A Study of Western Ideas in Russia: Socialism and the Land Reform of P. I. Pestel

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Alexander Herzen once characterized P.I. Pestel as a "socialist before there was socialism." [1] A leader of a secret society of young revolutionaries in nineteenth-century Russia, Pavel Ivanovich Pestel was one of the most radical thinkers of his day. Pestel had assimilated much from the philosophes of the French Enlightenment, as had other young intellectuals of his generation. In his conclusions, however, Pestel went far beyond the moderate reformist thinking that characterized most Russian radical thought in the early nineteenth-century. In part, this extremism stemmed from Pestel's interest in contemporary European social philosophy — particularly his interest in several concepts important to the development of modern socialism.

At the turn of the eighteenth century, socialism as a distinct, coherent ideology was still in its formative stages. As yet there existed only nascent ideas concerned with social inequities and injustices, and these ideas themselves were only a part of the larger intellectual ferment of the Enlightenment. Four basic principles of social philosophy were especially important in the formation of a coherent socialist ideology. First, man was originally social and virtuous. Secondly, environment, not the nature of man, had produced social evils. Thirdly, with appropriate changes in environment, man could be perfected. Finally, changes could not be effected so long as private property was allowed to exist, for all change in a political structure was useless while economic conditions remained untouched.[2] These principles, in turn, were supported by the twin pillars of "natural law" and "sensualism," [3] which together provided a foundation for a number of the intellectual products of the Enlightenment.

Many of the eighteenth-century philosophes based their ideas on a primitive, natural society which they valued over reality. The original inhabitants of this society were idealized as virtuous men

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whose lives were governed by natural laws. Since the average citizen in eighteenth-century Europe fell well short of this ideal, man's fall from such a noble estate needed explanation. Unspoiled, or natural, man, these philosophes asserted, had been corrupted by state and society. Man's faults were not inherent; they were acquired from his corrupting environment, absorbed by the devices through which man perceives the environment — his senses. But the philosophes did not relegate mankind to the status of a chip buffeted by the vagaries of state and society. Man could, they believed, find his way back to the natural state through a change in the environment.

Thus, the state of nature to which the philosophes hoped to return was not a mere logical abstraction, but a model for society.[4] This idea led directly to a belief in the existence of certain fundamental laws which regulated man's actions and his mode of government. These universal, or "natural," laws were discoverable through a complete analysis of the nature of man, making it possible to deduce an entire social science for the regulation of communal conduct.[5] The philosophes rejected compromise and reform as perpetuations of the absurdities and imperfections of the existing order. Instead, they suggested the construction of new systems, which were logically deduced from universally valid principles.

To many of the philosophes the most basic and absurd imperfection of the existing order was inequality, and of all the social inequities, that of wealth was the most "monstrous." Some philosophes refused to reconcile themselves to a society in which the overwhelming mass of the people lived in destitution while a few lived in opulence. They believed it "just and desirable to investigate the means of arriving at a better partition of property." [6] If man was to return to nature, then the inequality of wealth must be the first and most important problem to solve.

Rousseau was the first to articulate a solution to this problem of inequality. In *The Origin of Inequality Among Men,* Rousseau identified private property as the serpent that was responsible for man's fall from his simple and carefree natural state. This fatal departure from nature led to all the social evils and unjust laws which the usurpers of the common stock of property imposed on others.[7] The institution of private property resulted both in the

distortion of human motives and in the rise of a false ethical (and political) system. The legalization of property was at once followed by a rise in man's conscious self-interest. Hence avarice was born. This in turn produced a discord of individual wills, negating those impulses toward equality which had originally worked spontaneously.

Having been aroused in opposition to this tyranny of the "possessors," certain philosophes proposed the most logical solution — that is, the abolition of all private property as a necessary precondition for any real change in man's environment. The objections to private property raised by these philosophes constituted the foundation of a social philosophy which served as the intellectual watershed for socialist ideology. But as yet this social philosophy had not coalesced into a coherent movement.[8] Rather, it presented an amalgam of abstract ideals and theoretical absolutes which clearly reflected the profound but often confused thinking of the Enlightenment.

Although not at all approximating the scope of the Enlightenment, the eighteenth-century in Russia was also a period of intense intellectual turmoil. Contacts with Europe became closer than ever before. The increasing acceptance of first, Western fashions and customs, and later, Western ideas, was accompanied by a loss of confidence in Russian intellectual traditions (principally those of the Russian Orthodox Church). Russians turned more and more frequently to the West for the ideas which they believed could help them overcome the twin evils of autocracy and serfdom and propel Russia into modernity.[9]

In contrast to Europe, the number of men in Russia who participated in this intellectual awakening were few indeed. But these few men were dedicated to bringing about an immediate melioration of serfdom and autocracy in Russia. At first this determination was manifested in nothing more dangerous than social "circles" where ideas could be discussed and exchanged. But in the face of an intransigent Tsar these innocent circles were soon supplanted by a conspiracy to overthrow the state. The conspirators, known today as the Decembrists (for their attempted putsch on December 14, 1825) were for the most part young army officers. During the latter stages of the Napoleonic Wars these

young officers had traveled throughout Europe. What they saw of European civilization heightened their sense of Russia's backwardness and their appreciation for the changes wrought in Europe by the French Revolution. Imbued with the ideals of the Enlightenment, the conspirators intended to put these ideals into practice in a reconstructed Russia, a reconstruction to be accomplished, if necessary, by force.

The first organization of these radical young officers was a secret society founded in 1816, the Union of Salvation (*Soiuz Spaseniia*). Most of the conspirators shared a background as Freemasons. The importance of this common heritage was most apparent in the structure of the society which closely paralleled the Masonic orders. The Union of Salvation was replaced in 1818 by a reorganized society, the Union of Welfare (*Soiuz Blagodenstva*). The new organization placed less emphasis on political goals while it re-emphasized the necessity of an economic and social transformation of Russia. This society remained active until 1821 when a dispute over policy caused it to split into two independent organizations — the Northern and Southern Societies. The predominant lines of thought among the conspirators were defined by the leaders of the two Societies. Nikita Mikhailovich Muraviev, the leader of the Northern Society, typified the moderate reformism which dominated radical thought in Russia during this period. Although he called for the abolition of serfdom, Muraviev did not advocate complete equality of civil rights and was willing to accept a constitutional monarchy. On the other hand, P.I. Pestel, the leader of the Southern Society, called for radical solutions and stood virtually alone in his demand for the complete transformation of Russian society. He advocated a complete abolition of the class structure, an end to the monarchy (Pestel firmly believed in the utility of regicide), and the establishment of an egalitarian, democratic republic.

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Pavel Ivanovich Pestel was born in Moscow on June 24, 1793. His father, Ivan Borisovich, was a member of the lower nobility, attaining that rank through steady advancement in the tsarist

bureaucracy. In 1806 Ivan Pestel reached the pinnacle of his career when Alexander I appointed him governor-general of Siberia.[10] Pestel proved unequal to the task, however, and his tenure in office was marked by gross mismanagement and corruption. Despite the facade of a detached and inept bureaucrat, the elder Pestel possessed a remarkable insight into the problems which plagued the Russian peasantry. He never tired of trying to instill in his son compassion and respect for the Russian *muzhik*. Thus, despite his shortcomings as a bureaucrat, Pestel's father played an important role in shaping Pavel's attitudes toward the peasantry and serfdom.[11]

Pavel Pestel studied at home until the age of twelve. Then he was sent abroad to continue his studies, spending the next four years in Hamburg and Dresden under German tutelage. In 1810 he returned to Russia and entered the *Pazheskii Korpus* (Corps of Pages), at the time one of the best schools available to the sons of the nobility. Pestel proved an excellent student and graduated from the Corps first in his class.

In 1811 Pestel was commissioned as an ensign in the Litovskii Infantry Regiment. He was seriously wounded at the battle of Borodino in September 1812 and did not return to active duty until the following summer. In Europe he took part in the Battle of the Nations near Leipzig in August 1813 and entered Paris with the victorious Russian army in March 1814. In August 1814 Pestel was transferred to the Cavalry Guards Regiment under General Witgenstein. In 1818 he moved south with Witgenstein when the latter was put in command of the Second Army. In 1821 Pestel was posted to Bessarabia to collect evidence on the activities of Greek revolutionaries in Moldavia. He pursued this assignment with great dedication and much success, receiving the personal commendation of the Emperor for his final report. Pestel's last post was as commander of the Viatskii Infantry Regiment, a notoriously ill-disciplined outfit. Within a few months Pestel was able to transform this regiment from one of the worst units in the Second Army to one of the best, once again earning Alexander's personal commendation.[12]

There seems little reason to doubt that had he so chosen, Pestel could have enjoyed a brilliant career in the Russian army.

Promotions came easily to Pestel and he had attained the rank of full colonel with his last assignment. But he found little satisfaction in military life and gradually the study of law, economics and politics became his primary occupation.

Pestel received his first formal training in law and political theory at the Corps of Pages. His instructor was K.F. German, a professor later banished from St. Petersburg University for his sympathy with radical causes.[13] Early in the reign of Alexander I, liberal ideas had gained a brief respectability in Russia. This new tolerance for liberalism was reflected in the curriculum at the Corps where Rousseau's concept of natural law was especially popular. Pestel soon gravitated toward the most liberal concepts and in fact joined with several other students in a series of secret societies with the avowed purpose of studying proscribed political and social theories. After graduating from the Corps, Pestel continued to pursue Western ideas on his own. In the winter of 1816-1817 Pestel attended political lectures at Professor German's apartment in St. Petersburg, but according to his own testimony, heard little that was new. Most of the material was the same as he had read while at the Corps.[14]

Once introduced to the sciences of politics, economics and law, Pestel was anxious to apply his knowledge to a study of the Tsarist system of government. As Pestel noted in his confession (1826), he began this study with the aim of serving a useful purpose to Russia and the Tsar. But the more he studied, the more apparent the incompatibility of his theories with the realities of state and government became.[15] As Pestel pondered the servitude of the people and the privileges of the aristocracy, he concluded that the aristocracy formed a wall between the tsar and his subjects, concealing from him — for the sake of material advantages — the misery of the people.[16] Along with these thoughts Pestel reflected on other problems, such as Arakcheyev's military colonies, social injustices, the corruption of the judiciary and bureaucracy, the fall of trade, industry and general wealth, the burden of military service on the peasantry, and "many other" problems of Russian society.[17]

All of this presented Pestel with a sad picture of oppression and "lack of welfare." As these observations became clearer, his

attitude toward the state hardened. The Bourbon restoration in France precipitated the first firm formulations of his political opinions and concepts. In that restoration, Pestel saw that most of the basic resolutions promulgated by the revolutionaries had been preserved under the new monarchy. For that very reason Pestel became convinced not only that a revolution could be useful, but also that any government that had not undergone a revolution remained devoid of the advantages accrued through such an upheaval.[18]

Pestel's revolutionary convictions soon brought him into contact with the conspirators of the Union of Salvation, whom he joined in January 1817. Pestel stood out as one of the most brilliant and widely-read of this group of intelligent and well-educated young men. His thinking was heavily colored with ideas drawn from the French Enlightenment, although Pestel was also acquainted with Bentham's utilitarianism and the economic views of Adam Smith. Works by Helvetius, Mably, Montesquieu, Raynal, Rousseau, Say, Smith and Bentham figured prominently in Pestel's library.[19] He also kept a notebook of quotations from books of special interest. Included in this were selections from Voltaire, Diderot, Holbach and Beccaria.[20] Pestel was familiar with the works of Sismondi as well as Destutt de Tracy's *Commentaire sur l'esprit des lois.*[21] He acknowledged a particular debt to the latter work which had "changed him from a federalist to a republican and played a major role in the ultimate formulation of his *Weltanschauung.*[22]

Pestel codified his plans for reform in a constitution entitled *Russkaia Pravda (Russian Justice).* He wrote an early version in 1821 and as his ideas grew more radical Pestel revised his constitution accordingly. In 1824 he began a comprehensive revision of the work, but was able to complete only two and one-half chapters before his arrest in December 1825.[23] In it can be found the heart of Pestel's plan for a new Russia — his land reform. It was this reform that led Herzen and others to label Pestel as a "socialist."

Pestel intended to divide the Russian land equally into "private" and "social" sectors. The origins of the plan lie in the two prevailing theories of property then popular in Europe. Pestel explained his understanding of these theories at some length.

> The first opinion can be explained thusly: A man is located on the land. He can only live on the land and only from the land can he receive subsistence. The Supreme Being created mankind on the land, and He gave the land to him to fulfill his needs. Nature produces all the nourishment a man can use, consequently land is the social property of all mankind, and not for individuals. Under no circumstance may it be divided amongst some people while excluding others. As soon as one man exists who is deprived the use of land then the will of God and the laws of Nature are transgressed and natural rights and the nature of man become determined by violence and the misuse of power (*zlovlastie*).[24]

This view closely conforms to Rousseau's condemnation of private property, especially as expressed in *The Origin of Inequality Among Men,*[25] a work which Pestel probably studied while a student at the Corps of Pages.

But there was another concept of property which Pestel found equally compelling.

> The second opinion, contrary to the first, explains that labor and work are the sources of property and that he who improves the land, and by any means produces growth (crops) should have the exclusive right of possession of that land. To this judgement it is also necessary to add the concept that in order for agriculture to flourish many expenses are incurred, and that only he who has full confidence that he owns the land will be willing to invest in these expenses. The uncertainty engendered as land passes from hand to hand will never allow the improvement of agriculture. Thus all land should be the property of a few people despite the fact that this rule will exclude the majority of people from owning land.[26]

In this citation Pestel closely parallels the defense of private property set forth by John Locke in *Civil Government.*[27] Again, Pestel quite likely was introduced to Locke's works at the Corps of Pages.[28]

Pestel saw justice in both conceptions and his land reform attempted to reconcile them. According to his plan, one-half the land would be assigned to the individual *volosti* (rural districts). Each citizen would be assigned to a *volost* where he would be given enough land to sustain himself and his family.[29]

> The social land will belong to the entire *volost* society in common, and comprise its inalienable property. It cannot be sold or mortgaged. It will be assigned for the attainment of the necessities (of life) for all citizens without exception and will be the possession of all and each.[30]

By providing the "necessities of life" Pestel intended that this "social" land would guarantee each citizen economic independence.[31] Men received this land not as a gift but as a right, for Pestel believed that the State was obliged to supply its citizens with the means of subsistence. "Those who enjoy social support receive it not out of kindness, but as a right, for the first obligation of a man is the preservation of his existence." Therefore "each has the right to that which he needs and without which he could not exist." [32]

Pestel intended that the second, or "private," theory of property would be applied to the remaining half of the land. It was intended to supply the surplus, or profits, which Pestel believed were necessary for the prosperity of the nation.[33] The State treasury would control this land and be empowered to sell or rent it to individuals. Plots, if purchased, would become the property of the buyer and could be passed on to his heirs in perpetuity. No limit was placed on the amount of land one man could purchase and no restrictions were placed on buying land in a *volost* other than one's own. But this land could be purchased only after the needs of all the people had been met.[34]

From the above, it is clear that Pestel predicated his idea of equality on the possession of land. Only those who were registered in a *volost* could become citizens in Pestel's Russia — thus all men were placed on one political level. Equality was cemented by the possession of "social" land, which was automatically a right of all members of the *volost*. Possession of this plot of land, Pestel

believed, would prevent some men from becoming dependent on others — a situation that was bound to develop if the second (or "private") theory of property was allowed to predominate.[35] Pestel did not believe in economic leveling. He did believe, however, that a free, democratic society was possible only so long as the privileges of wealth did not conflict with the welfare of the people.[36]

Pestel's idea of "social" land was thus aimed at providing all men with the necessities of life, a condition which, if fulfilled, he believed would insure the political and civil equality of all. He was confident that there could be no danger of the poor being forced into subjugation by the rich so long as the necessities of life were provided for all. Since the well-being and happiness of all men would thereby be secured, Pestel felt free to allow the unrestricted accumulation of wealth on the "private" land, believing (as might a good pupil of Say or Smith) this to be in the best interests of the nation.

At the same time, Pestel was acutely aware of the dangers that unrestricted wealth might hold for the new Russia. He clearly voiced this concern in his conviction that

> the outstanding features of the present century are illustrated by the open battle between the people and the feudal aristocracy, (a battle) in which the origins of the aristocracy of wealth began — an aristocracy much more harmful than the feudal aristocracy, for the former can always be shaken by public opinion, and consequently in some forms depends on public opinion; but the aristocracy of wealth has means for defending its views such that public opinion is powerless against it, and through which all people can be led into complete dependence on it.[37]

Pestel demonstrated considerable insight in recognizing that the emergence of a wealthy class and the decline of feudalism were connected. He proposed to avert the dangers of an aristocracy of wealth through a careful plan of land distribution.

These were the major ideas which determined Pestel's land reform. There is no reason to doubt that he utilized western sources in dealing with the question of private property. The

influence of Rousseau and Locke on this point is clear. Less clear are the origins of the ideas Pestel used in the reform itself. Soviet historians minimize the influence of Europeans on Pestel's thought while pre-revolutionary Russian historians, particularly Semevskii and Pavlov-Silvanskii, tend to maximize it. All too often, the Soviet historians have resorted to verbal gymnastics and broad assumptions to "disprove" any relationship between Pestel's ideas and those of European intellectuals. The leading Soviet scholar of the Decembrists, M.V. Nechkina, rather disingenuously suggests that Russian thinkers in the early nineteenth century were the equal of those in Europe and thus were able to formulate similar theories entirely on their own.[38] But Semevskii is no less guilty of stretching a point to its limits when he attempts to draw a connection between Pestel's plan for the division of the land and similar projects proposed by the Abbey De Cournand or by the English historian Charles Hall. In his conclusion Semevskii is forced to admit that there was virtually no possibility that Pestel was acquainted with the works of either man.[39]

There is good reason to believe that Pestel was perfectly capable of original thought. Certainly the nature of his ideas set him apart from his contemporaries in Russia. Both the private and social conceptions of property were compelling to Pestel, and that he could have arrived independently at his plan for reform cannot be dismissed. Soviet historians are justified in pointing out that Russian history itself provided an historical precedent for Pestel's project, for the land had long been divided in Russia — that is, between the peasant's commune and the lord's estate. Pestel himself acknowledged this division. But the weak point in this argument is that Pestel made little use of history in formulating his ideas. Thus Pestel did not regard the historical division of the land as a source of inspiration but rather as a means of explaining why his reform could work in Russia while it might not work in a country of different traditions.[40] The past, to Pestel, comprised a sorry record of injustice and oppression, a tradition which had fostered the growth of serfdom and autocracy. Those aspects of history which Pestel did value, he tended to idealize. Pestel viewed the ancient republic of Novgorod in much the same way that he and other children of the Enlightenment viewed the republics of Greece

and Rome.[41] But a similar idealization of the division of the land or of the peasant commune is totally absent from Pestel's works.

Unfortunately for posterity and curious historians, Pestel had little to say about his sources of inspiration, particularly about the ideas behind his land reform. But it is precisely this land reform, and its provision for "social" land, that has established Pestel as a "socialist before socialism." As stated above, there was as yet no coherent body of socialist ideology which could serve as a source of inspiration for Pestel's plan of dividing the land. There were, however, many inchoate ideas included in the broad spectrum of European thought which could have convinced Pestel of the necessity of providing a plot of land to every family in Russia. Montesquieu, for example, believed that the best states would be based on the idea of "common property" found in Plato's *Republic*,[42] and that many ancient legislators, such as Lysurgus and Romulus, had divided the land of their states equally among the people. This could be accomplished, however, only upon the foundation of a new republic, or when an old state had become so rotten that the poor demanded a change and the rich allowed (or were forced to accept) it.[43] To Montesquieu, a good democracy would consist of small and equally sized landholdings.[44]

Whereas Montesquieu stressed the positive value of "common property," Rousseau offered a valuable rationale for condemning private property. Rousseau was convinced that the true cornerstone of civil society was ownership. Laws and states were founded simply to facilitate the conversion of possession into property — that is, to transform a usurpation into a right. "The first man who enclosed a plot of ground saying to himself 'this is mine,' and found others foolish enough to believe him, was the true founder of civil society." [45] Pestel, no doubt, found this idea useful in explaining the oppressive and arbitrary nature of Russian society. Just as Rousseau's condemnation of private property was primarily moral and only incidentally economic, Pestel was more concerned with the problem of civil and political equality than with economic leveling. Civil laws must be everywhere equal because they "most of all will contribute to the gift, in all parts, of a uniform shade of morality," and through this create a "strong and true political contact with the state." [46]

Pestel made clear the proper relationship between the State and the people and the rights of each. He believed that

> an unalterable law of civil society includes that each state consists of the people and the government and each of these has its special obligations and rights. However, the government exists for the good of the people and has no other basis for its existence or formation. . . . The Russian people are not the possession of any person or family. On the contrary, the government is the possession of the people and is instituted for the good of the people — the people do not exist for the good of the government.[47]

Only the full equality of rights and obligations could insure a just society. Depriving the people of their natural rights and placing all social obligations on their shoulders would inevitably entail a dissolution of the social contract and a subversion of the political structure.[48]

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There have been many attempts made at "proving" or "disproving" Herzen's characterization of Pestel as a "socialist before socialism." Whatever the conclusions, this controversy suffers the incongruity of attempting to attach modern labels where they do not belong. Pestel was best acquainted with the ideas and concepts of eighteenth-century France. He was acquainted only slightly, if at all, with the ideas of St. Simon or Fourier, and in any case he would have found these ideas, the product of a bourgeois, early industrial France, of little use in Russia. Certainly Pestel reflected "socialist" ideas, just as he reflected "liberal" ideas in the representative democracy he envisaged, or "capitalist" ideas in his understanding of free enterprise, or even "totalitarian" ideas in his plan for a secret police. But none of this equates to a "liberal-bourgeois" or "socialist" system. Pestel's *Russian Justice* was a product of its age, a period which had not yet fully experienced the interplay of ideas that would later produce Populism, a uniquely Russian variant of socialism, or the politics of the liberal bourgeoisie.

Pestel has quite unintentionally played a small joke on all those who picture him as a "socialist." At heart, Pestel was primarily concerned with one thing — the happiness and well-being of the Russian people.[49] But happiness and well-being could not be achieved simply through economic leveling. Far from it. Pestel believed that the prosperity of the nation depended on the accumulation of wealth through capitalist methods. His use of the concept of social land was simply a device through which the Russian people could reap the fruits of capitalist growth without suffering from any of its shortcomings. Might not we then say that in Pestel's hands socialism has become the tool of capitalism?

In one sense Pestel did presage the whole trend of Populist and Marxist thought in Russia. The similarity lies in this — *Russian Justice* and the more modern political and socio-economic systems proposed in Russia all succumbed to the same temptation, that of Dostoevskii's Grand Inquisitor, who demanded the renunciation of truth in the name of man's happiness. In this sense Pestel was closer to the Russian nihilists of the 1860's and 1870's than to the early French "socialists" and "communists" who valued virtue over happiness and saw materialism as fatal to humanity.[50] Pestel reminds one much more of a Rakhmetov [51] than a Morelly or Mably who were unshakeable in their conviction that virtue must be placed above happiness — indeed, that without virtue, true happiness was unobtainable. For Rakhmetov and Pestel, happy was the sated man, not the virtuous man.

Pestel, as a rationalist, chose to disregard all that is unknowable or unpredictable in human nature. He saw man as above all a rational being whose ultimate goal was happiness. His values were essentially unchangeable for they were based on what he called "natural laws." This led him to judge all things in absolute terms of good and bad, right and wrong, while refusing to see the relativity of values, and recognizing the transitory nature of his concepts. As his institutions were perfected so would man regain his lost happiness. Since happiness is ultimately defined by human needs, Pestel derived his policies from these needs, which apply to everyone, and which are primary and unvarying. History plays little role in such a doctrine.

Pestel foreshadowed the predominant line of thought in the Russian revolutionary movement. He was not concerned with the historical traditions of Russia — these had only led to misery and suffering. Rather, Russia must be shaped anew, in conformity with idealized models, for only thus could happiness be achieved. This view had much in common with the materialism of the nihilists who forsook objective reality and metaphysics for subjective sociology and atheism. The call to the Russian intelligentsia from Berdyaev, Bulgakov and other of the *Vekhi* group [52] to denounce its narrowly political and materialist interpretation of the world and seek a new approach in the struggle for its traditional ideas of social justice and individual fulfillment was intended for a modern audience. But had it been addressed to Pestel he would have found its criticism no less bitter. In this sense, and perhaps in this sense alone, was Pestel truly a Russian "socialist before there was socialism."

FOOTNOTES

[1] A.I. Herzen, *Sobranie sochinenii v 30-kh tomakh.* Vol. VII, (Moscow: 1956), p. 200.

[2] C.H. Driver, "Morally and Mably," in F.J.C. Hearnshaw, *The Social and Political Ideas of Some Great French Thinkers of the Age of Reason.* (New York: 1931), p. 225.

[3] Better known by its Benthamite appellation of "utilitarianism."

[4] A. Lichtenberger, *Le Socialisme au XVIII^e Siecle.* (Paris: 1895), pp. 4-6.

[5] Driver, p. 233.

[6] Lichtenberger, p. 7.

[7] K. Martin, *French Liberal Thought in the Eighteenth Century.* (London: 1962), p. 238.

[8] Lichtenberger, pp. 27-28.

[9] One of the first of these men was Alexander Radishchev, whose *Puteshestvie iz Peterburga v Moskvu (Journey from St. Petersburg to Moscow)* reflected many of the most radical ideas of the French Enlightenment.

[10] P. Maikov, "Ivan Borisovich Pestel." in *Russkii biograficheskii slovar,* (noted *RBS*), (St. Petersburg: 1902), pp. 593-599.

[11] See for instance Ivan Pestel's letters to Pavel in A. Kruglyi, "Pestel po pismam ego roditelei." *Krasnyi Arkhiv,* XVI, (1926), pp. 165-188.

[12] N.P. Pavlov-Silvanskii, "Pavel Ivanovich Pestel." in *RBS,* pp. 599-600.

[13] R.Kh. Iakhin, *Gosudarstvenno-pravovye vzgliady P.I. Pestelia.* (Kazan: 1961), p. 27.

[14] Pavlov-Silvanskii, "Pavel Ivanovich Pestel," p. 601.

[15] M.N. Pokrovskii (ed.), *Vosstanie dekabristov: materialy.* Vol. IV, (Moscow-Leningrad: 1927), p. 89. This thirteen volume collection contains all the documents pertaining to the official investigation of the Decembrist conspiracy. Also included are transcripts of the interrogations of all the leading conspirators.

[16] N.P. Pavlov-Silvanskii, "Pestel pered verkhovym ugolovnym sudom (po neizdannym istochnikam)," *Byloe,* No. 2, (1906), p. 136.

[17] *Ibid.,* p. 136.

[18] *Vosstanie dekabristov,* Vol. IV, p. 90.

[19] P.A. Zaionchkovskii, "K voprosu o biblioteke P.I. Pestelia." *Istorik Marksist,* No. 4, (1941), pp. 86-89. This article is a reproduction of a police report which listed the most important books in Pestel's library at the time of his arrest.

[20] N.P. Pavlov-Silvanskii, *Ocherki po russkoi istorii XVIII-XIX vv.* (St. Petersburg: 1910), pp. 270, 272.

[21] V.I. Semevskii, *Politicheskie i obshchestvennie idei dekabristov.* (St. Petersburg: 1910), p. 224. Also in *Vosstanie dekabristov,* Vol. IV, p. 91.

[22] Semevskii, p. 515. Also, *Vosstanie dekabristov,* Vol. IV, p. 91. Such a diversity of ideas could easily have led to a confusion of thought in the mind of a person studying the works of these intellectuals. Indeed, Pestel's *Weltanschauung* reveals a fondness for eclecticism, a use of disparate ideas molded into a coherent program of reform, a formulation Pestel believed uniquely suited to Russian conditions. Arthur E. Adams sees "confusion" as the key to understanding Pestel's reforms, for it enabled him to "believe in natural law and simultaneously preach the principle of utility." A.E. Adams, "The Character of Pestel's Thought." *American Slavic and East European Review,* Vol. XII, No. 2, (April 1953), p. 154.

[23] *Russkaia Pravda* was first published by P. Shchegolev in 1906. This edition is generally acknowledged today as flawed in its composition as it presents the work as an organic whole. In fact, Pestel had never completed it. Shchegolev, to complete his edition, used, perhaps unknowingly, parts of the earlier (1821) version of *Russkaia Pravda.* The Soviet edition of *Russkaia Pravda* (Vol. VII of *Vosstanie dekabristov*) is an improvement over Shchegolev's edition and clearly delineates between earlier and later fragments of Pestel's work. For a fuller discussion of this point see M.V. Nechkina, *Dvizhenie dekabristov.* Vol. II, (Moscow: 1955), pp. 71-72.

[24] M.V. Nechkina (ed.), *Vosstanie dekabristov: materialy.* Vol. VII, (Moscow: 1958), p. 182.

[25] See for instance, C.E. Vaughan (ed.), *The Political Writings of Jean Jacques Rousseau.* Vol. I, (New York: 1962), pp. 11, 169. Also A.E. Whittaker, *A History of Economic Ideas.* (New York: 1940), p. 202.

[26] *Vosstanie dekabristov,* Vol. VII, p. 183.

[27] P. Larkin, *Property in the Eighteenth Century with Special Reference to England and Locke.* (New York: 1969), p. 62.

[28] Professor German had assigned heavy supplementary reading to his students at the Corps. Included in this list were works by Montesquieu, Locke, Mably, Rousseau, Bentham and others. B.E. Syroechkovskii, "P.I. Pestel i K.F. German." in B.E. Syroechkovskii, *Iz istorii dvizheniia dekabristov.* (Moscow: 1969), p. 37.

[29] *Vosstanie dekabristov,* Vol. VII, p. 183.

[30] *Ibid.*, p. 183.
[31] *Ibid.*, pp. 185-186.
[32] Pestel quoted in Semevskii, p. 542.
[33] S.S. Milman, " 'Prakticheskie nachala politicheskoi ekonomii' P.I. Pestelia." *Krasnyi Arkhiv*, No. 13, (1925), pp. 193-195.
[34] *Vosstanie dekabristov*, p. 184.
[35] *Ibid.*, pp. 183, 187.
[36] Pestel cited in Semevskii, p. 524.
[37] *Ibid.*, p. 524.
[38] Nechkina, *Dvizhenie dekabristov*, Vol. I, pp. 407-408. Also see K.A. Pazhitnov, *Ekonomicheskie vozzreniia dekabristov.* (Moscow: 1945), pp. 42, 92-93.
[39] Semevskii, pp. 536-537.
[40] *Vosstanie dekabristov*, Vol. VII, p. 184.
[41] *Vosstanie dekabristov*, Vol. IV, p. 91.
[42] Montesquieu quoted in Semevskii, p. 534.
[43] Montesquieu, *The Spirit of Laws.* T. Nugent (ed.), Vol. I, (Cincinnati: 1873), pp. 48-49. This was one of the works assigned by German at the Corps of Pages.
[44] *Ibid.*, p. 52.
[45] *Vaughan*, p. 169.
[46] Pestel quoted in Semevskii, p. 517.
[47] P.I. Pestel, *Russkaia Pravda.* P. Shchegolev (ed.), (St. Petersburg: 1906), p. 6.
[48] I.Ia. Shchipanova (ed.), *Izbrannye sotsialno-politicheskie i filosoficheskie proizvedeniia dekabristov.* Vol. II, (Moscow-Leningrad: 1951), pp. 78-80.
[49] *Vosstanie dekabristov*, Vol. VII, p. 187.
[50] Indeed, Pestel saw "all civil virtue" as the *result* of man's welfare. *Ibid.*, p. 187. See also Martin, p. 243, and Driver, p. 243.
[51] The archtypically nihilist hero of Nicholas Chernyshevskii's novel *Chto Delat? (What is to be Done?)*
[52] So named for a series of articles (entitled *Vekhi*) published in 1909 by intellectuals dissatisfied with the course taken by the radical intelligentsia in post-1905 Russia.