

## INTRODUCTION

If in the middle of this universal corruption, in this cohort of pilfering administrators and lying judges that weighs down Russia, one meets by chance some honest and enlightened functionary, some magistrate firm and vigilant, one can be pretty sure that he was at the University of Moscow.<sup>1</sup> --Nikolai Turgenev

Russian culture and liberal thought flourished during the reign of Nicholas I from 1825 to 1855, despite the regime's restrictive censorship and the comprehensive police surveillance of intellectual activity. Even though the tsar and his conservative Minister of Education Sergei Uvarov tried to instill in Russians a respect for "the Altar, the Throne, and the Fatherland" and closely monitored all intellectual activity, an active intelligentsia emerged.<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>Nikolai Turgenev, La Russie et les russes, 3 vols. (Paris, 1847), 2: 357.

<sup>2</sup>William Johnson, Russia's Educational Heritage (New York, 1969 [1950]), ix; Nicholas Riasanovsky, A Parting of the Ways (Berkeley, 1976).

The center of this development was Moscow University under the curatorship of Count Sergei G. Stroganov.

The University enjoyed its golden age from 1835 to 1848, and the city became intellectually and culturally the most exciting place to live in the Russian Empire, as brilliant men gathered to debate the country's past, present, and future. Why and how did this occur? Why was Moscow University the center of Russian intellectual life in the 1840s? How did an intellectual flowering that resulted in the "Marvelous Decade" take place under the watchful eyes of the autocrat? How did Moscow University contribute to that development? What kind of environment did the school provide for Russian youth? How did the University's facilities, faculty, and student body change? What personal role did Sergei Stroganov play in shielding the school from repression?

### Thesis

The central role which Moscow University played during this time was due to its development of an institutional infrastructure, a system of "transmission belts," that allowed it to pass on intellectual, cultural, and scholarly information to Russian society by a variety of means and in a diversity of forms. The school's importance also stemmed from the "professionalization" that took place in the 1840s with respect to the school's administration, facilities, faculty, and student body and from the active role played by

Sergei Stroganov as curator in this process. As a result of these three factors, the University was at the forefront of intellectual developments in the country.

#### Historiographical background

Russian education has long been regarded as a "deficient field" in which "much of the spadework of investigating the actual relationship between schools, instruction, and society remains undone."<sup>3</sup> There are a number of general surveys of tsarist educational policy, but most are superficial, outdated, and overly "political" in nature.<sup>4</sup> Soviet historians have managed to produce a vast monographic literature yet have shed little light on the subject.<sup>5</sup> Most Western scholars have focused their efforts on the connection between education and the growth of the spectacular "student movement" in the late nineteenth

---

<sup>3</sup>Ben Eklof, "Review Essay: Russian Educational History," Journal of Social History, 15 (Fall 1981): 109-10.

<sup>4</sup>Allen Sinel, "Problems in the Periodization of Russian Education," Slavic and European Educational Review, no. 2 (1977): 54-55. For example, Daniel Leary, Education and Autocracy in Russia (Buffalo, 1919); Nicholas Hans, History of Russian Educational Policy (New York, 1964); Patrick Alston, Education and the State in Tsarist Russia (Stanford, 1969); James McClelland, Autocrats and Academics: Education, Culture, and Society in Tsarist Russia (Chicago, 1979); and Sergei Rozhdestvenskii, Istoricheskii obzor deiatel'nosti Ministerstva narodnago prosveshcheniia, 1802-1902 (St. Petersburg, 1902).

<sup>5</sup>See, William Brickman, "Some Aspects of the Historiography of Soviet Education," Paedagogica Historica, 17 (1977): 37-49; A. Piskunov, Sovetskaia istoriko-pedagogicheskaia literatura, 1918-1957: sistematičeskii ukazatel' (Moscow, 1960).

century,<sup>6</sup> but in none of the existing works "do we walk into a school, leaf through a textbook or reader, or watch interaction between teacher and pupil."<sup>7</sup> Universities have fared exceptionally poorly at the hands of historians,<sup>8</sup> and the history of Moscow University, despite its importance in the history of Russian culture, has been completely neglected by Western scholars.<sup>9</sup>

As a whole, the reign of Nicholas I remains the subject of uneven historical scholarship. While many historians have lingered on intellectual developments in the "Marvelous

---

<sup>6</sup>For example, Sadek Brim, Universitäten und Studentenbewegung in Russland im Zeitalter der grossen Reformen, 1855-1881 (Frankfurt/Main, 1985); S. Mel'gunov, Iz istorii studencheskikh obshchestv v russkikh universitetakh (Moscow, 1904); and P. Tkachenko, Moskovskoe studenchestvo v obshchestvenno-politicheskoi zhizni Rossii vtoroi poloviny XIX veka (Moscow, 1958).

<sup>7</sup>Eklof, "Russian Educational History," 110.

<sup>8</sup>Except for James Flynn, The University Reform of Tsar Alexander I (Washington, 1988); V. S. Ikonnikov, "Russkie universitety v sviazi s khodom obshchestvennago obrazovaniia," Vestnik Evropy, 11 (October 1876): 492-550, 11 (November 1876): 73-132; I. N. Borozdin, "Universitety v Rossii v pervoi polovine XIX veka," in Istoriia Rossii v XIX veke, 9 vols. (St. Petersburg, 1907-11), 2: 349-79; and Regina Eimontova, Russkie universitety na grani dvukh epokh: ot Rossii krepostnoi k Rossii kapitalisticheskoi (Moscow, 1985).

<sup>9</sup>There are a number of Russian works: Mikhail Tikhomirov, Istoriia Moskovskogo universiteta, vol. 1 (Moscow, 1955); Stepan Shevyrev, Istoriia Imperatorskago Moskovskago universiteta (Moscow, 1855); Aleksandr Kizevetter, "Moskovskii universitet (istoricheskii ocherk)," in Moskovskii universitet, 1755-1930: iubileinyi sbornik (Paris, 1930), 9-144; and Lidia Nasonkina, Moskovskii universitet posle vosstaniia Dekabristov (Moscow, 1972).

Decade,"<sup>10</sup> rarely has the societal or institutional framework within which that development took place been studied.<sup>11</sup> Recently, however, some attention has been devoted to Russian education under Nicholas I.<sup>12</sup> Constantin Galskoy wrote a "socio-bureaucratic" study of education in the first decade of the reign, describing the formal structure of the Ministry of Education, and Steven Allister examined "the planning of educational reform."<sup>13</sup> But both of these dissertations addressed only the early part of the reign and neglected policy implementation. Charles Steinger wrote an "administrative history" of the government's educational policies and their application to the University

---

<sup>10</sup>For example, Isaiah Berlin, "A Marvelous Decade," Encounter, 4 (June 1955): 27-39; Martin Malia, Alexander Herzen and the Birth of Russian Socialism, 1812-1855 (Cambridge, 1961).

<sup>11</sup>Soviet historians have done some work in this area: Nikolai Eroshkin, Istoriia gosudarstvennykh uchrezhdenii dorevoliutsionnoi Rossii, 3rd ed. (Moscow, 1968) and Krepostnicheskoe samoderzhavie i ego politicheskie instituty (pervaia polovina XIX veka) (Moscow, 1981); and Petr Zaionchkovskii, Pravitel'stvennyi apparat samoderzhavnoi Rossii v XIX v. (Moscow, 1978).

<sup>12</sup>Alain Besançon, Education et société en Russie dans le second tiers du XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle (Paris, 1974); James Flynn, "Tuition and Social Class in the Russian Universities: S. S. Uvarov and 'Reaction' in the Russia of Nicholas I," Slavic Review, 35 (July 1976): 232-48; and Cynthia Whittaker, The Origins of Modern Russian Education: An Intellectual Biography of Count Sergei Uvarov, 1786-1855 (Dekalb, 1984).

<sup>13</sup>Constantin Galskoy, "The Ministry of Education under Nicholas I, 1826-1836" (Ph.D. diss., Stanford University, 1977), v; Steven Allister, "The Reform of Higher Education in Russia during the Reign of Nicholas I, 1825-1855" (Ph.D. diss., Princeton University, 1974), 7.

of St. Petersburg.<sup>14</sup> As for Stroganov himself, although most scholars note his importance, few provide more than a cursory glance at his career.<sup>15</sup>

For a study of Moscow University in the 1830s and 1840s, there is an abundance of published source material available, including documentary collections of the Ministry of Education and the annual reports of the University.<sup>16</sup> There also exists a wide and diverse memoir literature about the period,<sup>17</sup> the University,<sup>18</sup> and Stroganov.<sup>19</sup>

---

<sup>14</sup>Charles Steinger, "Government Policy and the University of St. Petersburg, 1819-1849," (Ph.D. diss., Ohio State University, 1971), 4.

<sup>15</sup>Priscilla Roosevelt, Apostle of Russian Liberalism: Timofei Granovskii (Newtonville, 1986), 51; Galskoy, "Ministry of Education," 173; and Whittaker, Origins of Modern Russian Education, 158. Biographical sources include: "Stroganov, Sergei Grigor'evich," in Russkii biograficheski slovar' (St. Petersburg, 1909), 19: 523-30; N. M. Kolmakov, "Dom i familiia grafov Strogonovykh, 1752-1887 gg.," RS, 53 (March 1887): 577-602; 54 (April 1887): 71-94.

<sup>16</sup>Ministerstvo narodnago prosveshcheniia, Zhurnal (St. Petersburg, 1834-1917), Sbornik postanovlenii po Ministerstvu narodnago prosveshcheniia (St. Petersburg, 1864-1904), Sbornik rasporiazhenii po Ministerstvu narodnago prosveshcheniia (St. Petersburg, 1866-1907), and Dopolnenie k "Sborniku postanovlenii" (St. Petersburg, 1867). After 1834 the University published an annual Otchet o sostoianii (Report on Conditions) and Rechi proiznesennia v torzhestvennom sobranii (Orations at the Annual Gathering).

<sup>17</sup>Aleksandr Nikitenko, Dnevnik, 3 vols. (Moscow, 1955); Pavel Annenkov, Literaturnye vospominaniia (Moscow, 1960); and Alexander Herzen, My Past and Thoughts, 4 vols. (New York, 1973).

<sup>18</sup>I. M. Solov'ev, ed., Russkie universitety v ikh ustavakh i vospominaniakh (St. Petersburg, 1914); R. A. Kovnator, ed., Moskovskii universitet v vospominaniakh sovremennikov (Moscow, 1956); L. M. Isaev, ed., Moskovskii universitet v vospominaniakh sovremennikov (Moscow, 1989); Boris Chicherin, Vospominaniia: Moskovskii universitet (Moscow, 1929); and Sergei Solov'ev, Moi

---

zapiski dlia detei moikh, a, esli mozhno, i dlia drugikh (St. Petersburg, 1915).

<sup>19</sup>Fedor Buslaev, Moi vospominaniia (Moscow, 1897); A. Kochubinskii, "Graf S. G. Stroganov: iz istorii nashikh universitetov 30-kh godov," Vestnik Evropy, 31 (July 1896): 165-96, (August 1896): 471-90.