

Conservatives against Uvarov's Triad

A. E. Kotov, A. A. Amosova

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The notion of “Russian conservatism” is commonly associated with the support of so called Uvarov's triad. However, as noted even by Soviet researchers, many individual conservatives were not in the mainstream of the government policy. At the same time, the conservatives did not constitute a single whole. United by their general commitment to historical continuity, they often understood it in fundamentally different ways, focusing on various aspects: national, class, institutional, state or religious. As a consequence, they disintegrated into numerous circles, groups, “parties” and “factions” of most diverse and bizarre types. The struggle among them often resulted in inconsistencies with the essential points of Uvarov's triad. The attitude of various conservative groups towards the principle of “nationality” was most complicated. The last and the most “innovative” element of Uvarov's triad was a “sacred cow” of Slavophilism and Katkov's circle. Yet it was also criticized, and most severely — by V. D. Skaryatin and N. N. Yumatov, editors of the *Vest'* newspaper and masterminds of nobiliary conservatism. Another element of Uvarov's triad — “orthodoxy” — was not criticized openly. However, the attitude of conservatives towards it was not as unambiguous as it might seem at first glance. The central element of Uvarov's triad — “autocracy” — also underwent a peculiar, not always evident transformation in the conservatives' views. Post-reform conservatism was in fact broader than Uvarov's triad — both because of its heterogeneity and because of its belonging to an era that was far from conservative. All this ultimately led the followers of post-reform Russian conservatives to support the Progressive bloc.

Keywords: conservatism, nationalism, Uvarov's triad, monarchy, slavophilism, orthodoxy, autocracy, nationality.

Aleksandr E. Kotov — Doctor in History, Associate Professor, St. Petersburg State University, 7–9, Universitetskaya nab., St. Petersburg, 199034, Russian Federation; a.kotov@spbu.ru

Александр Эдуардович Котов — д-р ист. наук, доц., Санкт-Петербургский государственный университет, Российская Федерация, 199034, Санкт-Петербург, Университетская наб., 7–9; a.kotov@spbu.ru

Alisa A. Amosova — PhD in History, Associate Professor, St. Petersburg State University, 7–9, Universitetskaya nab., St. Petersburg, 199034, Russian Federation; a.amosova@spbu.ru

Алиса Анатольевна Амосова — канд. ист. наук, доц., Санкт-Петербургский государственный университет, Российская Федерация, 199034, Санкт-Петербург, Университетская наб., 7–9; a.amosova@spbu.ru

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Консерваторы против уваровской триады

А. Э. Котов, А. А. Амосова

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Понятие «русский консерватизм» обычно ассоциируется с лояльностью самодержавию и поддержкой так называемой уваровской триады. Вместе с тем еще советские исследователи, говоря об отдельных консерваторах, отмечали их расхождения с магистральной линией политики самодержавия. Консерваторы не составляли единого целого. Объединенные приверженностью к защите исторической преемственности, они нередко понимали последнюю принципиально различным образом, делая акценты на преемственности национальной, сословной, институционально-государственной или религиозной. Как следствие, лагерь консерваторов распался на многочисленные кружки, группировки, «партии» и «направления» самых разных и причудливых оттенков. Борьба между этими «направлениями» нередко приводила консерваторов к существенным противоречиям с отдельными элементами «триады». Наиболее сложными были отношения с принципом «народности». Этот последний и самый «инновационный» элемент уваровской триады был главной святыней славянофильства и катковского направления. Наиболее резко критиковали идею «народности» идеологи сословно-дворянского консерватизма — редакторы газеты «Весть» В. Д. Скарятин и Н. Н. Юматов. «Весть» не без остроумия опровергала славянофильские представления о природном монархизме народных масс. Постоянным корреспондентом этой газеты был киевский помещик и уездный предводитель дворянства А. М. Бердяев. Другой элемент уваровской триады — православие — в консервативной среде не подвергался открытой критике. Однако отношение к нему не было столь однозначным, как может показаться на первый взгляд. В славянофильском богословии присутствовали значимые протестантские тенденции, а М. Н. Катков был принципиальным противником самостоятельной и влиятельной церкви. Центральный элемент уваровской триады — самодержавие — также претерпел в восприятии консерваторов своеобразную, не всегда заметную трансформацию. С принципом неограниченной самодержавной власти объективно вступало в противоречие направление газеты «Весть». В представлениях славянофильского и катковского направлений практически исчез тезис о божественном происхождении царской власти. Наконец, по мере реализации «контрреформ» в консервативной среде зрело недовольство властью.

Ключевые слова: консерватизм, национализм, уваровская триада, монархия, славянофильство, православие, самодержавие, народность.

The notion of “Russian conservatism” is often associated with being loyal to the government and with unconditional support of the principles of Orthodoxy, Autocracy and Nationality of the famous formula by Count Sergey S. Uvarov¹. However, as noted even by Soviet researchers, many individual conservatives were not in the mainstream of the government policy. As the most striking example, we can cite V. G. Chernukha’s comments on M. N. Katkov’s activities. The researcher noted that “from time to time, the autocracy had to pay for the support Katkov gave it by enduring insulting reproaches”². Of course,

¹ Ivanov A. A. Pravye v ruskom parlamente: ot krizisa k krakhu. 1914–1917. Moscow; St. Petersburg, 2013. P. 4.

² Chernukha V. G. Pravitelstvennaia politika v otnoshenii pechati 60–70-e gody XIX veka. Leningrad, 1989. P. 152.

V.G. Chernukha did not exaggerate the degree of independence of both the “Moscow Thunderer” (Katkov) himself and the conservative press as a whole, noting that the difference in views between the right press and bureaucratic spheres was often advantageous to the latter: “independent” radical press “was a favourable background for moderate transformations”³.

As far as the interaction between the conservative circles and the authorities is concerned, there is another important aspect not to be ignored. Similarly to the “authorities” themselves, conservatives never constituted a single whole. United by their general commitment to historical continuity, they often understood it in fundamentally different ways, focusing on various aspects: national, class, institutional, state or religious. As a consequence, the “protectionists” disintegrated into numerous circles, groups, “parties” and “factions” of most diverse and bizarre types. The struggle among them often resulted not only in convinced conservatives’ opposition to individual representatives of the “government”, but also in inconsistencies with certain points of Uvarov’s triad⁴.

In the complex pool of ideologies, which is commonly called the Russian post-reform conservatism, we distinguish the following main trends: class conservatism (V. D. Skaryatin, N. N. Yumatov, V. P. Meshchersky), imperial conservatism (F. I. Firks, E. E. Ukhtomsky), bureaucratic nationalism (M. N. Katkov and his circle), conservative-democratic nationalism (Slavophiles and the *pochvennichestvo* (“native soil”) movement), church traditionalism (T. I. Filippov), conservative romanticism (K. N. Leontiev), neoconservatism (L. A. Tikhomirov, Yu. S. Kartsov)⁵. This division is, without doubt, purely tentative, and fundamental differences among the members of the same group are possible. Thus, Baron Firks was a convinced Westernizer, while Prince Ukhtomsky was an “Easternist”; whereas for K. N. Leontiev, who defended class, churchliness and imperial “blooming complexity”, and opposed “egalitarian” nationalism, the most important criteria were romantic ones: the “aesthetic standard” and a certain kind of historicism formulated in his “theory of triune progress”.

The situation concerning the attitude of various conservative groups to the principle of “nationality” was most complicated. The attempts of Soviet researchers to separate early Slavophilism from M. P. Pogodin’s and S. P. Shevyrev’s ideas were quite ambiguous, which was clearly demonstrated by V. A. Koshelev⁶. Anyhow, by the early 1860s the last and most “innovative” element of Uvarov’s triad had become a “sacred cow” of Slavophilism, the *pochvennichestvo* movement and Katkov’s group — it is no accident that E. Taden characterized all three as “conservative nationalism”⁷. F. I. Tyutchev viewed “nationality” as a happy combination of the French words “national” and “popular”⁸ — which, incidentally, was not at all a manifestation of the “special path” of Russian thought of the time, but was an indispensable attribute of the European nationalisms of modernity⁹. The essence of the

³ Ibid. P. 123.

⁴ *Shevchenko M. M.* Poniatie “teorii ofitsialnoi narodnosti” i izuchenie vnutrennei politiki imperatora Nikolaiia I // *Vestnik of Moscow University. Ser. 8. Istoriiia.* 2002. N 4. P. 89–104.

⁵ *Kotov A. E.* “Tsarskii put Mikhaila Katkova”: Ideologiiia biurokraticheskogo natsionalizma v politicheskoi publitsistike 1860-1890-kh godov. St. Petersburg, 2016. P. 7–41.

⁶ *Koshelev V. A.* Slavianofily i ofitsialnaia narodnost // *Slavianofilstvo i sovremennost. Sbornik statei.* Leningrad, 1994. P. 133–134.

⁷ *Thaden E.* *Conservative nationalism in nineteenth century Russia.* Seattle, 1964. P. VII.

⁸ *Tiutchev F. I.* *Sobranie sochinenii i pisem.* In 6 vol. Vol. 6. Moscow, 2004. P. 65.

⁹ *Gellner E.* *Natsii i natsionalizm.* Moscow, 1991. P. 108.

“nationality” of the 1860s was best formulated by I. S. Aksakov: “We Russian Slavs do not boast of the knightly blood; we are, in the words of Khomyakov, the plebeians of mankind; we allowed the Germans, and now we allow the Czechs to consider “kighthood” the ideal of moral truth <...> What is kighthood in the moral sense? It is a beautiful use of brute force, according to the narrowest, most conventional ideas of honour, together with a gross contempt for the ordinary folk <...> No, we Russians are not knights, we are the people, we are the plebs!”¹⁰ The democratic character of the Russian autocracy was also emphasized by M. V. Yuzefovich, who tried to combine Slavophilism with “Katkovism”: “But our Peter’s axe is more glorious / Than all the swords of Napoleons”¹¹.

It was the democratic implications of “nationality” that determined the sympathies of its adherents — primarily the Slavophiles and “Katkovians” — not only to the southern Slavs, but also to the indigenous population of the Ostsee provinces. On the other hand, the very same implications drew severe criticism from the masterminds of estate and nobiliary conservatism. In the opinion of K. F. Golovin, the Slavophiles, M. N. Katkov and K. P. Pobedonostsev were the spokesmen of the “numerous party” which triumphed under Alexander III — it had gained strength “in the last years of the previous reign <...> accused the then government (Alexander II — A. K., A. A.) of cosmopolitanism and believed the heir to the throne to be a solid custodian of purely national interests. Even at that time, this party of a special kind was a manifestation of certain unconscious democratism <...> their central tenet being autocracy, not of the tsar alone, but also of that exclusively Russian majority, which supposedly could never be mistaken. It was overlooked that this seemingly trustworthy rhetoric concealed admiration for the dense masses of people, for all their beliefs, habits and superstitions <...>. The most common ideal of the then society was unity in its grossest form”¹².

But the most scathing criticism of the idea of “nationality” came from V. D. Skaryatin and N. N. Yumatov, editors of the *Vest’* newspaper. Back in the early 1860s they stressed: “<...> We always stood for the political predominance of the upper and middle classes over the rude masses of the people. We did not join Barbier and Mr. Aksakov in singing the praise of that grande populace and sainte canaille, that great mob, of which these two dreamer-poets speak with such reverence <...> In our opinion, a clean shirt, fine and white as snow, cannot prevent one from loving one’s fatherland. In our opinion, kid gloves do not make one a criminal and do not put him *beyond* the law, just as coarse sheep mittens do not make one virtuous and do not give him the right to be above the law. For us, the smell of tar has no privilege over Ess Bouquet. We will not sit those in rough caftans in our living room and we will not drink raw vodka with those wearing zipuns”¹³.

To the editors of the *Vest’*, the idea of “nationality” seemed an imitation of French revolutionary egalitarianism — it was no accident that Russian “Milyutin’s followers” called the newspaper “our Frenchmen in civil servant uniform”¹⁴. Skaryatin and Yumatov counterposed the idealized image of the aristocratic and class-based England to the French ways, which looked favourable against the backdrop of not only France, but also oth-

¹⁰ *Aksakov I. S. Sochineniia*. In 6 vol. Vol. 3. Moscow, 1886. P. 129–130.

¹¹ *Nechkina M. V. Dekabrist N. I. Lorer i ego “Zapiski” // Lorer N. I. Zapiski dekabrista*. Irkutsk, 1984. P. 31.

¹² *Golovin K. F. Moi vospominaniia za 35 let*. Vol. 2. St. Petersburg, 1910. P. 38–40.

¹³ *Vest’*. 1863. N 12. Oct. 27. P. 17.

¹⁴ *Vest’*. 1865. N 6. Sept. 23. P. 1.

er classless societies that floundered between democracy and dictatorship: “Look while France, bearing in its past as if some curse of insane elimination of the nobility, falls into the hands of a mob drunk with blood, then into the hands of a military dictatorship; while the throne of the Mexican emperor is erected on the ruins of a mad republic; while the American States, because of their desire to keep slavery, tear their own guts out and pour their own blood England which does not know equality stands firm and unshakable, despising the storms and spreading the sacred fire of knowledge and freedom in the whole world. Does not the history of such sober peoples as the English give us proof that we must protect, keep, develop and perfect our institution of nobility?”¹⁵

Peoples devoid of their own aristocracy were regarded by Skaryatin and Yumatov as defective. Thus, they recommended their opponents from the “Milyutin’s” *Russkiy Invalid* to appeal “to the peoples known for their plebeian character, such as Chuvash, Mordva, Cheremis, and so on. These happy tribes should enjoy the special sympathy of the Slavic “prophets” because they, above all others, preserved that type of *plebeian civilization* that the enthusiastic Mr. Hilferding dreams of”¹⁶. Later on, the *Vest’* included the Balkan Slavs among the “unfortunate” peoples: “apart from the Chuvash, the Mordvinians and Turkish Slavs, it is now quite difficult to find a pure *demos* in its absolute beauty”¹⁷. Another editorial stated that “only the absence of the nobility among the southern Slavs explains their enslavement by Turkey”¹⁸.

This same logic was applied by the *Vest’* to the local situation: “If Russia proclaims the rule of the masses, it will cease to be Russia”¹⁹. However, the periodical saw the symptoms of the approaching uprising not so much in socialism and populism as in “democratic Caesarism”, which was thought to be embodied, , among other things, in the activities of the Polish “triumvirate” — N. A. Milyutin, V. A. Cherkassky and Y. F. Samarin. Accusing these “democratic Caesarists” of detesting the nobility and assemblies of nobility, the *Vest’* emphasized their democratic sentiment: “In a hereditary monarchical system, they resolutely reject everything except the voting of the crowd <...> Europe has slowly, through a historical process, reached what it is now. But we want to make only desperate leaps. Once this system is accepted, we will come to nothing else but the ultimate ruin. Not only will we fail to overtake Europe, but we will turn our Russia into a vast Kyrgyz steppe. We will shake our weak civilization to the ground, we will achieve equality in nationwide ignorance, in total poverty and in complete anarchy... The advocates of Caesarism speak of a monarchy surrounded by democratic institutions; but are the fate of the unfortunate Caesars and their equally unhappy subjects enviable?”²⁰

Skaryatin and Yumatov believed that struggle of the “triumvirate” against Polish land ownership on the Western fringes of the empire was undermining the main conservative principle, i.e. respect for property. In the eyes of the journalists of the *Vest’*, the centralization of government control together with the elimination of class divisions was associated with the worst French scenario of the “crowned democrat” of Napoleon III: “Represented by Louis Napoleon, the revolutionary and democratic Europe sits on the throne of France

¹⁵ *Vest’*. 1864. N 47. Nov. 22. P.2.

¹⁶ *Vest’*. 1863. N 19. Dec. 15. P.9.

¹⁷ *Ibid.* P. 10.

¹⁸ *Vest’*. 1864. N 45. Nov. 8. P.2.

¹⁹ *Vest’*. 1865. N 30. Dec. 16. P.1.

²⁰ *Ibid.* P. 1.

and is arming itself against the conservative Europe”²¹. According to the *Vest'*, “the notorious expression — *a monarchy surrounded by democratic institutions* — proves, of course, the sharpness of the French mind, but it has also long proved its inconsistency. The order of things established now in France seems not to be able to inspire either envy or calm trust”²².

Describing “Milyutin’s people” as “our Frenchmen in civil servant uniform”, the newspaper viewed them as the personification of the revolutionary tendencies of their time: “... In our time, when democracy penetrates all pores, when every bureaucrat has a democratic theory up his sleeve <...> Even our gazettes <...> defend such principles, which are recognized as essentially democratic both by officials and prominent men of learning”²³. In general, the *Vest'* recognized democratization as an objective historical process, which nonetheless required gradualness: “The irresistible course of events proves that even in aristocratic England the future belongs to democracy. Yet there democracy will destroy neither the state, nor civilization, nor freedom, nor will it perish itself, for it will gain power gradually, slowly, not before it becomes able to take advantage of this power. Could anyone dare to affirm that the lower classes of the Russian people are more mature than the lower classes of the English people? <...> it is useful to postpone the era of this future kingdom of democracy as far as possible; it is not only in the interest of the state, but also in the interest of democracy itself. It is necessary to postpone the predominance of democracy as far as possible until it is mature and able to use power. This should be expected from the wisdom of the legislator, otherwise democracy will perish, which has already happened many a time in Europe and America <...> It will not be long, because, in any case, everything is going to aid its appearance: both the economic situation and our political naivety, and the spirit of our age that everyone is engulfed by, and finally the limitless rationalism, this eternal companion of superficial political education. <...> In Russia, every effort should be made to put off the moment when the light of democracy will rise. It is necessary that the democratization of the country happens as slowly as possible, as gradually as possible. Allowing for the still extreme ignorance of the masses, this gradualness, this slowness, is necessary here more than elsewhere. We understand the desire to democratize a country where there is an old, firmly seated, firmly organized aristocracy, which, having seized power and supported by both law and custom and the economic situation, transcends the limits of its purpose, becomes a hindrance and stalls any movement forward. But hardly anyone will have the courage to assert that there is something like that in Russia. On the contrary, maintaining the aristocratic element, which is also protectionist, requires special concern and care on the part of the legislator, for this element is suppressed on all sides both by the aspirations of the time and by all the diverse circumstances inside the country. Everything here already favours rapid democratization, and it would seem to us reasonable to slow down its pace as much as possible”²⁴.

The *Vest'* distinguished between two kinds of the contemporary democratic movement: a crude and unconscious democracy of the masses inspired by low instincts, and a much more dangerous “theoretical” or “bureaucratic” one, which had made itself legal through the idea of “nationality”. The *Vest'* spoke about the social base of the latter in the

²¹ *Vest'*. 1863. N 20. Dec. 22. P. 8.

²² *Vest'*. 1865. N 6. P. 1.

²³ *Ibid.* P. 1.

²⁴ *Vest'*. 1865. N 6. P. 1.

following terms: “<...> In its ranks flaunt primarily literary pens, uniformed and bilious seminarians; in a word, people who want to make a career and who would not achieve this career without effort in an ordinary, peaceful course of affairs. Unfortunately, one can not but admit that some of the nobility has not remained alien to this kind of democracy developed mainly in literary circles, since writers began to devote themselves with particular zeal to the clerical service. <...> Some like the unfortunate French nobility were infinitely blinded, and acted in this case also under the influence of the magnanimous enthusiasm so characteristic of certain epochs; others, having been ruined, sought an outlet and tried to find a new fad; yet others, finally, being possessed by ambition and a thirst for popularity, strove to move forward without having a disposition for it and replaced their emptiness with the views that came into fashion... All the rubbish, all the dregs of the nobility enlisted under the democratic banner <...> Is it advisable to en flesh such a spirit? Is it useful to provide a convenient ground for action for this mixture of writers, clerks and a certain section of the nobility, obsessed with the wildest rationalism?”²⁵

The support of the “democratic” transformations by many Russian noblemen seemed to the journalists of the *Vest'* to be the manifestation of weakness and a peculiar form of “Stockholm syndrome”: “The struggle of the last remnants of the aristocratic element with democracy in some states of the North American Republic at the beginning of the present century is well known: when the victory of democracy became undeniable, the surviving remnants of the upper classes not only submitted to the lower classes, but also tried to outdo them with democracy, although deep inside they hated and despised democracy. The state of Maryland, in which the aristocracy was stronger than in the others, was the first to proclaim *suffrage universel*. The aristocracy of this state underwent something that almost always happens with the vanquished: personal egoism takes possession of each member separately. All hope of winning was lost and the fatal *sauve qui peut!* spread through the ranks of the upper classes <...> There was only one thing to do to seek the disposition of the masses, to bow to them, to flatter, to act meanly... Thus, the upper classes themselves accelerated the triumph of the masses. In the republic there was and could be no power of the kind we have that could stop this disastrous retreat. The same sad phenomenon, the same admiration for the masses, the same flattery is, unfortunately, noticed here, too. We can say that here this sad phenomenon is manifesting itself with an even greater force, because this admiration for the masses, these self-interested calculations, this flattery are covered by the toga of liberalism, while firmness and steadfastness are stigmatized as serfdom”²⁶.

The *Vest'* also warned against the belief common in the monarchical milieu — that of the conservatism of the ordinary people: “<...> There are journalists who claim that the entire protective force of our fatherland lies precisely in the hands of these ignorant masses. Everyone knows that the masses remain passive until there is an opportunity. But the fate of Russia would be miserable if its entire protective force was nothing but unconscious ignorance and rudeness. However, not only the history of the past, but also recent incidents have clearly shown how easy everyone can excite and confuse and, moreover, by the most absurd means the “unconscious crowd”. All schoolchildren know that the masses are the worst bulwark against the spirit of anarchy and insurrection; that they obey the one in whose hands the power lies at the moment; that nothing is easier than to incite

²⁵ Ibid. P. 1.

²⁶ *Vest'*. 1865. N 8. Sept. 30. P. 1.

the masses to rebellion... And robbery, plundering, murders, theft, excessive drinking, all the moral corruption of a revolution's worth begins as soon as the reins are thrown loose? Look into our history and it will respond with many a story to this wild theory about the conservatism of the masses"²⁷.

Polemizing a month later with the "Milyutin's" *Russkiy Invalid*, the *Vest'* wittily criticized the Slavophile ideas of the inbred monarchism of the masses: "Concerning the people's monarchism, the *Russkiy Invalid* argues that even the rebels shielded themselves with the tsar's name: "the people followed Pugachev" wanting to defend the idea of supreme power represented by the sovereign. <...> What consolation is it for us in what the people *thought* when committing mass murders and unheard-of robberies! From this, we draw a completely different moral than the one drawn by the *Russkiy Invalid*. If the Russian revolutionaries, taking Emelian Pugachev as their prototype, begin to assure that all their actions tend to only strengthen the monarchical principle, neither Russia, nor the dynasty that reigns in it, can benefit from these hypocritical words. Mr. Herzen himself once declared that it was all the same to him whether the welcome sun would rise under the cap of Monomakh or under a Phrygian cap. Mr. Herzen can not be considered a friend of monarchical principles, but he does not mind taking advantage of the same method that Pugachev had used. What is comforting in all this?.. <...> If the Russian revolutionaries resort to lies and deceit by accepting the titles of "tsar" or by wearing the mask of loyal servants of the monarchical principle; then we should be careful all the more; at least we should preemptively mistrust the false and flattering assurances of people, hostile to public order and capable of ruining even those weak beginnings of civilization that have been so hard to settle in Russia <...> The conservatism of the masses should not be counted on, for every passer-by, every Pugachev, every Anton Petrov, can confuse the common people by assuming the title of tsar and handing out the 'golden letters'. The fact is that with the conservatism of the sort that the *Den'* and the *Russkiy Invalid* found in the masses, it is possible to make a revolt *in the name of 'the tsar' against the Tsar* and against the entire social hierarchy"²⁸.

The *Vest'* regarded European democracy as an unquestionable evil: it always "acts like a half-educated schoolboy"²⁹; "anarchy, despotism, violence, militancy — these are the attributes of democracy!"³⁰ Reporting on the G. Garibaldi's call to abolish the constitution for a while and give the king extraordinary "dictatorial" powers, the newspaper concluded: "But this is what democracy has always been and will always be! It has always created idols, which it worshipped unconditionally, forgetting its human dignity. These are the instincts of the masses! They, these masses, are not able to manage their own affairs; caution and ingenuity in politics and finance are not accessible to them, and democracy, impatient, unable to wait, always eagerly seeks a dictator to whom it could shuffle off the burden of government control, and who would venture to lead it to the most risky enterprises"³¹.

In Russia, Skaryatin warned, the middle class being small in numbers will inevitably lead to radical forms of democracy: "We have almost no middle class. And so only the so-called clerks, seminarians, those indefinitely on vacation, etc., could become the leaders

²⁷ Ibid. N 6. P. 1.

²⁸ Ibid. N 14. Oct. 21. P. 1–2.

²⁹ *Vest'*. 1864. N 6. Feb. 9. P. 1.

³⁰ *Vest'*. 1863. N 20. P. 8.

³¹ Ibid. N 21. Dec. 31. P. 8.

of democracy, and then only for the time being. Their influence would inevitably be soon replaced by the direct power of the masses, exposing from their midst leaders obedient to them and as ignorant as the masses themselves. It would no longer be democracy, but ochlocracy, that is, the most repulsive distortion of democracy, where the predominance and influence fully rests with the ignorant, lawless mob. Its ideal is the "peasant kingdom" of the Pugachev's rebellion..."³².

A permanent correspondent of the *Vest'* was a Kiev landowner and a district leader of the nobility A. M. Berdyaev. The father of the future author of the "Philosophy of Inequality" and the "New Middle Ages" became a constant target of criticism by the local national-liberal periodical — the *Kievlyanin* newspaper. On its pages, Berdyaev the elder earned the nickname of "a fighter of the Polish police on the Russian land". Responding to the accusations that a significant part of the Russian nobility in the southwestern region was oppressed and therefore opposed to the activities of peace mediators, the leader of the nobility wrote: "How, indeed, can we not consider the Russian noblemen to be Polonised when they dare assert that one cannot give free rein to the peasants' excessive demands and that respect for the law should be strictly instilled into them. <...> Some people are sure that if the landowner is a Pole, not only can we, but we even should encourage disobedience of the peasants in his estate. <...> In vain you try to convince them that one should not corrupt the whole Russian village for the sake of corrupting one Polish family. They still do not want to understand this simple truth. May God grant that it be sown in time, so that it is not too late to correct the mistakes"³³.

Berdyaev the elder depicted "communal despotism", with all the "horrors" of self-government, in the darkest of colours: "The stupid chatter and arguments have discouraged all decent landowners from coming to the gathering, and it is now mostly composed of bawlers and scum". In addition, there were the abuses of the peasant court: "Almost all judges are corrupt. Big cases are paid with money, small cases are paid with vodka. Coming in the parish, the plaintiff must certainly have a shtof with him"³⁴.

Serious doubts about the Russification potential of the Russian peasantry were expressed in A. M. Berdyaev's correspondence: "Would it be reasonable to leave only simple people guarding the Russian nationality in the province, as is the dream of the entire party of false liberals who have invaded here? Recognizing all the moral qualities in the people, we still cannot help but say — and we are confident in the fairness of our words that the Russian peasant is not yet mature enough to understand the state interests. The bureaucracy alone will never be able to protect the people from the intrigues of a hostile party; it cannot develop a sense of conscious patriotism in it. This requires the help of an educated class of *zemstvo*: its alliance with the people. Support the local Russian nobility, strengthen it with new forces from within Russia, leave it to gain the people's trust and you will have all the elements of the power that will make the western region Russian and will be able to protect it from alien domination"³⁵.

Adhering mainly to patriotic views, the *Vest'* accused the journalists of the then "Russian trend" of being demagogues trying to conceal their genuine democratic tendencies behind patriotic rhetoric. Thus, in an article on the Ostsee issue, V. D. Skaryatin asserted:

³² *Vest'*. 1865. N 17. Nov. 1. P. 2.

³³ *Vest'*. 1866. N 54. Jul. 14. P. 2.

³⁴ *Vest'*. 1864. N 38. Sept. 20. P. 4.

³⁵ *Vest'*. 1865. N 34. Dec. 30. P. 2.

“This maneuver of the leaders of the democratic party, this appeal to the sense of patriotism, this excitement of passions in the name of the fatherland, were revealed with particular courage and clarity in the so-called Latvian question. They were not ashamed to stir up the Russian patriotic feeling against the upper classes of the Ostsee land, talking about some kind of separatism, using as a cover up the issue of the Chukhny, which had been artificially instigated by homegrown agitators with the participation of some Russian figures, perhaps honest, but certainly short-sighted, caught on the bait of local exploiters. And the party of our pseudo-democrats had already consciously joined them. <...> We insist that in the exclusively Latvian issue, religious and tribal interests are intentionally exposed through a deliberate intrigue, in a distorted form, having a goal to undermine the influence and political organization of not only the Baltic nobility, in the Latvian issue, but of the nobility of the empire in general, in the application to all those spheres, the fruitful participation in which seems to be so hated by both local and all our demagogues. <...> What does the Russian democracy desire campaigning against the Ostsee nobility? <...> Burning with the ideal love for the Chuhnets, is it not dreaming of making itself a warm nest in the Ostsee land?”³⁶

N. N. Yumatov approached the question somewhat more conceptually. He regarded ethnic nationalism as a return to the Middle Ages: “We have considered the issue of nationalities raised recently in different parts of Europe to be only one of the convulsive manifestations of the revolutionary elements of Europe. This is a direct step backwards in terms of civilization, and it would be necessary to despair in civilization and recognize that Europe is living out its last days if the issue of nationalities were not a fleeting phenomenon. It is hard to believe this, looking at how strong and vibrant the life of European nations seethes”. He considered states the most perfect forms of achievements of modern civilization: “After a thousand-year struggle, state units have been formed; these are the vessels within which the freedom of the individual, the inviolability of property, science, and arts develop... This formation of state units cost rivers of blood; European genius and powers have been put into it. Is it for nothing? Do we have to rebuild everything again? Is it possible that when these units have been developed, when all the forces have been directed to the peaceful development of the existing system, when Watt’s genius carries whole populations across mountains and seas, when the borders dividing peoples are becoming more passable every day, is it really possible to fight for these borders at that moment and to pour blood for a new delimitation?” In the “age of steam and railroads”, nationalism seemed “a genuine barbarism” to the defender of the property of nobility³⁷.

However, criticizing the egalitarian-democratic nationalism behind the Slavophile “people”, the *Vest’* did not abandon the notion of national interests and even “national egoism”. Thus, in polemizing with A. F. Hilferding, N. N. Yumatov warned Russia against sympathy for the “plebeians of mankind”: “The virtue of plebeians, marvelous beauties and virtues preserved especially in the lower classes, in this sanctuaire des sanctuaires of the faithful followers of Pan-Slavism, all these things are extremely sophisticated and bizarre for the majority of readers. Finally, as for the praise of the people, humble and “ready to sacrifice their property,” let the scholarly editorial board of the Russkiy Invalid explain the meaning of these words to those who are incompetent. The Russian conscience revolts against such an absurd characterization of the Russian people. In what way do you think a

³⁶ Ibid. N 24. Nov. 25. P. 1.

³⁷ Vest’. 1864. N 34. Aug. 23. P. 2.

people, ready to renounce their property with a lamb's meekness, are worthy of praise and capable of some future, some kind of radiant calling? To renounce one's property, to give the heritage of his ancestors to a stranger! But is there such a people in the world? And can a people survive if it allows its native land to be divided into fragments among stranger aliens? No, this is not in the nature of the Russian people — open your history books, read them, and stop entertaining yourselves with metaphysical exercise”³⁸.

Yet, the authors of the *Vest'* imparted a much more peaceful character to the subject of national egoism than Katkov did. Characterizing the views of the Slavophiles on domestic policy as “Byzantine-democratic”, Skaryatin considered the stand of “this philo-Slavic policy” on foreign affairs to be based mainly on empty phrases and bluster: “Russia has neither the strength nor the opportunity, as the Crimean campaign proved, to make the Danube Slavs independent. Therefore all sorts of agitation, all sorts of nervous excitement of the sick patriotism of Slavic subjects of the Turkish sultan, cannot not vanish fruitlessly as of today, they lead to sad consequences: executions, imprisonment, and persecution of all sorts”. Even before K.N. Leontiev and F.M. Dostoevsky, Skaryatin warned that the southern Slavs would prefer to orient themselves toward the West, and not Russia. The *Vest'* asserted: “For Russia <...> an offensive, aggressive and even revolutionary policy, which Louis Napoleon so successfully follows, is impossible. Our policy has been outlined enough recently it is a highly protective and peaceful policy and we will always win if we refer to treaties. <...> The Slavophiles advise to violate the Paris treatise and console us with the ridiculous idea that the Slavs are our only allies. But what does the union with the Slavs mean? Is there any Slavic state in Europe? After all, this means a union with the idea, an alliance with the principle of the oppressed nationalities... A union with the Slavs is as beneficial as an alliance with a man who has neither the strength nor the means. Our native Russian people are closer to us than the Turkish Slavs and we can not sacrifice our people and money in favour of the Bulgarians”³⁹.

The *Vest'* insisted that “the current interests of Russia are more important than a distant future”, and in the Eastern question one cannot be guided by “noisy shouting of our belligerent patriots”. Therefore, the editorial board believed that the only right “mode of action” for Russia in the Middle East was “moral influence”, “through internal improvement”. At the same time, the newspaper resolutely refused to recognize any threat to Orthodoxy from either the Muslim authorities or Western activists: “They are trying to convince us that Orthodoxy in the East is in danger. They spread the rumour that they seek to undermine Orthodoxy with intrigues, offering the Patriarch of Constantinople to recognize the primacy of the Pope. To dig up Orthodoxy with intrigue! We are sufficiently familiar with the history of Orthodoxy in the East recorded by martyrdom to believe this newspaper puff. Nevertheless, the appearance of such news proves that the Eastern question has once again become part of the agenda, and therefore the restoration of the ancient cathedrals within Russia will be our best tool and weapon”⁴⁰.

It was the peculiar protective pacifism of the *Vest'* that gave rise to the famous slogan “Russia for the Russians!”, which, according to A. A. Ivanov's rightful comment, was not at all nationalist in nature, because the very word “Russians” was for the *Vest'* not an ethnic,

³⁸ *Vest'*. 1863. N 19. P.9.

³⁹ *Vest'*. 1864. N 23. Jun. 7. P.2.

⁴⁰ *Vest'*. 1866. N 82. Oct. 20. P.1.

but a civil-political category⁴¹. In 1867, reacting to the rise of the Slavophile sentiment after the famous Ethnographic exhibition, the *Vest'* denounced the Panslavists: "The old time was blamed for the fact that Russian interests were sacrificed to German interests. Do they want the vital Russian interests now to be sacrificed to the interests of the Slavs? No, and a thousand times no! Russia is for the Russians! — that's our banner"⁴².

Thus, the slogan considered one of the central to Russian nationalism today initially emerged in opposition to its earlier form — the idea of a "nationality", which at the time was an element of Uvarov's triad. Another element of the triad, Orthodoxy, was not openly criticized among the conservatives. Still, their attitude towards it was not as unambiguous as it might seem at first glance. In general, Slavophile-pochvennichestvo groups shared Fyodor Dostoevsky's idea that "the non-Orthodox cannot be Russian". However, researchers of Slavophile theology have repeatedly noted Protestant tendencies within it.

Yu. F. Samarin, for example, emphasized in his private letters: "As for me, I prefer the hymn to the icon and have a better understanding of the philosophical formula than the legend, and therefore I have always wished for the Church to which I belong not to break with the past, but to rise with the natural awakening of the mind that created the Protestant lifestyle"⁴³. N. P. Gilyarov-Platonov argued that "the cement, which connects us with the Eastern (in this case, the Balkan. — A. K., A. A.). Slavs" is not so much Orthodoxy as "the deposits that lie in it"⁴⁴. "I do not consider the historical Orthodoxy, as it has developed in the Eastern Church, an absolute", wrote Gilyarov. In his opinion, one should be guided not the by "tribal principle" and not by Orthodoxy, but by "the Russian spirit, this populace *suis generis*, in whom every plebeian, every slave of humanity feels his brother"⁴⁵. Accordingly, when comparing Catholicism with Islam, he drew an analogy between the Russian pan-Slavism and the Western "anti-Papal" movement: "We occupy that place in the East opposite the Eastern Rome of Mohammedan civilization that the civilization occupies in the West opposite the Western Catholic Rome"⁴⁶. Thus, the Orthodoxy of Gilyarov-Platonov acquired the strongly pronounced liberal-Protestant features — as well as the religious views of A. A. Kireev, who strove "to differentiate firmly our holy church dogmatic truth, *the divine truth that the gates of hell cannot overcome, from the human elements that obscure it*"⁴⁷. Like Gilyarov, Kireev found "a lot of Roman Catholic, formal and, so to speak, religious-materialistic" features in "the historical Orthodoxy", and the old Catholic movement, with which he sought to unite the Russian Church, was essentially a variety of Protestantism⁴⁸.

The attitude of M. N. Katkov, the recognized classic of post-reform conservatism, to Orthodoxy as an element of the Uvarov's triad (i.e., to the role of the Church in the state and society) was no less complex. In the 1860s he, like the Slavophiles, advocated the liberation of the Church from the pressure of the state which, incidentally, did not mean

⁴¹ Ivanov A. A. Vyzov natsionalizma: Lozung Rossiia dlia russkikh v dorevoliutsionnoi obshchestvennoi mysli. St. Petersburg, 2016. P. 29.

⁴² Vest'. 1867. N 151. Nov. 15. P. 2.

⁴³ Ia liubil Vas liuboviu brata: Peregiska Iu. F. Samarina i baronessy E. F. Raden (1861–1876). St. Petersburg, 2015. P. 241.

⁴⁴ Vozvrashchenie N. P. Giliarova-Platonova. Kolomna, 2007. P. 260.

⁴⁵ Ibid. P. 260.

⁴⁶ Sharapov S. F. Neopoznannyy genii. Pamiati N. P. Giliarova-Platonova. Moscow, 1903. P. 39.

⁴⁷ Rossiiskii Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv literatury i iskusstva (RGALI). F. 2. Ed. 14. L. 8 ob.

⁴⁸ Tikhomirov L. A. Teni proshlogo. Vospominaniia. Moscow, 2000. P. 661.

turning it into an independent political force⁴⁹. Speaking of Orthodoxy, he stressed: “The Orthodox Church is our people’s church, and such it should remain”⁵⁰. Thus, the Church here really turned into an attribute of nationality — something desirable, but not indispensable for the affiliation with a “political nation”.

Later on, the freedom of the Church was no longer in question, but Katkov’s general feelings towards the Church as a state institution remained lukewarm. It is not accidental that the “prophets of Byzantism” K. N. Leontiev and T. I. Filippov compared the “Muscovite oprichnik” with Feofan Prokopovich⁵¹. In this paradoxical way, “the two Byzantines”, dreaming of a strong and free Church, resolutely broke with the Byzantine practice of church-state relations and rather tended toward the Roman political experience. Contrary to that, the “Muscovite oprichnik” with his Caesarian Papism was closer to the medieval Constantinople realities. Obviously, despite the constant praise of the Orthodox monarchy, the Church was not considered by Katkov as a subject of public life. But, clearly, he was not an opponent of Orthodoxy. Rather, one may call Mikhail Nikiforovich the forerunner of the current “official spirituality”. For example, in the last year of his life the *Moscow Bulletin* sympathetically cited a French pamphlet on Russia: “Like vessels, imbued with already evaporated incense, the Russian literature, as well as the Russian soul, is often imbued with a feeling of a disappeared faith. Some kind of a religious evaporation comes up to the cold literary strata from the ordinary people as if from the ground”⁵².

It is no accident that it was Katkov who became one of the fiercest advocates of Russification of Catholic worship in the provinces inhabited by the Poles. “The decisive separation of polonism from the Catholic Church” seemed to him one of the main instruments of assimilating the western outskirts⁵³. Katkov was ready to recognize any citizen of Russia a Russian, be it a Catholic, or a Protestant, or a Jew. Accordingly, “the big task of Russification of the western region is not to eradicate Catholicism there <...> but to disunite Catholicism from polonism”⁵⁴. The existence of Russian Catholicism would prevent, from the point of view of the Moscow editor, the use of Western Christianity as a banner of political struggle against Russia by the Poles.

Katkov insisted that both Catholics and Jews should be given the opportunity to be Russian “<...> There is an immense harm to the state in such forceful identification of tolerant religious beliefs with political nationalities, which do not have a place in Russia”⁵⁵. The independent Church appeared to him as an incarnation of the main evil in the national life “the state within the state”. In his opinion, this should not be the case in a “political nation” no matter how this “small state” stands out from the big one: through discrimination or through the granting of privileges.

And finally, the conservatives’s views on the central element of Uvarov’s triad autocracy also underwent a peculiar, not easily noticeable transformation. The rhetoric of the *Vest’* newspaper, which N. E. Nolde characterized as “a purely nobilitarian variant of early

⁴⁹ Moskovskie vedomosti. 1867. N 162. Jul. 31. P. 1.

⁵⁰ Moskovskie vedomosti. 1863. N168. Aug. 2. P. 2.

⁵¹ Proroki vizantizma: perepiska K. N. Leonteva i T. I. Filippova (1875–1891). St. Petersburg, 2012. P. 225.

⁵² Moskovskie vedomosti. 1887. N 103. Apr. 15. P. 2.

⁵³ Moskovskie vedomosti. 1866. N 26. Feb. 1. P. 2.

⁵⁴ Moskovskie vedomosti. 1866. N 61. Mar. 18. P. 1.

⁵⁵ Moskovskie vedomosti. 1866. N 175. Aug. 19. P. 2.

Russian constitutionalism”⁵⁶, was in conflict with the principle of unlimited autocratic power. At that time, even the Slavophile dream of the Zemsky Sobor had some constitutional potential, as was noted by Katkov’s associate, N. A. Lyubimov, who hinted at it in his dialogues about the French Revolution: “Both friends and enemies of the political ruin of France <...> equally testify that the question of whether a revolution is to happen or not was answered affirmatively at the meeting of notables”⁵⁷. In the quoted descriptions of this event, the contemporary reader could easily recognize the Slavophile rhetoric: “I saw how France, relying on religion, exhorted us to comply. <...> I remembered the words of the prophet: “My God, my fatherland, my fellow citizens have become me”⁵⁸. As a consequence, “clearly, step by step the power was taken from the monarch, and meanwhile, they continued to talk pompously about the rise of royal dignity and the strengthening of the throne by virtue of people’s gratitude for the allegedly granted liberties”⁵⁹.

But most importantly, it is during this very period that the idea of the divine origin of tsar’s power practically disappeared from conservative rhetoric. I. S. Aksakov argued that autocracy “is a practical truth that does not have any absolute significance, is subject to all the conditions of place and time and has all the characteristics of *relative truths*”⁶⁰. But even in the journalism of N. A. Lyubimov, a Katkovian, monarchical power took on a relative character, turning into “the result and testament of history”, “the presence of historical consciousness among the people, which should not be confused with the collective mind of the revolutionary theory”⁶¹.

It is difficult to judge to what extent such reflections were a consequence of the usual discontent with the Russian orders and the inconsistency of the real protective measures with the ideals of conservative intellectuals. For example, the policy of the authorities towards the press caused serious discontent among even conservative journalists. “In Russia”, the adherent of T. I. Filippov and K. N. Leontiev, a church traditionalist N. N. Durnovo, wrote in one of his Leipzig brochures, “russian patriots have a harder and sadder life than everyone else. Instead of listening to their open and honest voice coming from the bottom of the heart, even K. P. Pobedonostsev made sure more than once to throw cold water on them and even to expose the word of truth to administrative punishment... The best Russian people sank into the grave, the rest consider it best to remain silent to avoid trouble and material losses...”⁶²

Long before Durnovo, in the early 1860s, M. V. Yuzefovich reflected on the same topic: “And our enemies could not have devised a better means to support the Western influence on the minds — restraining the Russian speech within the limits of some official formalism deprived the most well-intentioned minds not only of developing useful ideas freely, but even of being able to reasonably oppose the most dangerous misconceptions that developed under the influence of Western theories... Censorship, restraining the speech, not only failed to restrict the spread of harmful thoughts but helped it”⁶³.

⁵⁶ *Nolde B. E.* Samarin i ego vremia. Moscow, 2003. P. 192.

⁵⁷ *Liubimov N. A.* Protiv techeniia // *Russkii vestnik*. 1881. N 10. P. 649.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.* // *Russkii vestnik*. 1881. N 8. P. 635.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.* // *Russkii vestnik*. 1881. N 3. P. 771.

⁶⁰ *Aksakov I. S.* Otchego tak nelegko zhivetsia v Rossii. Moscow, 2002. P. 897.

⁶¹ *Liubimov N. A.* Protiv techeniia // *Russkii vestnik*. 1882. N 1. P. 401.

⁶² *Durnovo N. N.* Nechto o russkoi tserkvi v ober-prokurorstvo K. P. Pobedonostseva. Vol. 2. Leiptsig, 1887. P. 8.

⁶³ *Iuzefovich M. V.* O znachenii lichnosti u nas i na Zapade. St. Petersburg, 1906. P. 9.

After the closure of the Moscow Slavic Charitable Society in 1878, Yuzefovich wrote to I. S. Aksakov: "...There is a double game here fully exposing the total incapability of our protectionist authorities to cope with the tasks of modern life. <...> Nobody would be louder than I am in demanding a strong, legitimate protectionist authorities, nobody would be more convinced than I am that without it freedom turns into the ugliest of moral human ugliness. I even do not mind dictatorship, if under certain circumstances the normal law is insufficient. But how to reconcile with the protectionist authorities, which not only allows the outrage of freedom but supplements it, where possible, with their own arbitrariness? Which <...> disperse the society that served the cause pointed to by the Tsar himself, and, at the same time, leave the outrage, with which the present time has marked, unpunished: in courts, where the murderers are acquitted; in the temples of God, where scoundrels serve requiems with cigars in their teeth, in the streets, where robberies are committed in broad daylight and where soldiers are wounded or killed while they are forbidden to use weapons"⁶⁴.

A. A. Kireev, also repeatedly indignant about censorship, explained that the authorities "are trying to find their own servants, but dress them in livery, and decent people do not accept livery. Prohibiting from talking *those who are not lackeys, who want to support Orthodoxy, autocracy and nationality* <...> they clamp their mouths"⁶⁵.

The consequences of such a policy were described in a letter to Kireev by another representative of the right wing of Slavophilism, P. A. Kulakovskiy: "I completely agree with those who think that the restraint was needed, that it was necessary to put a bridle on many things that were unbridled, but in times like this it is not always possible to keep within bounds, because pulling the bridle, you can do it too hard, cause pain <...> Now, even the *Citizen* is considered a prophet! It is necessary to fight not only with the unprincipled, broken "liberalism", but also with those who are not reasonably conservative, it is the duty of the honest free journalism that serves the Sovereign and Fatherland"⁶⁶.

But even a decade later, L. A. Tikhomirov, who shared these feelings, wrote: "The bureaucracy puts all the life of the nation in the monotonous obligatory forms, destroying, as far as the state's power allows, the entire free life of the nation, abolishes all social centers of life, and, therefore, undermines the moral and social authorities. Thus, it demoralizes the nation and brings a total lifelessness"⁶⁷. Paradoxically, Tolstoyism turns out to be akin to the deadly bureaucracy: "For the social world, it is much more terrible than the dynamite anarchism, for it brings into society neither acute crises nor the reviving struggle, but the hopeless dead rotting. It permeates the society with the bacilli of lifelessness, it erodes it in all veins and nerves"⁶⁸. The thought of the "Tolstoy-like" character of the Russian bureaucracy at the turn of 20th century was expressed by the student of K. N. Leontiev, Yu. S. Kartsov: "The theory of Count Leo Tolstoy about non-resistance to evil penetrated the consciousness of St. Petersburg statesmen and discouraged them from thinking and acting"⁶⁹.

⁶⁴ Rukopisnyi otdel Instituta russkoi literatury (RO IRLI). F. 3. Op. 4. Ed. 719. L. 34-34ob.

⁶⁵ Nauchno-issledovatel'skii otdel rukopisei Rossiiskoi Gosudarstvennoi Biblioteki (NIOR RGB). F. 126. K. 9. L. 111.

⁶⁶ RO IRLI. F. 572. Ed. 50. L. 2.

⁶⁷ *Repnikov A. V., Milevskii O. A. Dve zhizni Lva Tikhomirova*. Moscow, 2011. P. 366.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.* P. 266.

⁶⁹ *Kartsov Iu. S. Sem let na Blizhnem Vostoke (1879–1886). Vospominaniia politicheskie i lichnye*. St. Petersburg, 1906. P. 390.

The dissatisfaction of the conservatives with the consequences of the “conservative turn” was largely due to the specific character of Russian statehood: the government of the huge country could never afford to be restricted by any sort of masterminds — either conservative or liberal. Any theory was perceived by the authorities in the best case instrumentally, and any adherent of a theory sooner or later could find himself on the verge of disgrace: not only I. S. Aksakov or N. N. Durnovo, but also M. N. Katkov and E. V. Bogdanovich. On the other hand, post-reform conservatism was in fact broader than Uvarov’s triad — both because of its heterogeneity and because of its belonging to an era that was far from conservative. All this ultimately led the followers of post-reform Russian conservatives — V. M. Purishkevich, V. V. Shulgin, and others — to support the Progressive bloc.

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