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RUSSIAN MONARCHY REPRESENTATION AND RULE , By Ayse Dietrich*, Published by: Academic Studies Press, Boston. Written by Richard Worthman. Year of Publishing: 2013. Subject Area: Russian History. Book Type: History. Total Number of Pages: 332. ISBN: 978-1-61811-582-3, \$69 Hardcover.

This book provides a collection of essays by Richard Worthman about the history of the Russian monarchy.

The book consists of introduction and four parts. In the introduction Worthman describes how and why he approached the Russian monarchy as a continuing institution and political culture rather than a succession of individual rulers who were unaware of the social and historical context in which they reigned; how the Russian monarchy functioned, its depiction in visual and literary media, its presence in Russian life; and discusses whether the monarchy plays a central role of symbolic representation in the Russian political culture.

The book's first section is comprised of three essays: the first describes the Russian Monarchy and Legal system, the evolution of the Russian Monarchy; and includes a review of Anatolii Viktorovich Remnev's book *Somoderzhavnoe Pravitel'stvo: Komitet Ministrov v sisteme vysshego upravleniia Rossiiskoi imperii*. In this part he examines the origin and implementation of the Court Reform of 1864, focusing on the education, ideas, and mind-set of a group of reformers from the reign of Nicholas I and emphasizes their role in drafting a reform measure that established a modern liberal judiciary and the legal profession in Russia.

He then discusses the difficulties that emerged in attempting to develop an independent judiciary within the confines of an autocratic. He points out that high officials who were close to the tsar and the court constituted one of the main obstacles due to their determination to prevent the principle of legality from encroaching any further into the sphere of the tsar's authority.

Regarding how the monarchy was represented, Worthman claims that in Russia the monarch was

regarded as the embodiment of the state, whereas in Britain the monarch was separated from the state, and by divesting him of power he became a perpetual symbol of the nation. In addition, Russian rulers were frequently identified with biblical, historical, or other foreign figures; Peter the Great was portrayed as a conqueror.

Worthman discusses the Russian Empire's legal system in detail. He states that in this period the law in Russian political culture enhanced the ruler's image by serving as an ideal and ornament. When Russia adopted western legal forms the law was often perceived as an alien intrusion on the informal, personal relationships common throughout Russia, because Russia lacked the legal institutions of western monarchy. Administrative cases in Russia remained under administrative jurisdiction despite the court reform of 1864, and administrative institutions' legal relations remained autocratic; every official regarded himself as the monarch's personal representative. The European concept of *Rechtsstaat*, a symbiosis of administrative and judicial organs and personnel, was entirely foreign to the Russian monarchy. In addition, Western institutions were not easily adapted to Russia, whose economic and educational levels were not on par with the west. The centralization of power in supremacy of the monarch were a necessary result of Russia's vast territory and relatively sparse population.

The second essay, "The Representation of Dynasty and 'Fundamental Laws' in the Evolution of Russian Monarchy" focuses on the law of succession in light of the representations of Russian monarchy. Worthman begins by comparing royal succession in European countries with Russia's dynastic succession. He concludes that the borrowing of a European conception of a fundamental law, realized first in a law of hereditary succession, proved incompatible with Peter I's decree of 1722 which gave the monarch the right to select anyone as his designated successor.

After the demise of the Rurik Dynasty; there was no hereditary connection between the previous dynasty and the new Romanov dynasty. Hereditary succession on the basis of primogeniture was preferred, but descent alone did not necessarily make a ruler legitimate. Therefore, the Romanovs' customary preference for succession by primogeniture was reinforced by popular consent.

The third essay is a review of Anatolii Remnev's *Samoderzhavnoe pravitel'stvo: Komitet ministrov v sisteme vysshego upravleniia Rossiiskoi imperii, vtoraiia polovina XIX—nachalo XX veka*, a monograph depicting the tsar's pervasive personal influence in the day-to-day operation of the state administration. It uses the highest institution of the government, the Committee of Ministers, as an example. Utilizing recent studies and published memoirs, as well as extensive archival sources, Remnev's book describes the practices and psychology of Russian officials as they find ways to cope with a system of government supposedly based on laws and regulations, but acquiescent to the tsar's influence.

In Part II, in the fourth essay, "The Russian Empress as Mother," Worthman focuses on the changing roles of mothers in raising heirs to the throne. The queen or empress, as first lady of the land, was the first mother as well, symbolizing the purity, wisdom, and selflessness associated with raising a child. Her virtues would ensure the sound moral development of her children as well as the future of the dynasty. Nonetheless, after giving birth, the mother was no longer publicly associated with the heir.

The foreign origin of nineteenth-century empresses was another issue. From the reign of Nicholas I

on, the imperial family began to stress its Russian character and to use Russian both within the family and the court. The empresses had to endeavor to show their Russianness and to prove their fealty to their new nationality. They expressed their attachment to Russian culture in many ways, but primarily in the piety of their Orthodox faith. However, the empress's foreign origin made her something of an outsider, creating uncertainties in the heir's own sense of nationality.

Essay 5, "The Russian Family as Symbol," examines the idealization of the imperial family in the context of the early nineteenth-century cult of family and dynasty. Nicholas I introduced the imagery and ceremony that exalted the imperial family as the exemplification of domestic virtues, elevating the monarchy and the elite as paragons of western dynastic ideals.

Worthman claims that the domestic imagery introduced in the reign of Nicholas I made the family a central symbol of the Russian autocracy's moral purity, which claimed to be the purest form of absolute monarchy. By associating family morality and autocracy, violating the principle of autocracy was tantamount to a biblical sin against the father. Likewise, violation of family morality could weaken the moral foundations of autocratic rule.

The essays in Part III examine the incorporation of the ideas of nation and people into a myth of conquest that evoked symbolic distance between the ruler and the ruled.

In essay 6, "The Invention of Tradition and the Representation of Russian Monarchy," Worthman discusses traditions invented in nineteenth century Russia as means to emphasize heroic departures and breaks from previous reigns. Despite claims of fidelity to tradition, the depiction of the Russian monarchy from the reign of Peter the Great displays a symbolic discontinuity, a pattern of indications of change rather than the preservation of traditional ties, a dynamic process, but one that produced abrupt changes of direction that could discourage the progressive development of existing governmental institutions.

In Russia, the symbolic supremacy of the tsar had always been closely linked with the extent and effectiveness of monarchical power. Through performances which reaffirmed the state's superhuman, heroic attributes Russian monarchs themselves constantly kept the transcendent image of the political order before the public. Myth and ceremonies raised the image of the monarch as a distant, legitimate sovereign whose power was derived from God, but augmented by the foreign sources of his authority. With Peter the Great the image took on a Western tinge, since he adopted the Roman models of Western Europe and presented himself as *Imperator*.

Whether his changes represented true innovations or not was irrelevant; the appearance of change was the important point. Every tsar, except the last, made a symbolic repudiation of the previous reign, as an assertion that the ruler was not limited by the legacy of his or her predecessors.

New traditions developed that depicted the emperor's absolute power as an historical expression of Russia's national heritage. For example, the creation of a national style of church architecture expressed one theme of official nationality, the historic link between the Russian Orthodox Church and the autocracy.

Nicholas I and Alexander III looked to the periods before Peter the Great as source of inspiration to construct contemporary elements of a Russian national past. Alexander III's coronation in 1883, and

that of Nicholas II only thirteen years later, both served as means to celebrate the national character of the Russian emperor.

In the seventh essay, “National Narratives in the Representation of Nineteenth Century Russian Monarchy,” Worthman shows how two distinct conceptions of a national monarchy emerged in the nineteenth century: The first was Nicholas I’s “Official Nationality,” which maintained the basic themes and images of the European myth, and claimed that the Russian people were devoted to their westernized monarchs. The second was Alexander III’s, “national myth,” which introduced the element of ethnicity to representations of the tsar.

In order to prove their national credentials, nineteenth century Russian monarchs utilized mythical narratives which showed their bond with the Russian people. The Russian monarchy attempted to appropriate nationality for itself alone, and tried to demonstrate that the westernized absolute monarchy was native in origin and spirit.

After Alexander III’s death in 1894, Nicholas II did not regard himself as a heroic westernized ruler, asserting his power through the Petrine state. In fact, during his reign monarchical nationalism in Russia was a major factor in hindering the emergence of a democratic nationalism that could possibly unite state and society.

In essay 8, “Moscow and Petersburg: The Problem of Political Center, 1881-1914,” the author investigates the symbolic implications of Alexander III’s rejection of the narrative which had regarded St. Petersburg as the symbol of the westernized monarchy until it was stained by Alexander II’s assassination, and was then replaced by Moscow as the sacred center of a reborn national monarchy. In other words, depictions of the monarchy attempted to associate the image of imperial Russia with Moscow, rather than St. Petersburg since the events in there, especially those in the Winter Palace, discredited and dishonored the autocracy’s the sacred space.

The extensive use of Slavophile rhetoric and images in depictions of Muscovy served several purposes for ideologists of autocracy. For example, it separated the monarch not only from educated, westernized society, but also from the absolute state’s institutions which were encumbered by forms of European legality and institutional autonomy. In addition, Moscow, “the holy city,” represented traditional religious values.

In the essay 9, “Nicholas II and the Revolution” Worthman discusses the evolution of the national myth into the twentieth century. In particular, he focuses on Nicholas II’s sense of a personal emotional bond with the Russian people that he described in his decrees, diary, and personal correspondence, and his reaction to revolutionary actions. He accepted the pre-Petrine myth and belief that the Orthodox religion and the Russian people’s adherence to it expressed Russia’s true national spirit.

Throughout the revolution he demonstrated his belief that he had not forsaken his office as sovereign. Despite the revolution of 1905 the tsar remained confident in his vision of a renewed personal autocracy in Russia. In fact, the failure of the revolution convinced him that the Russian monarchy could overcome any difficulty, and it was his destiny to lead Russia out of a time of troubles. Like the first Romanov, he would create a restored, powerful absolute monarchy supported by the Russian masses.

On October 17, 1905, Nicholas II issued the October Manifesto in order to put an end to the disturbances. In it he promised to establish a state and to grant basic civil liberties, personal inviolability, and freedom of religion, speech, assembly and association. However, as the founder of this new system Nicholas II clearly believed that he had the right to change it whenever he saw fit. That is, Nicholas II insisted on the old definition of “unlimited and autocratic”, asserting that the new representative institutions did not limit his authority to abolish them if he so desired.

In addition, the Fundamental Laws could only be changed with the tsar’s consent; other laws would be enacted by the tsar with the Duma’s participation. In effect, the tsar remained sovereign, and the new Fundamental Laws maintained Nicholas’s belief in his autocratic power, while giving the appearance that a limited principle of rule of law had been introduced.

In Part IV, essay 10, “The Russian Empire and Russian Monarchy: The Problem of Russian Nationalism” explores the dynamic that produced this outcome, shifting the focus to the monarchy and the rulers’ determination to rule without public participation; to combine the nation and the empire within the institution of autocracy.

The chapter cites Geoffrey Hosking who claims that the imperial state discouraged the development of a civic or ethnic Russian nationalism that could provide the basis for a nation state. Regarding the Russian autocracy he states that it “was generated by the needs of empire, and had to be reinforced as that empire came increasingly into conflict with nation-building.” According to him, “in Russia state-building obstructed nation-building,” and that autocracy and backwardness “were symptoms and not causes: both were generated by the way the building of the empire obstructed the formation of a nation.”

Nationalism became a battleground between the monarchy and educated society; each side claimed to represent the people in its efforts to control the state. Because the Russian monarchy asserted that it embodied both the state and the nation, the Russian people were left with little opportunity to act independently.

In essay 11, “The Integrity (Tselostnost’) of the State in Imperial Russian Representation” the absolute power of the Russian monarch and how it was inextricably linked to the maintenance of the Russian empire’s unity and the integrity is examined.

From the reign of Peter the Great on it was argued that the empire was vulnerable due to both its physical size and the diversity of peoples found in it. These factors dictated the forceful, unlimited exercise of absolute power if it was to remain unified.

Both the need to preserve the integrity of the empire, and the essential role of absolute rule in the Russian state’s prospering and surviving were reaffirmed in the wake of the defeat of Napoleon’s challenge to Russia’s independence and the Decembrists’ challenge to the monarch’s absolute power. Russia’s defeat in the Crimean War cast a shadow on the idealization of autocracy, as it was clear that the empire’s integrity was again vulnerable. The Polish revolution of 1863 raised new concerns about the integrity of the state. As before, the reaffirmation of the empire’s integrity was presented in an ideological and symbolic statement of unity. Similarly, the revolution in 1905 resulted in great national disorder, threatening the state’s unity and integrity.

A new legal order resulted from the unrest in 1905, taking the form of a somewhat contradictory composite of regulations. Some regulated a state which claimed to derive its authority from popular mandate and others guarded the absolute, unimpeachable prerogatives of a sovereign monarch. With the promulgation on 23 April 1906 of Article I of the new Fundamental laws the Russian state was declared to be one and indivisible.

In the Soviet period the state's unity was restored by means of the Red Army's victories, and then institutionalized in the Communist Party, a new centralized, personalized authority that continued the concepts of autocracy and territorial integrity.

Today, Putin's emphasis on Russia's territorial integrity (*territorial'naya tselostnost'*) is not merely a justification for his autocratic power, but is indicative of the unity created by the Russian people and the state of which he is the democratically elected leader.

This article is followed by an discussion with the editors of *Ab Imperio*, who pose questions that challenge Worthman's assumptions and conclusions.

In the last essay, "The Tsar and Empire: Representation of the Monarchy and Symbolic Integration in Imperial Russia," Worthman investigates the attempts to assimilate both the nation and nationalities into the hierarchical structure of the monarchy. In particular, the author focuses on the reign of Alexander II, when the state is considered to have begun, and the efforts made to create a sense of citizenship. The article summarizes these efforts decreasing success, resulting in the use of force and the imagery of national conquest in an attempt to reaffirm the empire's unity. The centrifugal tendencies already present in this multinational empire were only exacerbated by the establishment of the Duma in 1906.

The enlightenment principles behind the European myth of the Russian autocracy assumed that the empire's subject peoples would eventually be assimilated. However, the realities of local power politics in the national regions clearly demonstrated that this assumption was false. The monarchy could not break free on the mythology of conquest, which continued at the same time that citizenship was being promoted. The Russian conquest and colonization of territories in the Caucasus and Central Asia resulted in mass expulsions and the extermination of local peoples.

Alexander II believed that the reforms and measure of freedom permitted after he took the throne would result in his grateful subjects making common cause with the monarchy. However, the assassination of Alexander II and the accession of Alexander III in March 1881 put an end to these reforms. Instead the new ruler was convinced that autocracy could only be defended by ruthless force. The motif of conquest that rejected conciliation and efforts at integration reappeared.

Although attempts at Russification had limited success, this ideology was powerful barrier to the integration of nationalities throughout the empire during the reigns of Alexander III and Nicholas II. This national myth replaced assumed assimilation into a multi-ethnic empire, with a preexistent national supremacy and dominance inherited from a distant, glorious past.

At the end of the book Richard S. Wortman's bibliography written by Ernest A. Zitser and the references are included.

This is a well written book and its collection of essays on the history of the Russian Monarchy provides a complete picture of the Russian monarchy as an ongoing institution and its political culture, functions, presence in Russian life; and central role of symbolic representation in the Russian political culture. The book would serve as a valuable source for academicians as well as students of Russian history.

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