

## CHAPTER 11

### STUDENT LIFE

A brief study of student life is essential to a complete understanding of the atmosphere at the school during the 1840s. The way that students spent their time while at the University and which professors were important to them lends insight in explaining the lasting impact the school had on their lives, as evidenced by their later reminiscences, and on society.

#### Academic year

The official school year contained two vacation periods that lasted from 20 December to 12 January and from 10 June to 22 July. Though the academic year began in July, lectures did not start until the first week of September because of the lengthy entrance exams. Classes then usually ended in April to allow ample time for students to prepare for their final exams, which lasted from mid-May to late June.<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>"Obshchii ustav universitetov," 742-69; Georgievskii, "Moi vospominaniia," (June 1915): 462.

Most of the lectures were held in the "new" building, and on a typical day, classes went nonstop from nine in the morning until two in the afternoon and, after a two-hour break, continued from four until six. Since many students often got hungry before the mid-afternoon break, they would send out some of their classmates to a nearby pastry shop for some food. This occurred frequently before Kachenovskii's lectures, which ran from noon to one.<sup>2</sup>

Usually, before classes began in the morning, students milled around talking to each other and hoping that the professor would not show up or wondering if he would be late. Then, when the professor did arrive, all rushed to take their seats and quickly became quiet.<sup>3</sup> As one student recalled, student pranks during lectures were far less common during the 1840s than in earlier times. He attested that "during lectures I heard only the scratch of pens and

---

<sup>2</sup>Buslaev, Moi vospominaniia, 6, 117; Chicherin, Vospominaniia, 54; and Georgievskii, "Moi vospominaniia," (September 1915): 428.

<sup>3</sup>N. D., "Studencheskie vospominaniia," (pt 1.): 87, 89-90.

[otherwise] not the slightest sound."<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>4</sup>Polonskii, "Moi studencheskiiia vospominania," 652.

Since the Stroganov era antedated lithographed lecture notes, most students attended classes diligently, notwithstanding the sometimes brutal conditions in winter. The rooms were cold, lamplit, and often overcrowded, as some of the first-year classes had more than two hundred listeners. To obtain a seat closer to the front of the room in order to hear better, a student might have to go to the University before dawn. There, a crowd would gather, waiting for the guard to open the auditorium doors, and when he did, everyone would dash in, put down coats or notebooks at a good seat, and then return home. Despite the packed lectures, each student's place was "inviolable," and it was "unthinkable" to remove anyone's belongings.<sup>5</sup>

At the lectures, students generally took notes for later study. The school administration advised them not to try to write down the lectures verbatim, but to take notes, compare them with others', and then rewrite them. Some students found it helpful to work together as a team. For example, Martynov sat with Polonskii, who remembered that "if I did not keep up with the professor's words, I only had to elbow him to see what I had missed."<sup>6</sup> One student, Petr Ivanovich, was famous among his comrades because he never missed a lecture and thus possessed very complete notes. The catch, however, was that no one else could use them because of his terrible handwriting.<sup>7</sup> Better students perfected the

---

<sup>5</sup>Afanas'ev, "Moskovskii universitet," 363; N. D., "Studencheskie vospominaniia," (pt. 1): 87; and Polonskii, "Moi studencheskiia vospominaniia," 652.

<sup>6</sup>Polonskii, "Moi studencheskiia vospominaniia," 666.

<sup>7</sup>N. D., "Studencheskie vospominaniia," (pt. 1): 87.

knack of taking notes so well that they did not even have to rewrite them, which gave them additional, free time in the evenings.<sup>8</sup>

### Admissions

As a result of the 1837 regulations, students wishing to enter Moscow University had to go through a more formalized procedure and began by presenting the administration with the following information: birth, baptismal, and school certificates and documentation of class origins. They also had to indicate who was responsible for their behavior while in Moscow (family, relative, or guardian). In addition, they had to pass admissions tests in religion, Russian grammar and literature, mathematics, physics, geography, history, Latin, German, and French. The exams in Russian literature, mathematics, and foreign languages were written, while the rest were oral.<sup>9</sup>

That first exam day aroused a feeling of dread in most young aspirants. One student later recalled how he stood "trembling" in front of the University, finally poised to fulfill his childhood dream of entering the school.<sup>10</sup> The exams took place in the main hall of the "new" building, which filled with a crowd of potential students who waited anxiously on benches in front of a few desks occupied by some professors. These prospective students quickly learned that

---

<sup>8</sup>Buslaev, Moi vospominaniia, 95. See also, Georgievskii, "Moi vospominaniia," (June 1915): 465; Chicherin, Vospominaniia, 53.

<sup>9</sup>"Pravila ispytaniia dlia zhelaiushchikh postupit' v universitety," 169-76; Moskovskiiia vedomosti, 12 May 1837; Georgievskii, "Moi vospominaniia," (June 1915): 461-62.

<sup>10</sup>N. D., "Studencheskie vospominaniia," (pt. 1): 82.

University examinations could be very unsystematic. Boris Chicherin, later a professor himself, recalled that despite answering his question in physics perfectly, he received only a "4," because Professor Spasskii was not in the habit of paying any attention to prospective law students.<sup>11</sup>

Once the exams were over and a student had been accepted, he reported to the pravlenie (executive board) and received a schedule of classes to attend.<sup>12</sup>

First-year students all took the same courses, since they came from varied backgrounds with different levels of preparation. In addition, first-year law

---

<sup>11</sup>Chicherin, Vospominaniia, 25; Polonskii, "Moi studencheskiia vospominaniia," 643; and Berkut, "Zapiski," 50.

<sup>12</sup>Georgievskii, "Moi vospominaniia," (June 1915): 465; N. D., "Studencheskie vospominaniia," (pt. 2): 10. The pravlenie, which was the University's administrative office in the right wing of the old building, also functioned as a post office and a meeting place for students who could go there and read announcements on a bulletin board.

students took two departmental courses: encyclopedia of law and the history of Russian legislation.

### Classes

Professors Davydov and Shevyrev, who taught a first-year literature class, had a major impact on students, but unfortunately during this period they taught the course in an increasingly uninspired fashion. Solov'ev only recalled Davydov's part of the class as being "nothing about nothing."<sup>13</sup> Buslaev also remembered "absolutely nothing" from the course, though he did credit Davydov with an occasional moment of brilliance, such as his critique of Karamzin's History. The poet Afanasii Fet also acknowledged that Davydov taught him that a proper critique had to consider the historical context of a literary work.<sup>14</sup>

Though Shevyrev was a hard worker, "not tall, rather stout, with a very loud and rather high-pitched voice," he tended to repeat the same lectures every year.<sup>15</sup> He was also very fond of Italian literature and Dante, and one of his students recalled that he would sometimes "declaim whole passages in Italian, forgetting that we did not understand the language."<sup>16</sup> Solov'ev was unimpressed with Shevyrev, who, he felt, "succeeded in turning rich material into nothing" and constantly asserted "the vileness of the West and the superiority of

---

<sup>13</sup>Solov'ev, Moi zapiski, 46.

<sup>14</sup>Buslaev, Moi vospominaniia, 120-21; Fet, "Rannie gody," (February): 462-64.

<sup>15</sup>Georgievskii, "Moi vospominaniia," (September 1915): 414-16; Afanas'ev, "Moskovskii universitet," 368-70.

<sup>16</sup>Shestakov, "Moskovskii universitet," 656.

the East."<sup>17</sup>

Shevyrev was not, however, completely worthless, as proven by his course on Church Slavonic and his critiques of contemporary Russian literature. For example, it was Shevyrev who acquainted Fet with Mikhail Lermontov's novel, Geroi nashego vremeni (A Hero of Our Time). But most significantly, Shevyrev made students write.<sup>18</sup> In the first-year course, students had to compose three essays a year on selected themes, and they also did translations, on which Shevyrev made public comments.<sup>19</sup>

The first-year religion course was taught by Petr Ternovskii, who, according to one student, was a "coarse and proud" priest who "spoke unpleasantly through his nose" and simply read from his book Dogmaticeskoe bogoslovie (A Dogmatic Theology) in an "extremely monotonous, dry, and lifeless" manner. Nevertheless, almost everyone attended his class, even if they owned the book, because Ternovskii got extremely angry if anyone missed a lecture. Moreover, he began each class by asking a student to repeat what had been covered the previous time, and if they could not, they had to pay the consequences. Once, he gave three students a zero for smiling in class and told them not to bother showing up for their exam, which meant that they had to

---

<sup>17</sup>Solov'ev, Moi zapiski, 46-47.

<sup>18</sup>Fet, "Rannie gody," 480-81.

<sup>19</sup>Chicherin, Vospominaniia, 46-47; Georgievskii, "Moi vospominaniia," (September 1915): 414-16.



repeat the entire year.<sup>20</sup>

The "encyclopedia" course, taught by Petr Redkin to first-year law students, provided a basic understanding of general legal concepts. Redkin, an animated lecturer, would enter the auditorium, take his place, and begin: "Why are you here?...Why have you gathered here in such a multitude? ...You are priests of truth...You are jurists." Sometimes Redkin inspired his audience to such a degree that it would applaud, which was in violation of University rules.<sup>21</sup>

Redkin held liberal political views and propagated them to his students as much as he dared. Two of his favorite proverbs clearly revealed his liberalism: "Everything passes away, only the truth remains" and "Law proceeds from truth."<sup>22</sup> Redkin was also heavily influenced by Hegel, and, in line with the thesis-antithesis-synthesis concept, "all of his lectures were divided into three parts, of which each again into three, and so forth." As a result, his students learned how to develop an idea logically.<sup>23</sup>

Konstantin Kavelin taught the first-year course on the history of Russian legislation in accordance with his 1847 article on the rodovoi (clan) basis of Russian history. His course "left nothing to be desired," and students considered

---

<sup>20</sup>Georgievskii, "Moi vospominaniia," (September 1915): 431; Buslaev, Moi vospominaniia, 99; and Shestakov, "Moskovskii universitet," 655.

<sup>21</sup>Afanas'ev, "Moskovskii universitet," 363, 364-65.

<sup>22</sup>Polonskii, "Moi studencheskiia vospominaniia," 652; Bestuzhev-Riumin, "Vospominaniia," 360.

<sup>23</sup>Chicherin, Vospominaniia, 36-37.

it "superior" in all aspects.<sup>24</sup> Kavelin covered a large amount of historical information, adding frequent commentary on original sources, such as the Russkaia pravda (Russian Truth). He also lectured in a "lively and simple" manner, and students liked him because he filled his lectures with ideas.<sup>25</sup> He was friendly, intelligent, and young; in fact, his friends called him the "eternal youth."<sup>26</sup>

Dmitrii Kriukov, and later Timofei Granovskii, taught ancient history in the first year. Kriukov was a large man with a "pure, Great Russian physiognomy: round, full face, fair complexion, and light brown eyes." He was a gifted lecturer whose "talent fit his external appearance well," even though there was something "cold" about the way he lectured.<sup>27</sup> Of all the introductory classes, Kriukov's made the strongest impression on Solov'ev.<sup>28</sup>

As for modern languages, one student, Georgievskii, and his friends quickly became convinced that it was "useless" to go to the German lectures of Johann Göring because little information was covered, but Georgievskii did attend diligently the lectures on French literature by Adolphe Pascault, Edward

---

<sup>24</sup>Ibid., 39-40.

<sup>25</sup>Afanas'ev, "Moskovskii universitet," 366-67.

<sup>26</sup>Chicherin, Vospominaniia, 52; Bestuzhev-Riumin, "Vospominaniia," 361; Bestuzhev-Riumin, "Eshevskii," xviii; and Shestakov, "Moskovskii universitet," 659.

<sup>27</sup>Solov'ev, Moi zapiski, 49. See also, Buslaev, Moi vospominaniia, 130; N. D., "Studencheskie vospominaniia," (pt. 1): 89; Polonskii, "Moi studencheskiia vospominaniia," 666; and Shestakov, "Moskovskii universitet," 656.

<sup>28</sup>Solov'ev, Moi zapiski, 48-49.

Harvey's English classes, and the Italian lessons of Giuseppe Rubini. The latter two had completely opposite teaching styles. While Rubini was "lively and energetic" and spoke only Italian in class, Harvey spoke so little English that his students never really had a chance to learn the language.<sup>29</sup>

In the second year, Nikita Krylov taught Roman law. Krylov was a "genial" professor and extremely gifted, but a man whom few liked because of his personality and alleged bribe-taking.<sup>30</sup> In his lectures, which were based on the works of Hegel, Barthold Niebuhr, and Karl Savigny, he explained the complexities of Roman law very precisely. Konstantin Bestuzhev-Riumin, the future historian, said that Krylov explained the fine points so clearly that "the basics of civil law were forever imprinted in [one's] memory," but other students

---

<sup>29</sup>Georgievskii, (September 1915): 427-30.

<sup>30</sup>Bestuzhev-Riumin, "Vospominaniia," 362.

had difficulty with the subject because of the thousands of complicated details.<sup>31</sup>

---

<sup>31</sup>Bestuzhev-Riumin, "Vospominaniia," 365. See also, Chicherin, Vospominaniia, 67-68; Afanas'ev, "Moskovskii universitet," 373-74; and Polonskii, "Moi studencheskiia vospominaniia," 670.

Also in the second year, Aleksandr Chivilev taught a course on political economy, which he defined in the classical sense as "the laws by which value is produced, distributed, and consumed by a people."<sup>32</sup> Evaluations of Chivilev's capabilities diverged widely, though most recognized the course as "very useful" in which Chivilev delivered his lectures "efficiently but drily."<sup>33</sup> The dryness of the class stemmed from the fact that the censorship prevented him from discussing contemporary socialist views and because he failed to update his lectures over the years. Students easily passed on his notes from one year to the next, and thus they could just sit and listen.<sup>34</sup> Solov'ev, however, went so far as to call him the "next most remarkable professor" after Granovskii, a "gentleman,...honest, exact in fulfilling his duties, and intelligent."<sup>35</sup>

In the second year, Mikhail Katkov taught a course on logic, but only infrequently since he was often sick; one year he gave only twenty-five lectures. For some unknown reason, Katkov had trouble making the subject intelligible to his listeners, and as a result, during one set of exams, the administration ordered that everyone had to be given a "1" because none of the students could respond with a coherent answer.<sup>36</sup> Chicherin, speaking of Katkov's course of lectures,

---

<sup>32</sup>Karataev, Ekonomicheskie nauki, 52, 70, 71, 75, 72-73.

<sup>33</sup>Chicherin, Vospominaniia, 58; Afanas'ev, "Moskovskii universitet," 377.

<sup>34</sup>Bestuzhev-Riumin, "Vospominaniia," 364; and Shestakov, "Moskovskii universitet," 658.

<sup>35</sup>Solov'ev, Moi zapiski, 51.

<sup>36</sup>Solov'ev, Moi zapiski, 127; Afanas'ev, "Moskovskii

claimed that "I heard nothing like it at the University. No one understood a thing."<sup>37</sup>

Other students judged Katkov less harshly. Some recognized in his lectures the inspiration of Schelling, whose classes Katkov had attended in Germany, and discovered an awareness of the "historical significance of the religious process, its influences on the fate and development of humanity, and its primary historical importance." Georgievskii, who befriended Katkov at the literary salon of Elizaveta Karl'gof, recalled that though Katkov did miss class often--"which we all hoped for very much"--he did "read with the force of conviction" and succeeded in interesting some students in philosophy.<sup>38</sup>

---

universitet," 382.

<sup>37</sup>Chicherin, Vospominaniia, 59-60.

<sup>38</sup>Bestuzhev-Riumin, "Eshevskii," xix.

Sergei Solov'ev also began his career at the University in 1845 as a teacher of Russian history to second-year students. He was a large man who spoke in an even baritone and who worked long hours six days a week. At first, listeners "little appreciated" his clear, factual lectures, especially when compared to those of Kavelin, but it was not long before he was recognized as a "star of the first magnitude."<sup>39</sup> Solov'ev, like Kavelin, was instrumental in explaining that it was clan, and not state, concerns that dominated relations among the early Russian princes.<sup>40</sup> He also stressed the zakonomernost' (conformity with law) of the historical process and liked to use the term istorichnost' (historicity) and the phrase "naturally and necessarily" when he lectured. Vasilii Kliuchevskii, the eminent historian, testified to the personal impact of Solov'ev. Solov'ev "spoke; he did not read" his lectures with his eyes closed. Solov'ev later told Kliuchevskii that he never saw the students when he was lecturing.<sup>41</sup>

The star of the second year course was Timofei Granovskii, who always drew a packed house to his courses on the Middle Ages and the Reformation. The large crowd made it difficult for students to take notes, and this was compounded by the fact that Granovskii had a quiet voice and a lisp. He had a

---

<sup>39</sup>Bestuzhev-Riumin, "Vospominaniia," 363; Georgievskii, "Moi vospominaniia," (September 1915): 422-23.

<sup>40</sup>Chicherin, Vospominaniia, 59; Aleksandr Afanas'ev, "Iz studencheskikh vospominanii," RA, 49, bk. 1 (1911): 184-85; Galakhov, "Sorokovye gody," 401; and Bestuzhev-Riumin, "Eshevskii," xviii.

<sup>41</sup>Vasilii Kliucheskii, "S. M. Solov'ev kak prepodavatel'," in Kliuchevskii, Sochineniia, 3: 255, 259, 261.

Ukrainian physiognomy and was "dark-complexioned [with] long, dark hair and dark, burning, searching eyes," and he spoke with "an attractive force."<sup>42</sup> Most students preface their memoirs of Granovskii with such phrases as "it is hard to explain his impact." One asserted that "on the podium, he was not only a scholar, but a poet, a craftsman, and an artist. That was his creation." Students remembered that a general idea pervaded his lectures, connecting and giving "purpose and greatness to everything."<sup>43</sup> Most believed him to be the "ideal of a history professor," even though he wrote little.<sup>44</sup>

But Granovskii was not perfect either. For example, Aleksandr Afanas'ev, later an ethnographer, found him "strangely lazy and not very persevering for disciplined scholarly work."<sup>45</sup> Granovskii, who might promise to do this or that for a student and then fail to fulfill the promise, was occasionally absent-minded:

[Once,] he read us the same lecture three times in a row, because the intervals between his three appearances in the University were so lengthy that he managed to forget what he had read the preceding time.<sup>46</sup>

Granovskii affirmed some of the truth of this in a letter in 1841. He wrote that he

---

<sup>42</sup>Solov'ev, Moi zapiski, 49-50; Georgievskii, "Moi vospominaniia," (June 1915): 470.

<sup>43</sup>N. D., "Studencheskie vospominaniia," (pt. 1): 90-92.

<sup>44</sup>Chicherin, Vospominaniia, 41-42; Georgievskii, "Moi vospominaniia," (June 1915): 467-68.

<sup>45</sup>Afanas'ev, "Iz studencheskikh vospominanii," 185; Georgievskii, "Moi vospominaniia," (June 1915): 467-68.



had returned home one night at five o'clock in the morning only to have class the next morning at nine. He went through his notes quickly and returned to the University, and the "students, good people that they [were],...believed, in the innocence of their hearts, that my evenings [were] dedicated to work."<sup>47</sup>

The third and fourth years for law students contained specialized classes on civil, criminal, international, police, and finance law. Because of that kind of topicality and because of the professors involved, some students, like Chicherin, perceived a sharp decline in quality of instruction after the first two years.<sup>48</sup>

Fedor Moroshkin taught civil law in the third year and civil procedure in the fourth. He was talented, as his work on the Ulozhenie showed, but one observer felt that "he was not well-educated and his style, [rather than content], dominated" his lectures. Thus, side by side with "clear ideas" were "the most barbarous fantasies,"<sup>49</sup> and it was hard to believe "that articles on the Ulozhenie and nonsense on the origins of the Slavic tribes belonged to the same pen."<sup>50</sup>

Moroshkin looked like a general, and students loved his "strong, Russian expressions," frequently circulating his lectures by hand because Moroshkin loved to make jokes and satirical remarks "that often made the entire class

---

<sup>46</sup>Afanas'ev, "Iz studencheskikh vospominanii," 186.

<sup>47</sup>Granovskii, Granovskii i ego perepiska, 2: 193.

<sup>48</sup>Chicherin, Vospominaniia, 68.

<sup>49</sup>Ibid., 66-67.

<sup>50</sup>Afanas'ev, "Moskovskii universitet," 384.

laugh."<sup>51</sup> He too could be absent-minded. After a two-hour lecture, he would leave, talk with someone, forget that he had already lectured, then go back and start all over again.<sup>52</sup>

There were many anecdotes about Moroshkin and his unexpected outbursts. Once, A. N. Popov, a very short student, visited Moroshkin before leaving town:

At the time, Moroshkin was strongly taken to show proof of the great tallness of the Slavs in general and Riazan natives in particular..."Riazanites! Their people are tall...dammed pillars." Then he glanced at Popov and asked, "And you are also from Riazan?" "Yes, I am a Riazanite," answered tiny Popov. "Well, you can still grow."<sup>53</sup>

Sergei Barshev taught criminal law in the third year and criminal procedure in the fourth. He was a kind-hearted man, but untalented, and his criminal law lectures were "sluggish and obscure," read "word for word from his published book."<sup>54</sup> He taught criminal procedure "lazily" in accordance with his brother's book, and supposedly, one of the two said: "On the barren soil of Russian criminal law have grown two fine flowers: my brother's book and mine."

---

<sup>51</sup>Ibid., 383.

<sup>52</sup>Chaev, "Otryvki iz vospominanii," 391-92; Bestuzhev-Riumin, "Vospominaniia," 365, 367; and N. D., "Studencheskie vospominaniia," (pt. 2): 4.

<sup>53</sup>Afanas'ev, "Moskovskii universitet," 383-86.

<sup>54</sup>Ibid., 387-88.

Students had to buy both of them.<sup>55</sup>

Vasilii Leshkov taught international law and diplomacy and, according to Chicherin, was "the stupidest of them all." He was a comical figure, "a thin, dark man with some kind of ducklike, but pointed nose,"<sup>56</sup> who had the bad habit of saying, "and so it is clear," when that was far from the case, especially since his enunciation was so bad. He "spoke rapidly, swallowing whole words," and sometimes students from other departments would come to watch him for amusement.<sup>57</sup>

---

<sup>55</sup>Bestuzhev-Riumin, "Vospominaniia," 365, 367; Chicherin, Vospominaniia, 64.

<sup>56</sup>Chicherin, Vospominaniia, 64.

<sup>57</sup>Afanas'ev, "Moskovskii universitet," 388.

Also in the third and fourth years, Krylov, Redkin, and Ternovskii taught other specialized law courses with uneven success. Many students emerged from Krylov's third-year course without the slightest understanding of the Pandects (the digest of Roman law).<sup>58</sup> Redkin's fourth-year course, which he habitually changed every year, though filled with Hegel, was dry, and Chicherin recalled that by that time, "we just smiled at his Hegelianism."<sup>59</sup> Ternovskii taught a class on church law in the fourth-year, and "You [could] not believe how he read," said one student. "He had no idea of law and knew nothing of Russian or church history." The priest was supposed to lecture two hours, but he usually arrived late and left early, and thus he never spoke for more than an hour. On one occasion, Ternovskii finished his lecture and was preparing to leave "when into the auditorium walked Golokhvastov, who sat down to listen. Ternovskii, not discomfited in the least, simply began to read over again what he had just finished."<sup>60</sup>

Mikhail Pogodin taught Russian history in the fourth year before Solov'ev took over. Solov'ev later noted that Pogodin "was famous for his crudeness, cynicism, pride, and especially cupidity," and though he wrote much, "Pogodin himself did almost nothing for Russian history." He was not an "inspirational"

---

<sup>58</sup>Also, Chicherin, Vospominaniia, 67-68; Afanas'ev, "Moskovskii universitet," 373-74; and Polonskii, "Moi studencheskiia vospominaniia," 670.

<sup>59</sup>Chicherin, Vospominaniia, 58; Afanas'ev, "Moskovskii universitet," 364-66.

<sup>60</sup>Afanas'ev, "Moskovskii universitet," (1886): 371-72.

lecturer and read almost word for word from Shafarik, his own dissertations, or Karamzin.<sup>61</sup>

Of the other professors, only Fedor Milgauzen, the brother of Granovskii's wife, distinguished himself. In the fourth-year, he taught a class on state finances, which, according to Chicherin, was "the most useful course that we had." Milgauzen was not overly talented but was well-educated and generous.<sup>62</sup>

Thus, in a typical four year course of studies, an average law student studied a defined selection of courses taught by a diverse group of professors. During that time, he was exposed to a variety of scholarly and political viewpoints that ranged from the Official Nationality of Shevyrev to the Western liberalism of Granovskii. This did not even take into account the distinctive personalities of the professors. It was those views and characteristics that students remembered once they left the University.

---

<sup>61</sup>Solov'ev, Moi zapiski, 53-56; Galakhov, "Sorokovye gody," 396-97.

<sup>62</sup>Chicherin, Vospominaniia, 68; Afanas'ev, "Moskovskii universitet," 389.

### Exams and studies

A major part of a student's course of studies at Moscow University consisted of the annual exams that took place every May. For each class, students had to appear before their professor, in alphabetical order, draw a slip of paper with a question on it from a bowl, and respond briefly. A student was entitled to three selections, and was graded on a scale from one to five. Usually, it was fairly easy to get a "3."<sup>63</sup>

For promotion from one year to the next, a student needed to obtain an average of "3.5" in all his subjects, and failure on any one exam meant repeating the entire year. Professors varied greatly in their grading methods. For example, Kriukov liked to give "1s," and students from other departments would come to see him do that.<sup>64</sup> Granovskii, on the other hand, never gave less than a "4." One student spent most of his time playing cards and chasing women and rarely went to lectures. At the student's exam with Granovskii, he took his question and waited while another student finished. Then he went up to the table and read, "Mohammed and the first attempt of a Muslim sermon." The student stammered out, "Mohammed... Mohammed...was...a remarkable reformer.... He had unusual...audacity," and he stopped. Granovskii replied, "It is so. Completely true," and he passed the student.<sup>65</sup>

---

<sup>63</sup>Fet, "Rannie gody," (January): 18-19.

<sup>64</sup>Shestakov, "Moskovskii universitet," 655.

<sup>65</sup>Chaev, "Otryvki iz vospominanii," 959; Afanas'ev, "Moskovskii universitet," 362.

The final exams were especially important because they determined the degree, and corresponding rank, that a student received. An average of "4.5" brought a candidate degree, and a "3.5"--"real" student. Again, much depended on the individual professor.<sup>66</sup> Nikolai Murzakevich recalled that he did fine with his exams, until he came to Professor Julius Ulrichs, who once taught universal history, and picked a question on the "Kalmar Congress." He had no idea how to respond and, as a result, did not finish as a candidate.<sup>67</sup>

The University exams, as unpredictable as they were, usually entailed much cramming on the part of students. At that time of the year, another kind of student appeared. "God only knows from where they suddenly appeared. No one had ever seen them."<sup>68</sup> These students had to make up for lost time quickly and would borrow other people's notes. Often students would lock themselves up in their rooms to study undisturbed. On one occasion, a professor had covered the theory and history of law but did not have time to cover certain specific points. At the last lecture, he recommended that students read the applicable sections of the Svod zakonov, and he indicated the major articles, explanations, and notes:

M.N. was not able to obtain these notes, so he took the three volumes that

---

<sup>66</sup>Afnas'ev, "Moskovskii universitet," 362.

<sup>67</sup>Murzakevich, "V Moskovskom universitete," 96. The Congress took place in 1397 in the Swedish town of Kalmar and led to the unification of Denmark, Norway, and Sweden under the Danish king (the Kalmar Union).

<sup>68</sup>N. D., "Studencheskie vospominaniia," (pt. 1): 88.

dealt with state institutions and lay on the divan with them, not getting up, reading everything word for word. In five days and nights, he read all three volumes and passed the exam brilliantly.<sup>69</sup>

Other students studied in groups. For example, to study for statistics, students would:

Gather at someone's apartment [and] lie on the floor around a huge unfolded map to study, with [their] own eyes, the statistical figures of the products of countries designated in Chivilev's lectures.<sup>70</sup>

In addition to the exams and the first-year essays in literature, students had to present written and oral work in various classes over the course of their career. Some professors such as Petr Einbrodt, who taught anatomy, directed group translations by their students. Others assigned essays or additional reading and then monitored a student's progress. Kriukov would often randomly ask students to translate and interpret Latin passages in class. Most professors often met with students on their own time, gave them books, and held discussions with them.<sup>71</sup>

The University also held an annual essay competition and awarded gold and silver medals for assigned themes in each department. These essays required independent study and research by students. Some of the themes in

---

<sup>69</sup>Ibid., 88.

<sup>70</sup>Fet, "Rannie gody," (April): 533.

<sup>71</sup>Otchet 1836/37, 33-34; Shestakov, "Moskovskii universitet," 654; and Fet, "Rannie gody," (March): 20.



Letters included, "O kharaktere istorii drevnei, srednei i novoi" (The Character of Ancient, Middle, and Modern History) and "O vliianii vneshnei prirody na narod i gosudarstvo" (The Influence of Nature on a People and State). Law students could choose from "O politicheskikh sistemakh gosudarstv evropeiskikh, s nachala novoi istorii do nastoiashchago vremeni" (The Political Systems of European States from the Beginning of Modern History to the Present) or "Ocherk istorii sel'skogo sosloviia v Rossii do vremen Ulozheniia" (History of the Peasantry in Russia before the Ulozhenie).<sup>72</sup>

#### Informal study

Students also acquired information, often in a clandestine manner, from other sources while at school. They read widely both Western and Russian authors, especially the romantics: Nikolai Gogol, Mikhail Lermontov, Aleksandr Pushkin, Alexandre Dumas, Heinrich Heine, George Sand, Friedrich Schelling, Friedrich Schiller, Walter Scott, and Eugene Sue.<sup>73</sup> Occasionally, the professors themselves brought contemporary authors to the attention of students. For example, when Davydov spoke about Vladimir Benediktov's poetry, Fet immediately rushed to the bookstore, bought the book, and stayed up all night reading it. Students interested in history would read Barthold Niebuhr, Karl Savigny, Edward Gibbon, Pierre Leroux, Leopold von Ranke, Friedrich Schlosser, or Jean Charles de Sismondi. Very popular with the more politically-

---

<sup>72</sup>See the Otchet for 1835/36, 1838/39, 1840/41 and Rechi 1844.

<sup>73</sup>Georgievskii, "Moi vospominaniia," (June 1915): 463; Fet, "Rannie gody," (January): 10-11, (March): 18.

minded students were François Guizot's, Histoire de la civilisation en Europe (History of Civilization in Europe, 1828), Jules Michelet's, Histoire de la Révolution française (History of the French Revolution, 1847), Karl Savigny's Geschichte des römischen Rechts (History of Roman Law, 1815-31), Karl Eichhorn's Deutsche Staats- und Rechtsgeschichte (German State and Legal History, 1808-23), Jacques Thierry's Histoire de la Conquête de l'Angleterre par les Normands (History of the Norman Conquest of England, 1825), and Luis Adolphe Thiers's Histoire de la Révolution française (History of the French Revolution, 1823-27)--not to mention the works of Granovskii, Karamzin, Kavelin, Kudriavtsev, Moroshkin, and Solov'ev.<sup>74</sup>

Many students turned to this extra-curricular reading because they believed that their classes failed to convey meaningful insight. For example, Konstantin Bestuzhev-Riumin, the historian, rarely attended his classes in the fourth year. Instead, he read historical works on his own because he found little historical content in any of the courses. Other students believed that they acquired more significant knowledge outside the classroom.<sup>75</sup>

The presence of Hegel was felt everywhere at the University in the 1840s, as many of the professors had been exposed to his ideas when they had studied

---

<sup>74</sup>Solov'ev, Moi zapiski, 60; Chicherin, Vospominaniia, 53; Bestuzhev-Riumin, "Vospominaniia," 367-69; and Istoriia Moskvvy, 483-484, citing Konstantin Ushinskii, Sobranie sochinenii (1952), vol. 11, pp. 12-24.

<sup>75</sup>Bestuzhev-Riumin, "Vospominaniia," 367, 369; Besançon, Education et société, 39.

abroad.<sup>76</sup> Granovskii, Kavelin, Kriukov, Krylov, and Redkin were all Hegelians, but no one lectured directly on Hegel, because it was forbidden, and even fewer read him in the original. Solov'ev did get through Hegel's Lectures on the Philosophy of History, and Chicherin mastered the Logic and Phenomenology, but the two were the exceptions to the rule, and both retained Hegel's influence in their later scholarly work.<sup>77</sup> Another student, Georgievskii, thought that since everyone talked about Hegel, he had better read him, but though he bought the collected works, he never got very far with his reading because his lack of background knowledge. Other students, like Fet and his friends, gathered as a circle and discussed Hegel in Kavelin's study.<sup>78</sup>

Chicherin left the University with the view that Hegel conveyed a sense of the onward march of ideas and that the development of humanity was the "realization of freedom and truth on earth." For liberal Russians, Hegel promised a fulfillment of their dreams, since ideas always preceded reality.<sup>79</sup> Granovskii summed up this historical understanding in simple terms, with clear implications for the future, in April 1847 as he finished a course on the Reformation:

From the mythical legends of China and India to the Reformation, we have seen that mankind often began to doubt its actions and did not believe in

---

<sup>76</sup>Solov'ev, Moi zapiski, 61-62; Chicherin, Vospominaniia, 31.

<sup>77</sup>Solov'ev, Moi zapiski, 60; Chicherin, Vospominaniia, 73.

<sup>78</sup>Georgievskii, "Moi vospominaniia," (September 1915): 416-17; Fet, "Rannie gody," (January): 12.

<sup>79</sup>Chicherin, Vospominaniia, xxi, 42-43.

itself, but in spite of this, the advance of humanity was brilliant and was filled with great events....and we have seen in the history of mankind that an idea does not always harmonize with reality; it goes before reality, and...sooner or later, reality reaches that idea.<sup>80</sup>

### Student corporatism

Gathered together in pursuit of higher knowledge, Moscow students, according to some memoirists, in the 1840s displayed a "spirit of unity."<sup>81</sup> This unity, however, lacked outward organization as there still did not exist any student corporate institutions: no skhod (assembly), no zemliachestvo (loose mutual aid organization based on locality), and no secret societies. Stepan Eshevskii, who transferred from Kazan University where these institutions did exist, found Moscow University to be very different, and reasons for this included the far greater size of the University and the city. Usually only students associating in one course and one department were on close terms, but even this had its limits when one considers the fact that the first-year law class in 1847-48 numbered over two hundred students.<sup>82</sup>

Circles were a common form of informal student organization, and they took a variety of forms. Sometimes students gathered in small circles to talk quietly over ideas, while others grouped together to have a good time. Some

---

<sup>80</sup>N. D., "Studencheskie vospominaniia," (pt. 1): 93-95.

<sup>81</sup>N. D., "Studencheskie vospominaniia," (pt. 1): 84, (pt. 2): 5.

<sup>82</sup>Polonskii, "Moi studencheskiia vospominaniia," 651; Bestuzhev-Riumin, "Eshevskii," xx.

students divided into circles according to their social class: aristocrats with their French language and three-cornered hats or sons of clergy. Circles, like those of Fet and Grigor'ev, could also be motivated by literary aims.<sup>83</sup> Lastly, many circles were just part of the process of making lasting friendships, and very few had overtly revolutionary intentions.<sup>84</sup>

### State student life

Although all students had to observe certain formalities, for example, keeping their uniform buttoned during lectures, state-supported students led, as far as practicable, a strictly ordered lifestyle. For them, "it was ordered when to get up in the morning, when to drink tea, when to eat lunch and supper, and when to lie down to sleep."<sup>85</sup> On the average, about one hundred and fifty students lived in the fifteen apartments on the top floor of the left wing of the "old" building, and most spent all of their time there because of their lack of money. Each student had his own small table and blackboard, a moveable box for notebooks, pencils, chalk, and a shelf for books, and every apartment had a long divan and a mirror. Students in each apartment also elected an elder to deal with

---

<sup>83</sup>Chicherin, *Vospominaniia*, 72; Polonskii, "Moi studencheskiia vospominaniia," 651; Bestuzhev-Riumin, "Eshevskii," xx; Afanas'ev, "Moskovskii universitet," 393; and Fet, "Rannie gody," (March): 14.

<sup>84</sup>Fedosov, *Revoliutsionnoe dvizhenie*, 201, notes that "we have very little material about the moods of Moscow University in the 1840s. [It] somehow escaped the watchful eyes of the Third Section."

<sup>85</sup>Shestakov, "Moskovskii universitet," 642.

authorities.<sup>86</sup>

In the middle of the building, between the two wings, was a large room with two large tubs for the students to wash in, closets for bedding and clothes, and an enormous samovar for hot water. There, the older students could shave, while the younger ones practiced the technique. Students drank tea and ate in the dining room on the lower floor. Since the state provided everything (clothes, books, candles, paper, and "not bad" food), "state" students' studies tended to be "more orderly," as they did not have to worry about "trifles."<sup>87</sup>

A few students even tried hard to become state students, which had been unthinkable in the 1820s. Pavel Shestakov, after repeated problems with his living arrangements--seven different apartments in ten months--found out at the start of the 1843-44 school year that there were two vacancies for state students, and he asked Nakhimov about getting one of them. Shestakov then approached Stroganov, who told him that the vacancies had already been promised to two recent gymnasium graduates, but Shestakov insisted that he had a better claim to the aid since he had finished his gymnasium with a silver medal and had already proved himself after a year at the University. Though contrary to the usual practice, Stroganov accepted Shestakov as a state student.<sup>88</sup>

### Student concerns

---

<sup>86</sup>Buslaev, Moi vospominania, 5-8.

<sup>87</sup>Buslaev, Moi vospominania, 5-10; Shestakov, "Moskovskii universitet," 646.

<sup>88</sup>Shestakov, "Moskovskii universitet," 645.

An outward symbol of the regulation of student life was the uniform. The inspectors were constantly on the search for those out of uniform, and the tsar paid very close attention to this whenever he met students.<sup>89</sup> Most students, if they could afford it, were proud of their uniforms as a sign of their place in Russian society. For example, after passing the entrance exam, Chicherin and his friends immediately ordered their uniforms and put them on. For them, the uniform symbolized a tremendous "success in life" and the beginning of a new stage in their careers.<sup>90</sup> Students usually wore their frock-coats and caps, but on holidays they would also wear their three-cornered hats and swords. On the other hand, some students avoided going to classes because either they could not afford a uniform or because they did not want to wear it and be caught without it. Uniforms also reflected the class origin of the wearer, as there were different styles for auditors, self-supported and state-supported students, and nobles and *raznochintsy*.<sup>91</sup>

A major concern of students was lodging. Some lived at home with their parents, their lifestyle determined by the wealth of their family. Georgievskii argued that, since his family did not have much money, he did not get distracted by the night life and thus studied better. Others lived with friends. For example, Fet lived with the Grigor'ev family for six years. One student lived in the house of

---

<sup>89</sup>Steinger, "Government Policy," 158.

<sup>90</sup>Chicherin, Vospominaniia, 25-26, 31.

<sup>91</sup>Buslaev, Moi vospominaniia, 99-101; Bestuzhev-Riumin, "Vospominaniia," 367.

the Moscow Philanthropic Committee, which was home to a very diverse population: tailors, bootmakers, students, and petty bureaucrats. It was cheap--only twenty-five paper rubles a month. Most students, however, lived in apartments where their rent included meals. One popular, inexpensive area of the city was the Arbat, where Buslaev lived. Chicherin, on the other hand, had a centrally-located apartment on Tverskoi Boulevard near the University, and almost every day his friends gathered there after classes and in the evenings to drink tea and talk.<sup>92</sup>

One of the more interesting student quarters was called "Irlandiia" (Ireland). It consisted of the top story of a building, in which the first floor was a store, and the second and third floors housed travellers. The fourth consisted of a wide, long corridor with thirty apartments of one, two, or three rooms. Students lived in most of them, sharing the floor with an occasional musician or artist. It was almost always packed, not because of its proximity to the University, low rent, or warmth in the winter, but because of the close ties of the occupants who lived there.<sup>93</sup>

Even some rich students shared a traditional scorn of luxury associated with the values of their generation. They just wanted to live simply and as they

---

<sup>92</sup>Georgievskii, "Moi vospominaniia," (June 1915): 464; Fet, "Rannie gody," (January): 5-7; Berkut, "Zapiski," 56; Afanas'ev, "Moskovskii universitet," 393; Buslaev, Moi vospominaniia, 4; and Chicherin, Vospominaniia, 69-70.

<sup>93</sup>N. D., "Studencheskie vospominaniia," (pt. 2): 1-4.



pleased, and that was Irlandiia. The third-year law student in room 16 was a passionate musician and a talented violinist. The person in room 13 loved cards, especially Preference, and played all night. "You want poetry? There is number 14. Shakespeare, Byron, Goethe, Schiller lie everywhere." If, sometimes, at three in the morning, you heard a shout, "it's just number 9." The tenant of that apartment usually studied at the theater, but when he stayed at home, he started to sing before going to sleep. "Number 15, that is the center of almost all Irlandiia society. There you could always find interesting conversations late into the night." Twice a year Irlandiia became deserted; in the summer and when the landlord collected the rent.<sup>94</sup>

Many students were hard-pressed to make ends meet. Polonskii was not particularly poor, but he still walked to the University in winter without a greatcoat or galoshes. There were cases of extreme poverty, like that of a "certain medical student Malich who slept on the boulevard benches, dying from hunger and gnawing on bones." Because it was cheaper, many students lived on the fringes of town, and there were rumours of extremely poor students who lived in pairs and went out one at a time because they only had one pair of shoes between them.<sup>95</sup>

To earn money many students gave private lessons. These could usually be arranged by the inspector, as parents would refer requests for tutors to him

---

<sup>94</sup>Ibid., 6-7, 9-10.

<sup>95</sup>Polonskii, "Moi studencheskiiia vospominaniia," 646, 655-56, 667; Besançon, Education et société, 85.

and leave it up to Nakhimov to pass the requests on to interested students. Georgievskii gave lessons in the evenings to a boy preparing to enter the Nobles' Institute and frequently had trouble collecting the money due him. In the summer he made more money since he could teach for sixty days at four hours a day for twenty-five silver kopeks an hour. Some students worked for journals or did translations, and medical students often had their own small practices. The difficulty with all these sources of income was that once a student did get paid, the news spread like wildfire, and everyone expected a celebration.<sup>96</sup>

#### Student leisure activities

In their free time, students sat around, talked, played cards, read, or had parties--when they had money.<sup>97</sup> More sobering pastimes included the theater and ballet at the Bolshoi and Malyi Theaters. Mikhail Shchepkin at the Bolshoi, famous as an interpreter of Gogol, Pavel Mochalov at the Malyi, famous for his Hamlet, and the prima ballerina Ekaterina Sankovskaia dominated the era, and students avidly followed their performances.<sup>98</sup>

A major part of student life revolved around certain inns. The tavern closest to the school was "Velikobritaniia" (Great Britain), directly across from the University. Students called it "Velikobritaniia" because Mokhovaia Street

---

<sup>96</sup>Georgievskii, "Moi vospominaniia," (September 1915): 433, 438, (October 1915): 85; Fet, "Rannie gody," (April): 541-42; and Buslaev, Moi vospominaniia, 13.

<sup>97</sup>Fet, "Rannie gody," (February): 468.

<sup>98</sup>Georgievskii, "Moi vospominaniia," (October, 1915): 252; Fet, "Rannie gody," (January): 16-18; and N. D., "Studencheskie vospominaniia," (pt. 3): 1-2, 9-10.

separated it from the University like the English Channel separated Britain from the continent. The place was essentially a student club where students met each other, killed time between classes, sat around and talked about the University and artistic life, smoked, drank, played billiards, and read the current journals. A specialty of the chef was brains with peas.<sup>99</sup>

The merchant Mefodii Pechkin ran two other similar establishments. The first was the Pechkin café, located just off a nearby square and up a spiral staircase in a couple of rooms, including one for billiards. Some called it "the center of Moscow science and art" because Perevoshchikov was always playing chess there with a Persian called "Kiriushii."<sup>100</sup> Granovskii, Iakov Polonskii, the poet, and Aleksei Galakhov, the literary historian, were also frequent visitors. The other Pechkin tavern was called "Zheleznyi" (iron) because it was located over an iron shop across from the Aleksandrovskii Garden outside the Kremlin. There was a special room for students where they could read books and journals, prepare for exams, and even write their essays. Students felt at home there away from the discipline of the University, and they would usually share their tea and tobacco with each other since they did not have much money.

---

<sup>99</sup>Fet, "Rannie gody," (February): 467; N. D., "Studencheskie vospominaniia," (pt. 3): 3-4.

State students usually chose Zheleznyi as the spot for an occasional feast.

Though they did not have much money, they did not need to buy much alcohol since they were not used to drinking.<sup>101</sup>

---

<sup>100</sup>Fet, "Rannie gody," (April): 536-38.

<sup>101</sup>Buslaev, Moi vospominaniia, 11-12, 13-14.

Georgievskii often had breakfast in any of these three places. All had journals and newspapers, but Velikobritaniia was the cheapest. A large, tasty pastry filled with beef and eggs cost only ten kopeks, while at Zheleznyi, it was fifteen or twenty, and at Pechkin--twenty-five or thirty. Britaniia, however, was always crowded and filled with smoke, which made it hard to read.<sup>102</sup>

Another popular eating spot was Pedotti's konditorei on the corner of Tverskoi Boulevard and Dolgorukii Lane near the University. There, students and professors like Kudriavtsev would stop by to drink some coffee and read the foreign newspapers. During the "mad year" of 1848, Georgievskii, then eighteen years old, sometimes stopped going to classes because he became so involved in reading the newspapers.<sup>103</sup>

In summing up the experience of students at Moscow University in the 1840s, two itmes should be noted. First, more than before, many students took their studies seriously. From their recollections, it is clear that their judgment of a professor's value usually depended on how good he was in his field and in presenting his knowledge to his students, and not necessarily on his political convictions, though liberalism helped his popularity greatly. Second, one finds that in many ways student life at Moscow University in the 1840s closely resembled that of students today: cutting classes, drinking, cramming for exams, struggling to make ends meet, and taking part in philosophical discussions late

---

<sup>102</sup>Georgievskii, "Moi vospominaniia," (September 1915): 428.

<sup>103</sup>Polonskii, "Moi studencheskiia vospominaniia," 646; Georgievskii, "Moi vospominaniia," (September 1915): 428, (October 1915): 85, (April 1916): 88-89.

into the night.