their energies and talents in the most profitable way. Without it, there would be no entrepreneurial spirit. Chicherin applied similar reasoning in his criticism of serfdom. Maintenance of Russia's international position demanded intensified industrial activity, but serfdom could only diminish the productivity of labour and industry. It constituted an obstacle to any improvement in agriculture. It diverted from work a significant portion of the people's energies. It suppressed popular initiative and independence and so undermined popular industriousness. Only liberty could produce active citizens, integrated in the state with a concern for the common good (Chicherin, 1856: pp. 127-229; Herzen and Ogarev, 1856: pp. 22-4).

Chicherin complained that the conservative ideology adopted by the government generated ruinous restrictions for industry and trade, and it destroyed private credit without which commercial exchanges were impossible. What was needed was a system of government that would not hamper commercial exchanges. This entailed establishing the rule of law. The civic liberties that were needed to turn passive subjects into active citizens, who stimulated industrial growth, had to be legally safeguarded against governmental interference. In order to mobilize the people to take part in the economy and in the modernization process in general, they needed both civic liberties and an independent sphere. When, as in contemporary Russia, the government's presence was felt in every aspect of daily life, legal protection against administra-

tive arbitrariness became vital (Chicherin, 1857b: pp. 91-5, 103-4). Chicherin's illustration of the arbitrary despotism prevailing in Russia feels oddly familiar:

[O]ne might assume that government is established for the benefit of the governed, but in reality it turns out to exist solely for the benefit of the rulers who constitute a bureaucratically organised corporation based on the principle of mutual assistance in the robbery and oppression of their subjects (Chicherin, 1857b: pp. 89-90).

This was the old-fashioned system that Chicherin wanted Russia to leave behind so that she could enter the modern world of nation-states. To this end, he put his faith in liberalism. Through liberalism, he held, individuals from all social estates would unite and shape a powerful public opinion for change (Ibid: pp. 111-12).

## V

In this article I have argued that to early Russian liberals, and to Chicherin in particular, liberalism served a specific purpose. It was not only valid *per se*, but served to instigate a process of nation-building which he believed was a prerequisite for the modernization of Russia. Hence, Chicherin believed that the realization of his proposed reforms was not only crucial for the liberalisation of Russia. They were essential for the future of Russia as a great European power. Liberalism, nationalism, and modernity were all linked together in Chicherin's thought. The significance of restoring Russia's great power status is evident already in his first political article, written in 1855. Here, he is deeply concerned with how the mighty Russia, which before 1853 'stood at the very summit of its glory and power' and decided 'all European questions' in 1855 suddenly 'tumbles from the height of its power,' is humiliated 'and sees before itself the time when it will be a second-class European power' (Chicherin cited in Hamburg, 1992: p. 119). Chicherin formulated his reforms in the context of the Crimean debacle, presenting the ruling elite with two clear options. Either the government realized the need for reforms, or it chose to disregard this historical opportunity for change. In the first case, Russia's might and glory would be restored together with her major role in European politics. In the second case, the country would stagnate completely, military, economically, politically, and culturally. Chaos, instability and perhaps even revolution would follow. As a consequence, Russia would lose its power and influence. It would become a second rate European power. It would be forced to humiliate itself before other states and, if worst came to worst; it would lose its political independence, its sovereignty.<sup>15</sup> Chicherin presented his liberal reforms as a way of counteracting this destructive development. He believed that liberalism was of vital concern to Russia's national interest, i. e., to the survival of the state. That is why Russian liberals were also patriots.

## Notes

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<sup>1</sup> See G. Hosking, *Russia and the Russians: A History* (Cambridge, MA, 2001) for similar arguments.

<sup>2</sup> The shaping of citizens from above can be compared with similar policies in the Ottoman Empire.

<sup>3</sup> The fear of revolution was something they held in common with other contemporary European liberals (Kahan, 2003 and Lyons, 2006).

<sup>4</sup> Kavelin directed particularly harsh criticism against what he saw as Chicherin's defence of the status quo (Hamburg, 1992).

<sup>5</sup> For studies on (early) Russian liberalism, see Leontowitsch, 1957; Fischer, 1958; Hammer, 1962; Timberlake, 1972; Field, 1973; Offord, 1985; Roosevelt, 1986; Schapiro, 1987; A. Walicki, 1992; G. M. Hamburg, 1992; 1998; Pipes, 2005; Kitaev, 1972; Zorkin, 1975; Prilenskii, 1995; Osipov, 1996; Pustarnakov and Khudushina, 1996; Shelokhaev, 1998; Itenberg and Shelokhaev, 2001; Arslanov, 2000; 2004.

<sup>6</sup> Chicherin modified his negative views of the aristocracy during the 1860s. See Hamburg, 1992, pp. 136-37.

<sup>7</sup> He reiterated this criticism in a more personal attack directed at Herzen in a letter published in *Kolokol* 1 Dec 1858. Kavelin strongly disapproved of Chicherin's disrespectful treatment of Herzen.

<sup>8</sup> While Aileen Kelly, and to a certain extent Evgenii Lampert, has taken a rather hostile approach to Chicherin, Gary Hamburg expresses a more balanced opinion.

<sup>9</sup> See Leonard Schapiro, 1967 for the link between liberalism and nationalism. Chicherin was not alone in trying to combine liberalism and nation-building in Russia. Mikhail Katkov, for example, expressed similar ideas. See Renner, 2003. In this article Renner argues that Chicherin was in favour of popular sovereignty. However, this was not something he believed in until late in life.

<sup>10</sup> Chicherin believed that progress would *eventually* lead to the shaping of a liberal Russian state, where citizens were given political rights, since modernity demanded liberty, but the people had to be educated first.

<sup>11</sup> Like Turkey, Russia was a non-Western and a non-colonial state, but in the Russian case this did not mean that questions of cultural distinctiveness were irrelevant. On the contrary, they were highly relevant.

<sup>12</sup> This criticism aimed at the aristocrats is in fact similar to the one expressed by the Russian Slavophiles in the 1840s (Rabow-Edling, 2006).

<sup>13</sup> His disregard for questions of ethnicity did not prevent him from opposing Russification policies later.

<sup>14</sup> Chicherin discussed this idea in connection with the debate among Russian intellectuals concerning the merits of centralised versus decentralised government (Chicherin, 1858b: 223-24).

<sup>15</sup> In 1855 Kavelin also warned that a possible outcome of a revolution for Russia was lost independence (Kavelin, 36-37).

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## **ЛИБЕРАЛИЗМ И НАЦИОНАЛИЗМ В ПОЛИТИЧЕСКОЙ МЫСЛИ РОССИИ: БОРИС ЧИЧЕРИН КАК ПРЕДСТАВИТЕЛЬ МОДЕРНИСТСКОГО НАЦИОНАЛИЗМА**

Окончание Крымской войны и начало царствования Александра II создали условия для существенных перемен в интеллектуальном ландшафте императорской России. С одной стороны, возникли новые площадки для сравнительно открытого и массового обсуждения политических проблем. С другой стороны, идеологическое осмысление военного поражения толкало интеллектуалов к восприятию утверждающейся на Западе модели национального государства как оптимальной формы существования политического сообщества. Повсеместно в Европе и США национальное государство воспринималось как идеальный инструмент для интеграции граждан в политическое сообщество и как следствие мобилизации масс для «общего дела». С этой точки зрения, гражданские права и независимое гражданское общество интерпретировались как необходимые условия для поддержания легитимности традиционных режимов, а либеральные реформы – как инструмент формирования лояльных и патриотичных членов государства.

Именно такой целью задалось российское правительство, шокированное позорным поражением в войне. Как отмечал Р. Пайпс, либеральные реформы Александра II призваны были превратить пассивных подданных в активных граждан и выступали составной частью плана по созданию «нации» сверху и преодолению традиций бюрократического деспотизма и аристократических привилегий. Таким образом, формирование нации-государства было тесно связано с развитием либерализма и модернизацией традиционного общества, и эта тройственная связь – национализм–либерализм–модернизация – лежит в основе данного исследования.

Как известно, ранний российский либерализм достаточно осторожно относился к народовластию, рассчитывая скорее на государство и сотрудничество с ним, чем на институты политической демократии. Исторический момент – проведение Великих реформ сверху – благоприятствовал возникновению ситуации, в которой либералы позиционировали себя добронравными патриотами. Подобная характеристика безусловно подошла бы и Борису Чичерину, взгляды которого сопротивляются рубрикации в привычных идеологических таксономиях. Задача статьи, однако, состоит не в выяснении того, был ли Чичерин либералом или консерватором, а в анализе того, какое место в его политических воззрениях занимала концепция национализма как инструмента модернизации и преодоления отсталости. Теоретический контекст подобных взглядов можно найти в концепции «модернистского национализма», предложенной А. Акманом для анализа идеологической ситуации в Турции.

Толчком для теоретических построений Чичерина послужила Крымская война, показавшая, по его мнению, неспособность консервативного правительства обеспечить массовую интеллектуальную и экономическую поддержку населения. Но, не соединив эффективность государства с массовой политической активностью народа, Россия не сможет оставаться конкурентоспособной на международной арене. Тем не менее, Чичерин не считал возможным предоставить народу право участия в принятии государственных решений, предложив взамен гражданские права, которые бы подняли «дух народа». Отмечая беспрецедентную для Европы слабость гражданского самосознания в России, он связывал ее с политической индифферентностью подданных императора к «общему делу» и предлагал ее преодолеть путем создания гомогенного национального государства. В его представлении это не противоречило природе многонациональной империи, каковой являлась царская Россия. Для Чичерина, как и для большинства европейских либералов его эпохи, культурные и этнические различия имели второстепенное значение по сравнению с правовой средой и системой гражданских прав, поэтому Россия представлялась ему как уже весьма гомогенное культурное тело с единственным относительно важным исключением в виде Украины.

Идеологическая атака Чичерина была направлена против дворянских привилегий, с одной стороны, и бесправия крепостных крестьян – с другой, что но не «снизу», а при посредстве государства, которое он под гегельянским влиянием считал воплощением общенародного интереса. Вторым шагом к национальному государству должно было стать дарование гражданских прав всему населению империи. Поскольку право предполагает обязанность, именно свободный человек в закономерном государстве, в его представлении, будет осознавать свою ответственность за «общее

дело» и благосостояние всего государства: свобода порождает патриотизм. И, наоборот, лишенные гражданских прав люди не видели смысла работать на благо государства, что именно и происходило в дореформенной России.

Что же практически предполагает дарование гражданских свобод? Для европейского либерала это, прежде всего свободу слова. Свобода публичного высказывания своей позиции и открытые дебаты по политическим вопросам представляли для Чичерина важнейшие инструменты трансформации России в современное национальное государство, которое держится на доверии к нему граждан и на атмосфере, в которой люди ощущают значимость своего мнения и своей личности для правителей. Более того, без свободы слова невозможно обеспечить прозрачность политических процессов и режим законности в государстве.

Таким образом, для ранних российских либералов, в частности, для Б. Чичерина, либерализм был важен не сам по себе как идеологическая проекция политических ценностей, но как инструмент модернизации России посредством создания национального государства. Мотивом его теоретических построений была горечь поражения в Крымской войне и осознание того, что без либеральной реформы Россия будет продолжать стагнировать как военная держава, а также как экономическая и культурная сила, отходя на задний план мировой политики, теряя суверенитет и чувство собственного достоинства.