

CHAPTER VI

The Aftermath

Subversion and sedition, half-conscious, perhaps, but still very real to the men concerned, were paralyzing forces for the rest of their lives. The central idea of the Brotherhood—the Slavic federation—was crushed and extirpated from their minds, and they did not return to it in their lifetimes. Yet the idea of a Ukrainian revival lived on and was taken up later by the same brethren quite vigorously. Here one must first note the relatively mild manner in which the banishments and strict supervisions were carried out. Alas, this comparative mildness of an authoritarian regime has disappeared under today's totalitarianism. Under the tsarist regime the prisoners were treated humanely, their sentences often lightened, and restrictions removed.

This was evident for each of the brethren. Shevchenko, although surreptitiously, was allowed to draw and write (he remained silent from 1850 to 1857), even if he had to hide his verses in his army boots. He made friends among his captors and was detailed for a while to participate in the Aral Sea expedition. In 1847, in Orsk fortress, he wrote a poem in which he said that he "suffered and was tormented but did not repent . . ." ¹ As a result of intercession by his friends, he was, after the death of Nicholas I, able to return as a free man to St. Petersburg and even to travel to Ukraine. This occurred in 1857 when, broken in health but not in spirit, he was released. He still managed to write some excellent poetry before his death in 1861.

Kostomarov spent his exile in relative comfort in Saratov. General Dubelt's note to the governor of the province—"Be kind to him. This is a good man who made a mistake, but has repented it" ²—worked wonders. Kostomarov was allowed to continue his research and writing on history and ethnography. This he did when not working as an official in the governor's office. He was even allowed to travel as far as