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activity. Among the conservative intelligenty, the realist of the radicals found an equivalent in the superfluous man or wanderer who at last overcame his alienation by returning to the native soil.¹ In the return to the soil, which emerged as the central idea of Vremia, lay the solution not only to the tensions contained in the metaphor Russia and the West, but to the discrepancy between thought and life, the ideal and the real, as well.

Dostoevsky saw it as the task of Vremia to analyse the 'nature of our time...and, particularly, the nature of the present moment of our social life.'² The analysis included an examination of Russian history and the principles governing the historical life of the Russians and of the debates that had animated and divided the intellectual life of the country since the beginning of the nineteenth century. These topics took the pochvenniki over ground already covered by the Slavophiles, and it will be interesting to compare the analysis and solutions put forward in pochvenicheshtvo to those offered in Slavophilism.

The analytical tools employed in Vremia, which are already familiar from Grigor’ev’s organic criticism, were part and parcel of the European conservative response to the philosophies of reason. The four cornerstones of the conservative ideology of the pochvenniki were philosophical nominalism, relativism, immanentism, and organicism, which they systematically applied to Russia’s unique historical conditions and peculiar social arrangements.

1 The pochvenniki were consistent antirationalists. They insisted on the primacy of life and experience over theory and abstraction and rejected the imposition of rationally deduced, a priori ideas on life. In this sense, Dostoevsky wrote, 'idealism stupifies, captivates and kills.'³ His phrase is reminiscent of Grigor’ev’s earlier response to Stankevich’s Hegelianism: idealism was the sickness of the age because it stultified the natural development of life by forcing it to conform to ideals external to its innate nature. ‘The naive theoretician,’ Strakhov wrote in 1861 under his favourite pseudonym N. Kositsa, 'looks at reality and sees with astonishment that life does not resemble his concepts.' ⁴ The pochvenniki numbered among the theoreticians in contemporary Russia both the nihilists and the handful of liberals who were seeking to impose alien and abstract forms and institutions on the native tradition.

The dismissal by the pochvenniki of abstract theorizing as a valid source of knowledge bore a close resemblance to the distinction drawn by the early Slavophiles between rationalism (rassudochnost’), which was based on logic and analysis, and reason (razumnost’), which rested on the integrated activity of all the faculties of cognition.⁵ Dostoevsky was also alert to a tendency in philosophy and social thought to substitute theoretical formulas for reality: The mistaking of incomplete thought for complete reality - here is the root of all the errors of mankind.⁶ Reason alone then provided an inadequate basis for knowledge. Thought, Strakhov concluded, was efficacious only when it was linked to 'life itself, to reality.'⁷

2 Closely related to the antirationalism of the pochvenniki was their theory of relativism. They pointed out that the process of abstract reasoning consisted fundamentally of combining individual objects under general formulas, 'Abstract thought is, therefore, always levelling thought, which sets differences aside and deprives phenomena of their colour.'⁸ In its drive towards centralization, theory overlooked local diversity, ignored dissenting opinions, and tyrannized over thought and action, reducing everything to the monotony of its own narrow vision. The theoreticians, who espoused a comprehensive formula, ignored the fact that life advanced many contending theories, each of equal validity, and failed to perceive what the romantics referred to as the 'irony' of life.

The defence of diversity by the intelligentsia conservatives in Russia was rooted in an aesthetic appreciation of life, which valued variety and colour as desirable in themselves.

In particular, the pochvenniki directed their criticism of the centralizing tendencies of rationalism against the idea of 'universal humanity.' 'Humanity!' Grigor’ev exclaimed, 'this abstract humanity of a badly understood Hegelianism, a humanity which does not exist; for there are only organisms which grow, age and are reborn, but which are eternal - nations.'⁹ Dostoevsky echoed Grigor’ev’s opinion, There was, he wrote, no reality in the concept man; there were only particular men, These relativist strictures were, of course, aimed at the Russian nihilists who, in the estimation of the pochvenniki, supposed that they could reduce the lives of highly complex national and human organisms to a handful of general impulses and needs.

It should be pointed out that the pochvenniki were not turning their backs entirely on human universality. The general,' Dostoevsky wrote, 'exists as potential but not as reality.'¹⁰ Like Herder, Dostoevsky was convinced that the destiny of man was universal, but that the common goal could be effected only through the separate efforts of individual nations. In his notebook for 1863 he remarked: 'We do not consider nationality to be the last word or the final goal of mankind. Only universal mankind can live a full life. But mankind will attain it in no other way than by emphasis on the unique nationality (natsional’nost’) of every people. The idea of the soil, of nationalities, is the fulcrum, Antaears,'¹¹
There was no suggestion of national exclusiveness in Dostoevsky's formulation, just as there was none in Herder's. Herder was defending German culture against the universalistic claims of French civilization. Similarly, the pochvenniki were seeking to liberate Russia from the related idea that the universal human ideal had already been discovered in western Europe and had only to be disseminated the world over. Instead, they maintained that the European ideal represented only a partial expression of the universal ideal which would not be complete until all nations had added their own unique contributions to it.

3 The third element of pochvennichestvo, the idea of immanence, followed directly from its adherents' view of the role of nations in universal history. Since every nation made some special contribution to the totality of human experience, each must be governed by a particular ideal or principle. The fate of a nation, therefore, was contained in its essence. At first the national ideal lived only unconsciously in the life of a people. But during the course of the nation's history, it gradually attained consciousness. The intellectual, social, and political forms and institutions of the nation at any given moment reflected the national ideal at its current level of development.

Unlike the early Slavophiles, the pochvenniki generally preferred to speak of the soul (dusha) of a nation rather than its spirit (dukh). One commentator has pointed out that what the pochvenniki meant by the soul was the unexpressed ideas which were strongly felt and which dwelt unconsciously in the life of the people. It was these fundamental ideas that they designated the 'native soil': 'Under the term soil are meant those basic and distinctive powers of a people which are the seeds of all its organic manifestations. Whatever the phenomenon is...be it a song, story, custom, or a private or civil form, all these are recognized as legitimate, as having real meaning, in so far as they are organically linked to the national essence.

4 Strakhov's definition of the soil points to the fourth major component of pochvennichestvo, organismism. Since every manifestation of the historical life of the nation was the product of its people's unique genius, the history of the nation formed an organic whole, and every stage of its development was necessary to the whole. No aspect of the past could be dismissed as merely a preparation for the present. As the manifestation of a single ideal each past event or achievement was intrinsically valuable. This aspect of the thought of the pochvenniki was directed at the disciples of infinite progress who reduced the past to an instrument of the present.

Like most conservatives since Burke, the pochvenniki judged the legitimacy of contemporary institutional, cultural, legal, and social arrangements by their rootedness in the past. Men and nations could not ignore their past because for all intents and purposes they were their past. 'To a certain degree,' Strakhov observed, 'human life has already become firmly established, has worked itself through and taken shape; it is no longer simply life; it is historical life. Mankind forms for itself a soil, a firm foothold, history. At the present time, man can no longer reject history, cannot be separate as was the first man, cannot sever his ties with the general world of humanity.' The pochvenniki concluded that the normal development of a nation depended on strict adherence to its traditions and to the roots of its unique existence. All legitimate change was organic change, and alien impositions were inimical to normal growth.

The idea of immanence and the organic conception of national development committed the pochvenniki to a kind of determinism. In this context, determinism simply meant the conviction that everything that had been and now was represented necessary aspects of the unfolding of the national ideal. The pochvenniki therefore excluded violent breaks in the continuity of the historical life of the nation. The whole of the past was contained in the present and would direct the future.

The organic view entailed a final consideration. Just as the history of a nation formed an organic whole so did its society. Individuals, classes, and interest groups were fundamentally united in a common endeavour, the fulfilment of the national ideal, which transcended temporary divisions and antagonisms. Since the attainment of the ideal rested on a cooperative social effort, it could be realized only through the fullest possible growth of every individual and each social grouping. The self-realization of the individual was the prerequisite of national fulfilment. The immersion of individuals in society with the resulting loss of individualism subverted the complete growth of the ideal of the nation. Not surprisingly, therefore, the pochvenniki attached an overriding significance to personality and were deeply suspicious of anything that imposed restrictions on the development of the individual. In order to realize his full creative potential the individual had to be rooted in the concrete, historical reality of his own time and place. 'To return to the soil,' Dostoevsky confided to his notebook, 'no one can be anything or achieve anything without first being himself.'

The pochvenniki examined Russian history and the state of society in the Emancipation period in the light of these four major concepts and within the general philosophical framework of which they form a part. The debt that the pochvenniki owed to the memory of Moskvitianin was
never more apparent than in their attitude to Russia and the West. The same ideas that pogodin had popularized in the 1840s were resurrected in *Vremia*. In his 'Series of Articles on Russian Literature,' Dostoevsky argued that Russia had never been divided into two classes, conquerors and conquered, as had the nations of western Europe. Every political, social, and cultural achievement of the West had been the product of a fierce class struggle, whereas in Russia peaceful co-operation among the various social strata was a fundamental characteristic of the national soul. In spite of external and temporary disagreements, a neutral soil existed in Russia on which all classes merged into a whole and co-operated in peaceful and fraternal creativeness.

After his brief visit to western Europe in 1862, Dostoevsky returned to Russia highly critical of the bourgeois-capitalist society he had for the first time encountered face to face. The root failing of the West, in his view, and the cause of its dilemma stemmed from the fact that the principle of fraternity was absent in Western life. Inequality was, therefore, endemic. Western socialists had uncovered the weakness of their society, but their attempts to generate a feeling of brotherhood, where it was naturally absent, by reason and artifice would inevitably result in the diminution and eventual eradication of individual liberty in the socialist antithesis. In default of an internal unifying force, social cohesion in western Europe could be achieved only through some form of external compulsion. The West, then, lacked the qualities necessary to deliver it from its spiritual predicament.

The early Slavophiles had arrived at a similar conclusion by a slightly different route. They agreed with the *pochvenniki* that Russia was different from the West by virtue of its Slavic fraternity or communality (*sobornost*). But the Slavophiles worked out a more intelligible and consistent explanation of these differences than did the *pochvenniki*. According to the Slavophiles, the distinguishing mark of any culture was the religious faith that underlay it. The culture of western Europe was the product of Roman Catholicism which had fallen prey to the one-sided rationalism of Roman philosophy and law. Russia, to its great good fortune, had eluded the Roman tradition, and in Orthodoxy had preserved the inner wholeness of Christ's love. The West had experienced the separation of life and thought, whereas Russians were blessed with the special capacity for integrated knowledge. The separation of life and thought in the West had, in turn, fostered the atomization of Western society and produced the bourgeois individualism that Dostoevsky had so deplored in his *Winter Notes on Summer Impressions*.

The explanation of Russian uniqueness by the *pochvenniki* was less specific than that of the Slavophiles. They attached far less significance to Orthodoxy, preferring instead to think in terms of national psychological types that were assigned their originality by Providence. They regarded the Orthodox faith only as one manifestation of Russia's distinctiveness. The vagueness of this account proved in the future to be unsatisfactory to the *pochvenniki*. Grigor'ev later criticized *Vremia* for underestimating the role of Orthodoxy in Russian cultural life, and Dostoevsky, too, was soon to find in the Orthodox religion the clue to Russian originality. In *Vremia*, however, the religious motif remained suppressed.

It was on the significance of Peter the Great's reforms that the *pochvenniki* differed most profoundly with the Slavophiles. The Slavophiles were far from being unanimous in their views about Peter. As usual, Konstantin Aksakov adopted the most extreme and abrasive position. In his view, Russia stood in imminent danger of losing its 'Russianness,' for that, he argued, 'is where Peter's system of government is leading it.' Most of the remaining Slavophiles avoided Aksakov's uncompromising position. Kireevsky and Khomiakov had identified the fault of the West as the separation of life and knowledge. It was precisely this fault, they believed, that Peter in his reforming zeal had introduced into Russian intellectual development. Peter's reforms, they were agreed, had not been entirely false or unnecessary. Before the reforms, Russians had been culturally too narrow and had unquestionably needed to be brought into the mainstream of civilization. Peter had, however, confused form with content and had laid waste the Muscovite content of Russian civilization in the name of empty Western forms. As Khomiakov wrote in 1857: 'The rational development of the human individual consists in his elevation to universal human significance of that type which is concealed at the very root of its national being.' Peter's reforms, on the contrary, had trampled roughshod over the national type and had set in motion the prevailing fashion against everything traditionally Russian.

In the years following Peter's death, the Slavophile argument continued, Western education and the forms of Western culture had developed rapidly among the upper levels of the Russian population. Of itself,
education was beneficial to Russia. Again with the exception of Konstantin Aksakov, all of the Slavophiles, particularly Khomiakov and A.I. Koshelev, were insistent on this point. But education was not enlightenment. Since the content of learning (nauka) was universal but the forms it assumed were always national, education was transformed into true enlightenment only with its complete integration with the national principle. In imposing Western education on the service classes, Peter had also imposed its forms, thus excluding in Russia any possibility of a native science or art. Only the peasant class had been spared Peter's reforming zeal as well as the subsequent dissemination of Western learning. The native way of life and the principles of old Muscovy had, therefore, been preserved in the peasantry. Consequently, Khomiakov concluded in his 'To the Serbians' of 1860, a complete state of inner disunity existed in Russia between the educated and the uneducated. As a result of the reforms intellect and body were separated; knowledge and life had no points of contact.

The pochvenniki took a somewhat different view of Peter's reforms and especially of their consequences. In their view, the reforms had been absolutely necessary to Russia's development. Their analysis was surprisingly sensitive to what had actually been taking place in seventeenth century Muscovy. In the years immediately preceding the reign of Peter the Great, they contended, Russians had sensed a need for spiritual and intellectual expansion. The cause of their restiveness, according to Dostoevsky, lay in the second inherent characteristic of Russians, which along with fraternity governed their development. This was that universality which Grigor'ev had already identified in Pushkin. Russians, said Dostoevsky, 'spoke all languages, understood all civilizations and sympathized with the interests of every European nation.'

Peter had responded, consciously or not, to the Russian yearning for the universal, had moved Russia into the orbit of universal civilization and enabled Russians, as destiny had decreed, to absorb the ideals of western Europe. The pochvenniki conceded that for all of this a price had to be paid. Although Peter was correct to lead Russia into Europe, the forms that he chose to impose on his empire were not national. The common people repudiated the reforms, separated themselves from those classes that had followed Peter, and declared their moral independence. Peter's idea, said Dostoevsky, was profoundly national since it was a response to the aspirations of the people for renewal and greater scope; but the fact of Peter, the actual reforms that he carried out, were anti-national because they were rejected by the people. Left to themselves, the common people, far from passively preserving the old, pre-Petrine traditions, as the Slavophiles supposed, actively sought to produce their own independent view of life. Much of what they created was monstrous, but they, too, changed and advanced, and their faith in themselves remained constant.

The pochvenniki disagreed with the Slavophiles also about the effect of Peter's reforms on the educated. The Slavophiles distinguished sharply between the people (narod), which was national, and the 'public,' a broad spectrum ranging from courtiers through bureaucrats, to novelists, which was westernized and alien to Russian nationality. The pochvenniki were equally aware of the enormous gulf that separated the educated from the uneducated in Russia, but they denied that there was any fundamental distinction between the two groups. It was true, they admitted, that the upper strata of society, in temporarily accepting the anti-national forms that Peter had imposed on them through the sheer force of his character, had forfeited the trust of the people and incurred their suspicion and at times hatred. Exposure to European civilization infinitely widened the outlook of the Russian educated class. Its members adopted the European way of life but 'did not become Europeans.' At first they reproached themselves for their inability to do so, but at last they realized that it was impossible. European forms were the product of European nationality which was distinct from their own. Russians had to create a 'new form, our own native form, taken out of our soil, taken out of our national spirit and our national principles.'

What, then, was the purpose of Peter's reforms, which had taken such a toll on national unity? It was, replied the pochvenniki, to enable Russians to meet with and absorb the national aspirations of the people of Europe, to awake in the consciousness of Russians the fact of their universality which had dwelt within their unconscious lives from the beginning, and to foster in Russians the realization that 'we are, perhaps, destined by fate to bring about the universal-human solidarity of the world.'

Yet throughout this process, the pochvenniki insisted, Russians had remained Russians. They were as convinced as Belinsky had been in 1841 that a people could not lose its nationality by exposure to diverse national life-styles. In his influential biography of Dostoevsky, Nikolai Berdiaev argued that the fundamental weakness of Slavophilism, and later of populism, was the tendency to identify Russian nationality with the common people. The fallacy was, he went on, one of the cardinal causes of the tragedy that overtook Russia in 1917. Among the offenders he included Dostoevsky. There is little evidence, as will be seen, that
Dostoevsky ever held such a view. He clearly did not hold it in the early 1860s. Instead, he fully concurred with Grigor'ev's definition of nationality as an organic whole made up of elements drawn from all classes of society. It was wrong, he argued in his article 'Pedantry and Literacy' in 1861, to equate nationality exclusively with the common people:

Why should nationality belong only to the common people? Does nationality disappear when the people develop? Are we, the educated, not really the Russian people? To us the opposite appears to be the case; with the development of the people, all of its natural gifts, all of its wealth develops and strengthens and the spirit of the people shines through more brightly ... We only know that we were divided purely by external circumstances. These external circumstances did not permit the residual mass of the people to follow us, thus including all the forces of the national spirit. We only know that we are a too separate and small part of the people and that if the people do not follow us, we will never be able to express ourselves completely... not as we would have expressed ourselves had the whole Russian people been with us. But it does not follow from this that we have lost our national spirit, that we have degenerated.  

Unlike the Slavophiles, the pochvenniki refused to believe that educated Russians had somehow defaulted on their nationality and become aliens in their own country. The reforms of Peter had precipitated no such fundamental contradiction in the nation. The common people had continued to develop after Peter, and the educated had not discarded their nationality but merely tempered it in the clash with other nationalities. The two parts represented the embodiment of the two major aspects of Russian nationality: fraternity in the common people, universality in the educated. Only in their reconciliation would Russian nationality attain its full and conscious expression. The pochvenniki, therefore, set out to promote a community of interests between educated and illiterate.

The metaphor Russia and the West had still another side which captured the attention of the pochvenniki. The ideological analogue to the historical gulf that separated Russia and the West and divided the educated and the people in the time of Peter was the intellectual rift between the Slavophiles and the westernizers. In a series of what amounted to leading articles in the early numbers of Vremia, Grigor'ev explored the origins and implications of the schism in Russian intellectual life. His remarkable and original analysis of the growth of the conflicting intellectual trends in Russia during the first half of the nineteenth century exhibited an insight into the psychology of Russia's intellectual development that was almost entirely unknown in Slavophicism. Grigor'ev's articles provide invaluable insight into the way the conservative intelligenty perceived themselves in relation to other intellectual groups in Russia and into the place they occupied in the evolution of Russian thought; they merit examining in detail. After Peter's reforms, Grigor'ev began, there was a rapid transformation of the external forms of Russian political and social life. Despite these changes, however, eighteenth-century writers never doubted the integrity and worth of Russian nationality. While the rest of Europe slavishly imitated Enlightenment France, 'with us there was still none of this neither a negation by us of our nationality nor a struggle on its behalf.' It was only with the great historian Karamzin that the separation of old and new appeared both in Russian life and literature. Karamzin, said Grigor'ev, was the first complete representative in Russia of European ideas. He was also the first real talent in Russian literature and was the first to exercise a powerful moral hold over society. Until 1812 Karamzin was a westernizer. It therefore fell to him to introduce the ideas of the Enlightenment into Russia and bring part of society under the spell of European ideals.  

Karamzin was to Russian intellectual life, Grigor'ev continued, what Peter the Great had been to Russian political and social life: he was the first European among educated Russians. He approached Russian reality with the European ideal and deceived both himself and the reading public by subjecting Russian history to the abstract and rationalistic standards of the West. Karamzin viewed Russian history exactly as contemporary historians in the West viewed their own history. He wrote of Russian events and characters not in a tone proper to them but in a tone derived from their supposed analogues in the West. Russian self-consciousness, Grigor'ev pointed out, was built on Karamzin's History of the Russian State.

Grigor'ev suggested that Karamzin was also the chief source of all the false attitudes towards Russian nationality in literature. Under the influence of the Western interpretation of the Russian past in Karamzin's History, novelists such as M.N. Zagoskin and dramatists such as Pogodin easily fell prey to the charms of Walter Scott, whose works introduced into Russian art the Western understanding of history. Works of historical fiction were produced in Russia in the style of Scott; they had nothing in common with Russian reality. By the early 1830s began the period that Belinsky in 'Literary Reveries' had called romantic-national. A whole spate of historical novels, which Russians supposed
fully represented their nationality, appeared. No one except Pushkin suspected that this flurry of historical fiction was due to the influence of Walter Scott and of Karamzin's false historical forms. These novels, in fact, said Grigor'ev, depicted Russian historical characters as no more than copies of their descendants' coachmen. A whole portrait of Russian nationality was painted. When it proved to be false, a crisis occurred among intellectuals in which not only the false picture but Russian nationality itself was rejected.40

It fell to Chaadaev to expose the essential falseness of Karamzin's representation of the Russian past. At the time he wrote his 'first philosophic letter' in 1829, Grigor'ev argued, Chaadaev was seduced by the magnificence of the Roman Catholic conception of human unity. Thus, when he failed to find in the real Russian past the parallels with Western history that Karamzin had claimed for it, Chaadaev was intellectually and emotionally unprepared to search in Russian history for the particular laws and attributes on which the positive differences between Russia and the West could be enumerated. Instead, he came to regard Russia as a helot set aside by fate as an example to the rest of the world of the inevitable destiny of a nation cut off from humanity and from the sources of salvation.41

Grigor'ev pointed out that there were two possible answers to Chaadaev's disclosure that Russia did not fit into Western forms as Karamzin had supposed: either 1) Russians were not completely human and so should sever themselves from their past, which had deprived them of full humanity, and seek to become western; or 2) Russian life was completely different from Western life, though no less human. The westernizers opted for the former, and the Slavophiles chose the latter. 'The Westernizers,' Dostoevsky took up Grigor'ev's argument, 'having adopted the theory of western European, universal life and meeting in Russian life phenomena entirely dissimilar from this theory, condemned Russian life.'42 Westernism failed to distinguish between the false nationality conjured up by the writers of the romantic-national period and true nationality and so 'took false forms for the idea itself.'43

At first the westernizers were aware only of the differences between Russian life before and after Peter's reforms. Having assured themselves that with Peter Russia had set out on the Western path and having incorrectly understood the Hegelian dictum that the 'real is rational,' Belinsky and the other westernizers were able to reconcile themselves to Russian reality under Nicholas I. But soon they became conscious of the disparity between the Russia of their own day and western Europe and rejected everything Russian in the name of the European ideal. Aggravated by the extremes of the westernizers, the Slavophiles, too, fell into extremes. An apparently irreconcilable gulf opened between the two schools.44

Grigor'ev's analysis of the origins of the Slavophile-westemizer controversy prepared the ground for a comprehensive critique of both camps. The downfall of Slavophilism, according to the pochvenniki, was its idealism, which imposed on its adherents an abstract, theoretical view of Russian reality. Late in 1861, Dostoevsky addressed the Slavophiles: 'You are Russians, honourable men, you love the fatherland; but your idealism is your undoing, and sometimes you made terrible blunders even in understanding the most basic elements of Russian life.'45 Their idealism, the pochvenniki believed, had led the Slavophiles into a number of errors. Pride of place among them belonged to their idealization of Muscovite life. Muscovy represented for the Slavophiles the normal condition of Russian nationality from which subsequent generations had deviated. 'The Slavophiles,' Dostoevsky claimed, 'taking the old Muscovite ideal as the norm ... condemned at a stroke everything in Russian life that did not fit into their narrow framework.'46 The accusation is hardly fair. Khomiakov was far from idealizing the lives of his Muscovite ancestors. It is not, however, the accuracy of the critique of Slavophilism by the pochvenniki so much as their own view of Muscovy that is of interest here. The Muscovite period, Dostoevsky went on, was distinguished by the falseness of its social relations. It was a time in which shame, affected humility, and slavery were supreme, a time of apathy towards religion and of brutality in family life.47 In short, Grigor'ev concluded, Muscovy was a narrow shell and one which, moreover, was Byzantine-Tartar and not national at all.48 Dostoevsky went even further. If any model for national life existed, he asserted, it was not to be found in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, 'when centralization had already seriously encroached upon the truth and freedom of the land,' but in the first six centuries of Russian history, when the free land lived a broad and open life.49

The pochvenniki found in the Raskol or schism further evidence for their view that Muscovite nationality was false. The church schism of the seventeenth century represented to them the rejection by the common people of the life of Muscovy. The pochvenniki took a great interest in the schism and viewed schismatic writings as one of the best sources for the study of Russian nationality in their own day.50 If the people had reacted so violently to Muscovite life, it was vain to search in Muscovy
for evidence of the true Russian character. Even if Russian nationality were hidden beneath the beards and caftans of Muscovy, both Grigor'ev and Dostoevsky were fully aware of the impossibility of turning back. Grigor'ev wrote: 'To return to pre-Petrine Rus', little as Rus' would want to do so, or to the Rus' of the twelfth century, even though we might wish it, cannot be done, at least with respect to forms. The life we lived after the reform cannot be eliminated: it was, and to deny as false the forces at work within it is quixotic fun, innocent, of course, but not a little amusing.\(^\text{51}\)

The second major error of Slavophilsim, so the pochvenniki believed, was its idealization of the peasant as the only remaining embodiment of Russian nationality. This myth prevented the Slavophiles from discerning the true nature of their times. They remained the victims of a proud and stubborn immobility at a time when all of Russia was in a state of flux. The Slavophiles failed to grasp that nationality was not a static entity, monopolized and preserved by one social group. Rather it was a process of continuous creation from the strivings of separate individuals and groups, ever advancing towards complete and conscious expression. The Slavophiles had played a significant part in their time, but in the general return to the soil 'Slavophile influence played scarcely any role.\(^\text{52}\) Enmeshed in its own theory, Slavophilsim had proved incapable of correctly interpreting Russia, either past or present, and retained merely historical interest. Grigor'ev pronounced an obituary for the Slavophiles: 'Slavophilsim, which is by now already the same kind of historical phenomenon as Westernism, did not take the people as it was in life but always searched for its own ideal people and trimmed the shoots of the great, organic life according to a ready-made pattern.\(^\text{53}\)

Westernism was also subjected to a penetrating analysis by the pochvenniki. Grigor'ev's earlier critique of the baleful influence of the Hegelian idea of universal spirit on Russian intellectual development in the 1840s formed the framework of their analysis. Russians, Grigor'ev maintained, had not understood Hegel because they had taken his theory too literally. In the aftermath of Chaadaev's letter, the westernizers had applied the German romantic ideal to Russian history, but having in time noted the discrepancy between the ideal and the real Russian past had rejected the history of their nation as a false path. Belinsky, who exercised enormous influence over his contemporaries, was instrumental in fostering what Grigor'ev called the 'historical view.' Grigor'ev believed that in placing the ideal or goal of humanity at the end of history, the historical view, by which he meant Hegelian historicism, reduced individuals and nations to mere instruments of universal spirit. Men were seen as conforming, whether willingly or unwillingly, to the demands of the final purpose. The inevitable result of this cosmopolitan notion of human progress was the elimination of individual differences and local peculiarities and the centralization of human attributes under the general rubric of abstract humanity. The westernizers, therefore, denied Russia's uniqueness and, rejoicing in Peter the Great as the hero who had brought the nation into the current of universal human progress, insisted that Russia too must pursue the path of Western development. For the sake of a theory imported from the West, the westernizers ignored the true facts and real needs of the national life.\(^\text{54}\)

Both Grigor'ev and Dostoevsky believed nevertheless that westernism represented a necessary facet of Russian development. Westernism was, Dostoevsky affirmed, the last spark of the Petrine reform and represented the innate capacity of the Russian for self-analysis and self-criticism.\(^\text{55}\)

Having searched for truth abroad, the westernizers inevitably concluded that the European ideal of humanity was partial and inadequate for Russia:

But having recognized the necessity of the soil, Westernism became convinced, by its previous life and development, that it was not a question of maledictions but of reconciliation and union, that the reform had outlived its time but, nevertheless, had introduced us to the great element of universal humanity, had forced us to comprehend and place it before us as our main purpose in the future, as the law of our nature, as the most important goal of all the strivings of Russia's vitality and spirit. And take note; the great mass of society in Russia always sympathized with the Westernizers.\(^\text{56}\)

The merciless analysis by the westernizers had, therefore, pushed society forward. They were, Dostoevsky was convinced, the 'beginning of consciousness, the beginning of will power, the beginning of new forms of life.'\(^\text{57}\)

Having unravelled the metaphor Russia and the West and set out its polarities -Russia before Peter and Russia after Peter, civilization and the Russian ideal, the educated and the people, Slavophilsim and westernism -the pochvenniki turned to the more challenging task of resolving the conflicts which it contained. The solution, like the metaphor itself, was comprehensive. The ultimate goal that the pochvenniki had in view differed little from that proposed by the Slavophiles. Both were seeking to overcome the gap between the educated and the masses and reintegrate Russian society. They differed, however, about the means by
which the desired end would be attained. Whereas the Slavophiles were voluntarists, the pochvenniki, as has been seen, were determinists. To the static national ideal of Slavophilism, which the educated had to retrieve by means of a conscious act of will, the pochvenniki opposed an evolving, organic synthesis of indigenous elements with universal civilization. The former were most evident among the common people but were also strongly felt among the educated; the latter was the gift of the educated to the people. The Slavophile analysis of Peter's reforms precluded an evolutionary solution. The reforms had, in their view, interrupted the natural development of Russian history and divided the consciousness of the nation into two irreconcilable camps. Only one camp, that of the people, had retained Russian nationality; the other had surrendered itself entirely to alien ideals. 'The restoration of our specific intellectual powers,' Khomiakov wrote in 1847, 'fully depends on a living union with the ancient but, nevertheless, to us fully Russian life, and this union is possible only by means of sincere love.' Imbued as they were with the alien, Western principles, the Slavophiles believed, the educated had forfeited their nationality. Only by a conscious act of the renunciation of westernism, an act culminating in sincere and profound love for the people, could they regain their nationality. It was not reconciliation that the Slavophiles offered but renunciation, repentance, and humble submission.

The pochvenniki took quite another view of the matter. Since nationality was not a fixed entity, but rather, as Herder had demonstrated, a continuous development in which all classes participated, there was not and never had been a rift in the national consciousness. Russian nationality belonged to neither the educated nor the people but transcended and subsumed both in an organic whole. Since Peter's reforms had been a necessary part of Russian national development, the continuity of Russian history had never been broken. Russia before Peter and Russia after Peter were organically joined. The pochvenniki refused to view the reforms of Peter, as did the westernizers, as the real beginning of Russian historical life, or as did the Slavophiles, as a break with the national character. Rather, they accepted Russian life as history made it. In the manifesto for Vremia of 1862 Dostoevsky wrote:

We do not go to ancient Moscow for our ideals [Slavophilism]; we do not say that first everything has to be transformed in the German manner and only then can we consider our nationality to be suitable material for a future, eternal edifice [westernism]. We have worked directly from what is and only wish to permit the greatest freedom of development to what is. Given such freedom of development, we believe in the Russian future; we believe in its independent potential.59

By the middle of the nineteenth century, the pochvenniki maintained, the Petrine reforms had achieved all of their objectives. Russians had been introduced to civilization; and they at last understood that the 'character of our future activity must be in the highest degree universal and that all the ideas of the separate nationalities of Europe would perhaps find reconciliation and further development in Russian nationality.'60 Unlike the Slavophiles, who ultimately opposed European to Slavic civilization and advocated withdrawal and internalization, the pochvenniki wanted to build on European culture, to revitalize it, and not to retreat into a narrow nationality. 'We know,' Dostoevsky wrote, 'that civilization only brings new elements into our national life, not in the least harming it, not in the least deflecting it from its normal course, but, on the contrary, widening our horizon, clarifying our goals and providing us with a new tool for future achievements.'61

Once civilization had been savoured and absorbed, educated Russians had come to the realization that further progress necessitated a return to the native soil, to the fundamental sources of the national character, the great reservoir of which was the common people. Without calling on the reserves of strength in the people, the educated would remain suspended in the air of abstraction. Thus the journey into civilization begun by Peter had ended in the return to the concrete reality of the Russian soil.62 Before the new life could begin, the reconciliation of the followers of the reforms and the common people was essential. Dostoevsky continued:

Here we are not talking about the Slavophiles or Westernizers. Our era is completely indifferent to their domestic quarrels. We are talking about the reconciliation of civilization with the national principle. We believe that both sides must finally come to an understanding of one another, must clear up all the misunderstandings which have amassed in such incredible numbers between them and then advance in concord, with uncompromisingly combined forces, along a new, broad and glorious path. Union at all costs, in spite of all sacrifices and as quickly as possible -that is our motivating idea, that is our motto.63

Ultimately, the pochvenniki resolved the conflicts inherent in the metaphor Russia and the West by denying that they existed except in the minds of the 'theoreticians.' They were simply abstractions that had no existence in the concrete reality of Russian life and history or, at most,
were temporary aberrations on the surface of the otherwise unruffled inner unanimity of Russian culture and society. The first guiding principle of Russian nationality -fraternity -guaranteed internal social harmony. But by itself, fraternity had, during the Muscovite era, proven incapable of creating a free and full life for the people. Hence the significance of Peter's reforms. For Russians possessed yet another quality, universality, or the capacity to assimilate the collective achievements of the ages and to create a harmonious whole from the conflicting principles of other nationalities. To this universal synthesis, the Russians would add their own principle of fraternity. The Russian experiment, therefore, was an experiment on behalf of humanity and represented the next phase in the development of universal civilization.

The obvious eclecticism of pochvennichestvo permitted it considerable flexibility in the formulation of a program. The whole concept of an integrated culture presupposed an amalgam of widely diverse components. But the tendency to borrow extensively from a wide variety of sources also impeded the exposition of a clear and concise statement of beliefs that the reading public could readily assimilate. The vagueness of Vremia, which contemporaries noted and criticized, was by no means mitigated by the editors' insistence that only life could determine the course of Russian development. The principles guiding the evolution of a nation could not be known in advance of their revelation in life itself. As Dostoevsky pointed out, a tendency is attained through experience, through time and life, and takes shape in direct relationship to the development of society itself. An abstract formula is not always appropriate.64 For all their professed commitment to the lessons of experience, however, the assessment of the pochvenniki of Russia's potential rested far less on a detailed and accurate evaluation of the forces at work in the past and present than it did on a utopian vision of the future. This vision, which was rooted in the romantic-idealist concepts of national types and national destinies, coloured their view of Russian history and blinded them to the real significance of the events taking place around them.

In spite of its limitations, pochvennichestvo nevertheless represented a significant change from Slavophilism. Slavophilism was originally conceived in a still relatively stable social and economic environment. The Slavophiles, as land-owning members of the Russian gentry, were rooted in the modes of traditional life in Russia. They therefore placed their ideals in the past and hoped to recapture it by an act of will. The conservative intelligentsia, in contrast, had no such links with the past; their future was inextricably bound up with the future of their country.

The pochvenniki therefore located their ideal in the future. All that was needed was to permit the present to evolve naturally for their ideal to be realized. In the changed circumstances of the Emancipation period, which held at least the promise of a more open social and political life, conservative nationalists required a more dynamic and egalitarian conception of nationality than the early Slavophiles had provided. Pochevnichestvo provided such a conception. It furnished conservatives with a coherent doctrine that stressed the organic unit of society and armed them with a weapon against the ideologies of class divisiveness. In a time of dramatic change, the idea that nationality was not a fixed entity but an ideal in the process of becoming enabled conservatives to account for and even welcome change while still preserving the framework of tradition. The evolutionary conservatism set out in pochvennichestvo was better adapted to a society experiencing economic and social modernization than were the static conservative forms of an earlier generation.