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*Russia of the Alexanders and the Nicolays. Between liberalism and reaction.
Reforms and attempts to reform in the Russian Empire*

SUMMARY

The aim of the dissertation is to present the reforms carried out in the so-called Alexanders and the Nicolays period in a coherent and comprehensive manner, presenting the initial state that existed at the beginning of the nineteenth century of the imperial Russia. The developed and proposed concepts of reforms, the attempts to introduce them and the reforms provided have been presented in a chronological and problematic way. An attempt was made to explain the reasons for the failure of the changes that the Russian Empire needed. The work belongs to the discipline of the history of political and legal doctrines, with particular emphasis on the political system and the Russian law.

The dissertation analyzes in the context of reform the reign of Alexander I, Nicholas I, Alexander II, Alexander III and Nicholas II. The murder of Emperor Paul I and the taking of the throne in St. Petersburg by his son Alexander I were accepted as the initial event. The February Revolution and the subsequent abdication of Emperor Nicholas II as well as the end of the Romanovs dynasty in the Russian Empire were adopted as the final censorship.

The object of research is not in any way international politics, wars conducted by the Russian Empire, nor the personal life of the reigning. The focus was on systemic and organizational issues, social and partly related economic aspects of the functioning of the state.

As the main reason for the failure of reforms aimed at modernization and, in the long term, saving the Russian Empire from collapse, a controversial thesis was raised that in particular led to an unsolvable dispute between opponents of any change of reactionaries and those seeking change, but not always consistent with the Russian specificity of liberals and moderate conservatives in the middle of the dispute, supporters of evolutionary changes, in line with the Russian tradition. In addition, we had to do with the existence of a revolutionary camp, which is beyond the aforementioned political system, striving to completely destroy the existing socio-political order. This insoluble dispute caused by stubbornness and conviction about its infallibility of the indicated political and ideological groups in the end led to the failure of reforms and the Russian Empire to disaster.

The work consists of an introduction, five chapters and the conclusion. The first chapter "The structure of central authorities" presents the phenomenon of self-righteousness, an unsuccessful attempt to reform the state prepared by Speransky, concepts of Decembrist reforms, reform of Alexander II and withdrawn reforms of his son Alexander III, i.e. counter-reforms. The end of the chapter is devoted to discussing the changes that took place in the Russian Empire following the revolution of 1905, the announcement of the October Manifesto, a new edition of the Basic Laws, the creation of the State Duma, the practice of constitutionalism and the fall of the monarchy. In the second chapter, "The structure of local authorities", the competences of the governors, general governors and the analysis of the institution of the lands (*zemstva*) were analysed.

Chapter three "Russian society - attempts of socio-economic reforms" consists of three parts. The first one presents the legal position of serfs and state peasants, shows numerous attempts to change the political position of the peasant population, culminating in the appropriation of Alexander II's alienation and the elimination of the *obshchina* (clutches) and *mir* (peace) by Stolypin. The second part presents the legal situation of the urban part of the population of the Empire, and the third shows the functioning of universities and colleges in Russia.

The fourth chapter, Codification of Law and Judicial Reform, shows the problem of the codification of laws in the Russian Empire in the first half of the nineteenth century and the reform of the judiciary and related institutions in 1864.

The fifth chapter of the "People of Russia and Petersburg" is devoted to the Grand Duchy of Finland, the Kingdom of Poland and the Jewish population living in the Russian Empire. The sphere of independence and autonomy of these territorial and ethnic objects from Saint Petersburg has been shown there.

While writing the dissertation, the principle of using and analyzing the largest number of book publications and scientific articles published in a Polish language was guided. In addition, there are references to selected books in English and Russian languages. Due to the limited ability of the writer, in particular, the foreign archival query was abandoned.