

CONCLUSION

This dissertation has addressed two main questions: why Moscow University was the major center of Russian intellectual life in the 1840s and what the University experience was like. The answers to these two inquiries required an analysis of the historical development of the school in terms of its facilities, student body, faculty, ties to society, and administration. In addition, the explanation of these questions demanded a detailed examination of specific aspects of the University during the curatorship of Count Sergei Stroganov.

The conclusion drawn is that Moscow University played its pre-eminent role in Russian intellectual life of the period for several reasons, including the "transmission belts" that connected the University with society, the "professionalization" of the school with respect to its professors, students, and facilities that took place, and the role played by Stroganov in these processes.

From the school's very outset in 1755, its founders had envisioned the University not just as an institution of higher learning, but as a national center of enlightenment; thus, Mikhail Lomonosov and Ivan Shuvalov immediately provided the school with the means, such as the press, public disputations, preparatory school, and a unique autonomy, for attaining that goal. After the school's founding, these "transmission belts" steadily expanded in scope. For example, in the 1780s the University's leadership established scholarly societies

to promote a better dissemination of important cultural and scholarly information to society, while in the first decade of the nineteenth century, Mikhail Murav'ev, the curator, began the practice of offering special lecture series for the general public. Later, in the 1830s the orations delivered by professors at the annual graduation ceremonies began to be published and distributed on a wide scale. It was by virtue of these "transmission belts" that professors such as Aleksei Merzliakov, Mikhail Kachenovskii, and Konstantin Kavelin made a decisive impact on the terms of contemporary intellectual debates. As a result of all of these mechanisms, particularly the press, Moscow University played an ever more prominent role in not just the city's, but the country's, intellectual life.

By the 1840s this infrastructure provided the school with a unique opportunity to influence Russian culture. This was an opportunity that other universities never possessed, because they lacked the full panoply of "means" that Moscow had--St. Petersburg had no press--nor were their locations as crucial--Kazan was far from being an important city. When Moscow University obtained the services of a group of first-rate scholars as a result of Stroganov's recruitment efforts, such as Dmitrii Kriukov, those "means" were placed at the disposal of those scholars, and the result was an intellectual blossoming. Thus, in less than a century, the University developed a complex, institutional mechanism for the transmission of intellectual and cultural information to both the general public and the scholarly community. As a result, the school moved to the forefront of intellectual developments.

This paper has concentrated on explicating the framework in which

intellectual developments occurred, and not the terms of the intellectual debate, because much of those arguments, especially the Westerner-Slavophile controversy, has already been treated by historians. However, there has never appeared an account as to why those crucial developments should have taken place in Moscow during the regime of an admittedly authoritarian autocrat.

This dissertation provides a number of explanations for that phenomenon. For one, in Moscow there existed a university that already possessed a developed system of "transmission belts" and a century-old tradition that none else had. Stroganov also played a major role. His presence ensured that the school's autonomy remained intact under a regime that was suspicious of intellectual endeavors. Since Stroganov was a trusted friend of the autocrat, Nicholas did not pay strict attention to Moscow University, and because Stroganov did not get along with Sergei Uvarov, the latter, too, kept his distance. Stroganov also did not intervene excessively in academic matters; thus, the guarantees of autonomy that the 1835 university statute provided could function freely.

Another reason for the free intellectual development taking place in Moscow was the "professionalization" of the University that occurred under Stroganov. Although this had been an on-going process ever since the school's founding, in the 1840s the school's faculty grew in numbers, became younger, better qualified, and more Russian. At the same time that it began to offer more specialized courses, the University's facilities were upgraded in all areas, especially in medicine where a completely new clinical system came into being.

As validation of these changes, society responded enthusiastically and flocked to the school. Student enrollment tripled, and the student body underwent important changes: its educational background became more formal, more students studied in a gymnasium before entering the University, and an increasing number of students from a noble background enrolled. Students still took longer to graduate, however, and there remained precious few graduates for a country the size of Russia. Overall, though, the great improvement in faculty quality, the better facilities, and the flocking of youth to the University all further served to enhance its leading role in the cultural and scholarly life of the country.

Much of this progress and enlightened atmosphere of the 1840s must be credited to the person of Count Sergei Stroganov. At critical moments in the University's history, it had been blessed with enlightened curators such as Ivan Shuvalov and Mikhail Murav'ev. Stroganov proved no exception to this tradition, and his guiding hand was found everywhere: selecting professors, obtaining minerals, fending off Sergei Uvarov, or sitting with students in class. As one student recollected, "we believed in him." Timofei Granovskii too, in a letter of 1847, wrote Stroganov that he and his friends appreciated having served under Stroganov and that they would always retain a "profound gratitude...for what you have done for the civilization and future of our country." Aleksandr Galakhov, another student, reminded people in his memoirs that no other curator

succeeded in creating such a golden age for his university.¹

There are a number of other important topics touched on in this dissertation, such as the relationship between Russia and the Enlightenment. From the evidence presented, it becomes obvious that Moscow University was an important funnel for the transmission of Enlightenment thought to Russian society. The work of Nikolai Novikov, Mikhail Kheraskov, and Johann Georg Schwartz, as Freemasons in the 1780s, was especially important in this regard. By the early 1800s, there existed an educated class in Russia that was completely at home with the tenets of the European Enlightenment and culture. The University, through its professors and "transmission belts," ensured that Russia participated in the continuing process of change in European thought. Thus, it is difficult to defend the view that Russia never experienced the Enlightenment.

This dissertation also sheds light on some timeless features of the university experience, such as the work demands on professors, problems of financial aid and minority students, tight budgets, and the need to encourage private donations. Moreover, students at Moscow University in the 1840s faced

¹Granovskii, Granovskii i ego perepiska, 2: 450-51; Galakhov, "Sorokovye gody," 127.

many of the very problems that their European counterparts did then and that students do today.

Though beyond the scope of this work, it is the author's judgement that during the curatorship of Stroganov, Moscow University emerged from being a provincial backwater to one of the best in Europe. It became one of the largest in size, offered a curriculum that included many courses in the physical sciences, and possessed a first-rate faculty. The school also had many of the same structural features of the European universities, particularly the Germans, and operated under similar government intentions.

Certain problems remain unresolved by this work, which is partly due to the fact that archival sources were not consulted. One unanswered question is the true nature of the relationship between Stroganov and Nicholas. Another issue yet unresolved is the way that Stroganov and the bureaucracy were able to filter out the impact of many of the tsar's reactionary measures and thus cushion their impact on the school. This dissertation has, however, elaborated the institutional framework by which Moscow University played its role in the intellectual developments of the 1840s and how the school developed that mechanism after its founding.