

CHAPTER 3

ALEXANDER I AND THE REFORM OF MOSCOW UNIVERSITY

In 1801 Alexander I became Emperor of Russia. Because of the enlightened upbringing that he had received under the direct supervision of his grandmother Catherine the Great, hope of reform circulated in the country. In line with the Enlightenment belief that education was the sole "criterion by which a country should be judged," the tsar intended to address the country's educational problems and build a new and lasting school system.¹

Alexander I

In June 1801 four of the tsar's close friends formed an Unofficial Committee: Pavel Stroganov, Adam Czartoryski, Viktor Kochubei, and Nikolai Novosil'tsev.² They eventually devised the ministerial reorganization of 1802 in which the Ministerstvo narodnago prosveshcheniia (Ministry of National Enlightenment, or Ministry of Education) replaced

¹Whittaker, Origins of Modern Russian Education, 57-58, citing Sergei Uvarov; Hans, History of Russian Educational Policy, 35; and Simkhovitch, "History of the School," 506.

²Count Pavel Stroganov, 1744-1817, was assistant minister of internal affairs and curator of the St. Petersburg Educational District. Prince Adam Czartoryski, 1770-1861, was a prominent Polish statesman, minister of foreign affairs, and curator of Vilna. Prince Viktor Kochubei, 1768-1834, was minister of internal affairs, and Nikolai Novosil'tsev, 1761-1832, served as a diplomat.

Catherine's Commission for the Establishment of Public Schools. The fact that the tsar's close friends were all members of the Main School Board of the new Ministry clearly illustrated the importance of educational matters to him.³ The Unofficial Committee also composed a series of regulations that reformed the educational structure of the country: the Establishment of Educational Districts and the Provisional Rules of National Enlightenment (1803), the Statute of the Imperial Moscow, Kharkov, and Kazan Universities and the Statute of the Educational Establishments under the Jurisdiction of the Universities (1804).⁴

The new regulations divided the country into six educational districts, each headed by a university: Moscow, St. Petersburg, Kazan, Kharkov, Vilna, and Dorpat. Each district consisted of a four-tier "democratic ladder" of schools: a one-year primary school in every parish, a two-year district school in every town, and a four-year

³Rozhdestvenskii, Istoricheskii obzor, 32-33, 37-41, 39, 49-50; Flynn, University Reform of Tsar Alexander I, 14-15.

⁴"Ob uchrezhdenii uchebnykh okrugov," "Predvaritel'nyia pravila narodnago prosveshcheniia," "Ustavy Imperatorskikh Moskovskago, Kharkovskago i Kazanskago universitetov" and "Ustav uchebnykh zavedenii podvedomnykh universitetam," Sbornik postanovlenii, 1: 13-22, 261-301, 301-39. For a general review, see, Hans, History of Russian Educational Policy, 45-49; Flynn, University Reform of Tsar Alexander I, 14-21. Most scholars, e.g., James Flynn, "The Universities, the Gentry, and the Russian Imperial Services, 1801-1825," Canadian Slavic Studies, 2 (Winter 1968): 492, insist that the new statutes were "deliberate copies of the best German universities."

gymnasium in every guberniia capital. There was supposed to be no discrimination for admission on a social, national, or religious basis, and advancement was theoretically on the basis of talent alone. Each school functioned both to prepare students for the next level and as an end in itself.⁵

A popechitel' (curator), personally appointed by the tsar and "answering for the welfare of all schools," headed each district. These curators resided in St. Petersburg so that they did not "impede local academic activity" and acted as intermediaries between the districts and the central administration. They received notice of university decisions, read the monthly reports, and passed on the information to the minister. Each curator was also a member of his district's Schools Committee and shared management of the district with the university rector; however, since the curators resided in the capital, some had only minimal contact with their districts.⁶

Real power lay with the university councils which enjoyed "absolute jurisdiction" over all school affairs. A

⁵"Ustav uchebnykh zavedenii"; Alston, Education and the State, 24; Hans, History of Russian Educational Policy, 46-51; and Darlington, Education in Russia, 42.

⁶Russia, Ministerstvo narodnago prosveshcheniia, Sbornik materialov dlia istorii prosveshcheniia v Rossii, 2 vols. (St. Petersburg, 1893-98), 2: 139-47, 142; Galskoy, "Ministry of Education," 219; and Borozdin, "Universitety v Rossii," 352.

council consisted of all the ordinary (full) and extraordinary (assistant) professors and met at least once a month. Subject to the approval of the minister, the council chose professors, honorary members of the university, gymnasium teachers, and an inspector to supervise state-supported students at the university.⁷

The executive committee of the council was the pravlenie (board), which comprised the rector, four deans, and the sindik, a full professor appointed by the curator to serve as a legal advisor. The board met twice a week to oversee general economic and administrative matters and to examine the credentials of applicants for admission.⁸

The rector, who held rank 5 on the Table of Ranks, was the true head of the university. He was a full professor, elected by the council and confirmed by the tsar, who chaired university meetings and supervised all district affairs.⁹

As confirmation of its autonomy, each university possessed a three-level court system (rector, board, and council) and exercised complete civil and partial criminal

⁷Steinger, "Government Policy," 23-24; Galskoy, "Ministry of Education," 216-17; and Shevyrev, Istoriia, 317.

⁸Steinger, "Government Policy," 24-25; Galskoy, "Ministry of Education," 217; and Borozdin, "Universitety v Rossii," 354.

⁹"Ob izbranii rektora v Moskovskom universitete na tri godi," Sbornik postanovlenii, 1: 522-24; Steinger, "Government Policy," 22-23; and Galskoy, "Ministry of Education," 217.

jurisdiction over all individuals associated with the school. In rough terms, the rector functioned as judge and the executive board as a tribunal, while the council heard appeals.¹⁰

Each university contained four departments: Literary Sciences (Letters), Physical and Mathematical Sciences (Mathematics), Moral and Political Sciences (Law), and Medicine. Each department elected its own dean and usually met monthly to examine manuscripts submitted for publication, review the use of funds, examine degree candidates, and schedule courses.

Professors could be emeritus, full, assistant, or honorary, and the new statute provided for twenty-eight chairs--a large expansion over the previous ten. It also added twelve adjunct professors, to reduce the professors' work load, and instructors of modern languages, dancing, drawing, and gymnastics.¹¹

Initially, professors had two major administrative duties. First, they were responsible for the management of the school district by means of a Schools Committee, composed of the rector and six professors. The Committee conducted annual inspections of all schools in the district

¹⁰Steinger, "Government Policy," 25-26; Galskoy, "Ministry of Education," 218-19; Mathes, "University Courts," 367.

¹¹"Ustavny Imperatorskikh universitetov," 261-301. For the distribution of chairs, see Appendix 2.

and approved the selection of gymnasium directors, teachers, and district inspectors. To supply teachers for the district, each university had a pedagogical institute where students received full financial support in exchange for six years of service after graduation.¹²

The second administrative duty of the professors was censorship. Initially, Alexander had eliminated all censorship restrictions, but gradually he changed his mind and began to view censorship as an "unfortunate necessity."

An 1804 decree put censorship in the hands of university committees that consisted of the four departments deans. The committee checked all works printed by the university press, published in the region, or ordered by the library or the faculty.¹³

Students under the new regulations, in theory, followed a three-year course of studies, which in practice usually took four years. Graduates received certain ranks according to the Table of Ranks: candidate--rank 12, master's--9, and Ph.D.--8. There was no tuition, and the state offered some stipends.¹⁴

¹²"Ob uchrezhdenii uchebnykh okrugakh," 22; Steinger, "Government Policy," 22; and Galskoy, "Ministry of Education," 218.

¹³Rozhdestvenskii, Istoricheskii obzor, 100-02; and Mikhail Sukhomlinov, Materialy dlia istorii prosveshchenia v Rossii v tsarstvovanii Imperatora Aleksandra I (St. Petersburg, 1867), 3-5, 16-17; and Materialy dlia istorii prosveshchenia v Rossii, ed. Peter Köppen, 3 vols. (St. Petersburg, 1819-27), 3: 6.

¹⁴Tikhomirov, Istoriia, 80; Steinger, "Government Policy,"

Though Alexander undertook sweeping educational reform, the first half of his reign, i.e., before 1812, ended with mixed results. Again, the state had taken the initiative in educational matters with intentions similar to those of previous rulers: "the education of useful citizens and the training of civil servants for imperial administration."¹⁵ Yet, it was difficult to determine how well the state's new schools met society's needs. For example, the gymnasia were not effective in preparing students for the universities. In 1819 the Moscow curator reported that:

In almost all gymnasia the number of students is not very great and some of the higher classes are almost empty. As a result, the number of students available for the University is not very large.¹⁶

Furthermore, students whose fathers were officials usually "were forced into service as soon as possible to help their families," while sons of merchants left school early because they only went "to learn to read, write, and manage accounts."¹⁷

The nobility still generally refused to attend the

21-22.

¹⁵Steinger, "Government Policy," 17; Borozdin, "Universitety v Rossii," 353.

¹⁶Rozhdestvenskii, Istoricheskii obzor, 69, 132.

¹⁷Hans Torke, "Das russische Beamtentum in der ersten Hälfte des 19. Jahrhunderts," Forschungen zur osteuropaischen Geschichte, 13 (1967): 155; Ikonnikov, "Russkie universitety," 543; and Steinger, "Government Policy," 33.

schools, and government measures to lure them remained unsuccessful. For example, a July 1806 decree provided that nobles "on finishing studies at a university with good success" could become commissioned officers after only six months of duty, but since the law did not define exactly what "finishing" meant, nobles still left school early.¹⁸ Though they attended the Noble Pension (preparatory, boarding school) in droves, when they decided to attend a higher school, it was usually an elite institution such as the Imperial Lycée in Tsarskoe selo and not a university.¹⁹

Fulfillment of the tsar's educational plan proceeded slowly and unevenly. By 1808 the Moscow District contained ten gymnasia for the ten gubernii with 447 students and forty-four schools for the 116 district towns with 2,356 students. In Kazan, the situation was far worse: five gymnasia for thirteen gubernii with 315 students and five

¹⁸"O proizvodstve postupaiushchikh v voennuiu sluzhbu," Sbornik postanovlenii, 1: 391-92; Flynn, "The Universities, the Gentry," 496.

¹⁹Ikonnikov, "Russkie universitety," 547; Lebedev, Istoricheskii vzgliad, 151-52; Whittaker, Origins of Russian Education, 66; and Borozdin, "Universitety v Rossii," 357.

schools for 129 district towns with 248 students.²⁰

Alexander's reforms also affected the universities unevenly. For example, while the tsar assumed that the new configuration of council and executive board safeguarded university autonomy, explicit limits still existed on that autonomy: the tsar and his minister confirmed the rector, deans, and professors; the student body had no corporate status; and the curator, though residing in St. Petersburg, could still be a powerful figure. Furthermore, professors' obligations had greatly increased.

By the end of Alexander's first decade, there existed widespread disappointment amid educated society with the educational reform. Since little direction emanated from the Ministry of Education, success depended largely on local initiative.

The reform of Moscow University

²⁰Rozhdestvenskii, Istoricheskii obzor, 71.

Although problems existed in Moscow as well, the University continued to grow due to the efforts of its curators. The first curator was Mikhail Kovalevskii, who had been educated in Strasburg, but Mikhail Murav'ev replaced him in 1803. Murav'ev, however, died in 1807 and Aleksei Razumovskii, the son of the famous Ukrainian hetman, who rarely visited the University, took the post.²¹

The selection of Murav'ev as curator proved to be a "very successful choice," despite the shortness of his tenure. He was also deputy minister of education and one of the most enlightened men of his time. He believed in freedom of education as "the chief fundament on which the well-being of a nation is based," and he considered that freedom of research was the "necessary condition not only for the development of enlightenment but also for the raising of popular morality."²² Murav'ev was responsible for the attaining many of the goals of the Alexandrine reforms, even though he was not supposed to interfere in daily affairs. When in 1804 the University received its new statute which promised, among other things, an expanded library and natural history museum, Murav'ev immediately set

²¹Tret'iakov, "Imperatorskii Moskovskii universitet," 125-26; Ikonnikov, "Russkie universitety," 73.

²²F. N. Berelevich, "Moskovskii universitet v 1800-1825 gody," Uchenye zapiski, no. 50 (1940): 26-27; Kizevetter, "Moskovskii universitet," 68; and Rozhdestvenskii, Istoricheskii obzor, 39.

out to implement these improvements.²³

Murav'ev had access to more money than previous curators because the 1803 budget gave the University 130,000 rubles a year. This was more than double the largest amount ever received under Catherine, and of this sum, 89,150 rubles went for salaries alone. The budget did provide one thousand rubles for the library, one thousand for the chemistry laboratory, and two thousand for the press. In all, about thirty percent of the money went for maintenance and facilities, which was also a great improvement over earlier budgets.²⁴

With this and other means, Murav'ev undertook to expand the school's facilities. One improvement was the purchase of two buildings, with supplemental money provided by the tsar, to house new professors brought from Germany.²⁵ Murav'ev also persuaded the tsar to buy various private book collections for the library and to purchase a telescope and equipment for an observatory. He also initiated the construction of a new chemistry laboratory.²⁶

²³Ferliuden, Istoricheskii ocherk, 65.

²⁴"O primernom izchislenii summ na ezhegodnoe sodержanie universitetov, gimnazii i uezdnykh uchilishch v Rossii," Sbornik postanovlenii, 1: 30-36. In comparison, a gymnasium budget was 5,750 rubles and a district school--1,410 rubles.

²⁵"Ob otpuske deneg na pokupku domov dlia pomeshcheniia Moskovskago universiteta," Dopolnenie, 25-26; Tret'iakov, "Imperatorskii Moskovskii universitet," 119-20.

²⁶"O pokupke dlia Moskovskago universiteta biblioteki doktora meditsiny Gupa," Sbornik postanovlenii, 1: 480; Berelevich,

Other University facilities increased in size during the first decade of the new reign. The Museum of Natural History, organized in 1791, quickly expanded, largely as a result of private donations. For example, in 1807 Princess Dashkova gave fifteen thousand objects, a collection of precious stones, and her library. Substantial donations from the Demidov and Urusov families followed her gift and more than quintupled the size of the collections.²⁷ As a result, the Museum was one of the best in Europe and may have held the "richest" collection of minerals on the continent.²⁸ Under Murav'ev, the University also established a botanical garden and increased the holdings of its herbarium, a collection of dried plants.²⁹ Finally, Murav'ev ensured that the University acquired its first

"Moskovskii universitet v 1800-1825 gody," 29; and Moscow, Universitet, Kafedra istorii khimii, Khimiia v Moskovskom universitete za 200 let (Moscow, 1955), 15-16.

²⁷Fedosov, Letopis', 41-42; "Letopis' mineral'nogo kabinetu," 79; Biograficheskii slovar', 2: 282-85; and N. M. Kulagin, "Pervye etapy razvitiia zoologii v Moskovskom universitete," Uchenye zapiski, no. 54 (1954): 22-23.

²⁸Moscow, Universitet, Geologicheskii fakul'tet, Istoriia geologicheskikh nauk v Moskovskom universitete, ed. D. I. Gordeev (Moscow, 1955), 62; S. S. Turov and G. P. Dement'ev, "Ocherk istorii zoologicheskogo muzeia Moskovskogo universiteta," Uchenye zapiski, no. 54 (1940): 176-77; Turov, Zoologicheskii muzei, 3-4; Kulagin, "Pervye etapy razvitiia zoologii," 24; and Biograficheskii slovar', 2: 282-85.

²⁹"O zavedenii botanicheskogo sad pri Moskovskom universitete," Sbornik postanovlenii, 1: 364; Fedosov, Letopis', 41; K. I. Meier, "Botanicheskii sad," Uchenye zapiski, no. 54 (1940): 333; and P. A. Smirnov, "Gerbarii Moskovskogo universiteta," Uchenye zapiski, no. 54 (1940): 324.

medical facilities. In 1805 a clinical institute opened, and the following year an obstetrical clinic began to function.³⁰

Although the school's facilities were improving, student enrollment remained small. By 1812 enrollment reached 215 students, more than double that of the 1790s, but though the Noble Pension had many students, few entered the University, and even fewer stayed to graduate. In 1810 only ten students graduated.³¹

Part of the problem was the lack of qualified students, which centered on the problem of social classes. Despite the nobility's reluctance to attend the university, the state pushed it hard. Nobles hated the Rules for Promotion in Rank in the Civil Service, with which Mikhail Speranskii, the tsar's capable reformer, attempted to raise the quality of the bureaucracy by linking promotion to education. The law required that all bureaucrats of middle rank and above receive a university education or pass an exam administered by the universities. Otherwise, there would be no promotions to rank 8, which conferred personal nobility, or

³⁰Fedosov, Letopis', 41; Berelevich, "Moskovskii universitet v 1800-1825 gody," 29; and Moscow, Universitet, Meditsinskii fakul'tet, 200 let Meditsinskogo fakul'teta Moskovskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta, ed. D. M. Rossiiskii (Moscow, 1955), 51.

³¹Tikhomirov, Istoriia, 85; Shevyrev, Istoriia, 412; and Flynn, University Reform of Tsar Alexander I, 33.

rank 5, hereditary nobility.³²

In general though, the government responded inconsistently to the problem of class. Although Alexander had envisioned non-class schools, in 1811 he ruled that a student from the taxable estate, those who paid taxes, had to complete his entire course of studies at a university before being legally released from his obligations and given a rank. Two years later, he issued instructions that no serf could enter a gymnasium without permission of the minister of education.³³ Yet, according to the curator of Kharkov, "if a university kept in a strict sense all the regulations which must be followed in the admission of students, it would not now have one student."³⁴

While the number of students at the school did not increase greatly, the faculty expanded significantly. From 1803 to 1812, the government appointed a total of forty new professors, including seventeen foreigners, which amounted to an almost complete replacement of the faculty. Murav'ev

³²Alston, Education and the State, 26-27; Torke, "Das russische Beamtentum," 63; W. Bruce Lincoln, In the Vanguard of Reform: Russia's Enlightened Bureaucrats (Dekalb, 1982), 11; and William Mathes, "The Process of Institutionalization of Education in Tsarist Russia," in Russian and Slavic History, eds. D. Rowney and G. Orchard (Columbus, 1977), 35.

³³Flynn, "Tuition and Social Class," 234; Flynn, "The Universities, the Gentry" 498; Shevyrev, Istoriia, 401; and Galskoy, "Ministry of Education," 22.

³⁴Rozhdestvenskii, Istoricheskii obzor, 62; Torke, "Das russische Beamtentum," 108.

himself brought in twenty-nine professors, fourteen of whom came from abroad, including many from the University of Göttingen: Ferdinand Reuss to teach chemistry, Franz Hoffmann in botany, Gotthelf Fischer von Waldheim in natural history, and Philip Reinhard as a teacher of the history of philosophy. The foreign appointees also included Heinrich-Moritz Grellmann, who had been teaching at Göttingen and was famous for his Historisch-statistisches Handbuch von Deutschland (Historico-Statistical Handbook of Germany, 2nd. ed., 1801), and Johann Buhle, a professor of natural law at Göttingen who wrote much, including a four volume Geschichte der neuern Philosophie (History of Modern Philosophy, 1800).³⁵

With this new influx of foreign professors, language once again became a problem. Ivan Heim, who arrived in Moscow in 1799, taught statistics "confusedly...in a barbarian Russian tongue."³⁶ Christian Schlözer, the son of the historian August Schlözer, was the first to teach

³⁵Tret'iakov, "Imperatorskii Moskovskii universitet," 119-20; Kizevetter, "Moskovskii universitet," 67-70; and Ikonnikov, "Russkie universitety," 531. Under Murav'ev: two new professors in 1803, fifteen in 1804, four in 1805, five in 1806, and three in 1807 (a total of twenty-nine, including fourteen foreigners); under Razumovskii, five Russians and two foreigners; and under Golenishchev-Kutuzov, three Russians and one foreigner.

³⁶Dmitrii Sverbeev, "Iz vospominanii," in Isaev, Moskovskii universitet v vospominaniakh sovremennikov, 153; I. A. Vitver, "Geografiia v Moskovskom universitete," Uchenye zapiski, no. 55 (1940): 13-17.

political economy and statistics in Russia. Although he possessed impressive scholarly credentials, students laughed when he tried to lecture in Russian, because no one could understand what he said.³⁷ Fischer, the natural historian, never studied Russian, preferring to lecture in German or Latin, and Reuss, the chemist, lectured in Latin.³⁸

On the eve of 1812, although the school counted thirty-nine professors, students must have felt that they had a choice only between incomprehensible foreigners and dull Russians. Dmitrii Sverbeev, a student, remembered Nikifor Cherepanov, who taught history, as a "bitch." Though students crowded into his lectures--they were mandatory for everyone--"the only ones who did not fall asleep were those who had brought a book to read." Cherepanov lectured "sluggishly, lengthily, and monotonously in a deathly voice."³⁹

Though professors were better paid under the new statute--each professor received two thousand rubles a year and each adjunct, eight hundred--they had more duties than

³⁷Sverbeev, "Iz vospominanii," 71; Kizevetter, "Moskovskii universitet," 67-70; Flynn, University Reform of Tsar Alexander I, 32; and Nikolai Karataev, Ekonomicheskie nauki v Moskovskom universitete (Moscow, 1956), 43-46.

³⁸E. S. Przheval'skii, "Khimia v Moskovskom universitete, 1755-1940 gody," Uchenye zapiski, 53 (1940): 15-16; N. D. Zelinskii, "Khimia v Moskovskom universitete s ego osnovaniia do nastoiashchego vremeni," Uchenye zapiski, 53 (1940): 3-5; and Gordeev, Istoriia geologicheskikh nauk, 69.

³⁹Sverbeev, "Iz vospominanii," 69; Tikhomirov, Istoriia, 84; and Berelevich, "Moskovskii universitet v 1800-1825 gody," 33.

before. Professors had to inspect the schools, and they might serve on the censorship committee, give paid lectures to bureaucrats, or test private tutors. Many also gave private lessons to augment their income.⁴⁰

Professor Aleksei Merzliakov was a good illustration of what the University could achieve in this period. Born in 1778 to a poor merchant in Perm guberniia, he studied at the local school where his "Oda na zakliuchenie mira so Shvedami" (Ode on the Conclusion of Peace with the Swedes) came to the attention of the school's director, who forwarded it to the guberniia governor, who sent it to one of Catherine the Great's favorites, who finally gave it to the empress. Catherine had it published and ordered Merzliakov to attend Moscow University at state expense. He attended the gymnasium and University and received his master's in 1805.⁴¹

In 1804 Merzliakov took over the chair of Oratory, Poetry, and Russian Language. The minister of education promoted him to assistant professor in 1807 and full professor three years later, and he continued to hold the

⁴⁰"O primernom izchislenii summ," 30-36; Fedosov, Letopis', 43; and Berelevich, "Moskovskii universitet v 1800-1825 gody," 33.

⁴¹Biograficheskii slovar', 2: 52-100; Sushkov, Moskovskii universitetskii blagorodnyi pansion, 88; Nikolai Mizko, "Aleksei F. Merzliakov, 1778-1830 g.," RS, 24 (January-April 1879): 113-40; and "Narodnoe obrazovanie i nauchnaia zhizn'," in Istoriia Moskvyy, ed. N. M. Druzhinin, 6 vols. (Moscow, 1952-54), 3: 500 [hereafter referred to as Istoriia Moskvyy].

chair until his death in 1830. Merzliakov was an important poet, critic, and scholar of his time. He was one of the first to teach ancient poetry in Russia, and at the same time, he expounded on the talents of Mikhail Lomonosov, Mikhail Kheraskov, Gavril Derzhavin, and Aleksandr Sumarokov as the best representatives of eighteenth-century Russian classicism. He was Russia's first literary critic and played an important role in awakening society to a "Russian" literary tradition,⁴² partly by undertaking a series of popular public lectures in connection with the literary debate between classicists (supporters of Lomonosov) and romanticists like Zhukovskii.⁴³

He developed his own view of art in a series of articles in Vestnik Evropy (Messenger of Europe). For Merzliakov, there were only two kinds of poetry: epic, in which the poet spoke, and dramatic, in which others talked, and he felt that art could not be subjected to any systematization: "Works of fine art, as objects of feeling and taste, are not subject to strict rules and may not, of course, have a consistent system or science."⁴⁴ He defined

⁴²Biograficheskii slovar', 2: 66; Kizevetter, "Moskovskii universitet," 72-74.

⁴³Mizko, "Aleksii Merzliakov," 116; Kizevetter, "Moskovskii universitet," 72-74. The debate also involved Karamzin, who represented a new, more graceful use of the Russian language, and Admiral Shishkov, who sought to preserve a fully-Russian language.

⁴⁴Mizko, "Aleksii Merzliakov," 120; Nikolai Gudzii, Izuchenie russkoi literatury v Moskovskom universitete (Moscow, 1958), 4-5;

poetry as "imitation in a harmonic word, sometimes true, sometimes embellished in conformity with the intention of the poet and his talant."⁴⁵

After 1812 Merzliakov lost some of his teaching effectiveness. M. A. Dmitr'ev, a student, admitted that Merzliakov rarely showed up to lecture and always improvised them when he did. Timkovskii often woke him from an after-dinner nap only a half hour before the lecture:

Then, in haste, he drank a huge glass of rum and tea...."Give me a book to take to the lecture," he ordered. When Timkovskii asked, "Which one?" Merzliakov would reply, "anyone you want," and thus a lecture was born.⁴⁶

Merzliakov exemplified the ties between the University and society that could be used by a professor. He was a publisher, editor, critic, and scholar, took part in the work of the scholarly societies, and gave public lectures. All these activities enabled him to influence the context of contemporary intellectual debate.

Murav'ev had made a special effort to initiate the practice of special lectures for the general public. In the 1803-04 academic year, he opened four such courses:

and Biograficheskii slovar', 2: 66.

⁴⁵Aleksei Merzliakov, "Ob iziashchnom, ili o vybore v podrazhanii," Vestnik Evropy, 69 (May 1813): 191.

⁴⁶Timkovskii, "Moskovskii universitet v 1805-1810," 66; Mizko, "Aleksei Merzliakov," 116-17.

Schlözer on European history before the sixteenth century, Heim on commerce, Petr Strakhov on experimental physics, and Fedor Politykovskii on natural history. The following year, Murav'ev added courses on English history, chemistry, the history of philosophy, ancient and contemporary aesthetics, and arithmetic.⁴⁷ These classes were extremely popular and attracted listeners from all levels of society, especially for Strakhov's physics experiments.⁴⁸

Petr Strakhov had studied at Moscow University and from 1791 to 1812 taught physics. In 1810 he published his own Kratkii kurs fiziki (Short Course in Physics) in which he correctly viewed physics as:

In general a science of bodies...It investigates not only the characteristics of bodies, but also the laws to which they are subjected, the processes and phenomena in which they are manifested.⁴⁹

He was a talented lecturer who drew many to his Saturday morning lectures at which he demonstrated various electrical and magnetic phenomena. (At one he explained in some detail the work of Benjamin Franklin.) Society's elite watched his experiments in the University's main auditorium.

One observer later recalled that the "women occupied the

⁴⁷Shevyrev, Istoriia, 343-44; Fedosov, Letopis', 38, 40.

⁴⁸Shevyrev, Istoriia, 333-35; Ferliuden, Istoricheskii ocherk, 66.

⁴⁹N. A. Kaptsov, "Fizika v Moskovskom universitete so dnia ego osnovaniia," Uchenye zapiski, 52 (1940): 28-33.

first rows of chairs, then visitors and students. All the well-known literati of the time were also listeners."⁵⁰

After the long practice of leasing the press to private individuals, Murav'ev and the council brought it back under their direct control in 1806.⁵¹ As directed by the new university charter, the press published its usual variety: scientific works, works of professors, dissertations, textbooks, translations, lectures, newspapers, and journals.

Popular foreign authors included Beccaria, Bentham, Condorcet, Goethe, Montesquieu, Walter Scott, and Adam Smith. Russian authors also became more available: Lomonosov, Fonvizin, and Derzhavin. Boarding-school students published their literary efforts such as Utrenniaia zaria (Morning Dawn, 1800-08).⁵²

In this period, a number of important journals appeared. Professor Buhle, following Murav'ev's idea about organizing a scholarly newspaper, published Moskovskiiia uchenyia vedomosti (Moscow Scholarly News, 1805-07), which contained reviews of Russian and foreign books and notes on University events. The most influential periodical of the

⁵⁰Istoriia Moskvyy, 486.

⁵¹Tret'iakov, "Imperatorskii Moskovskii universitet," 123; Trifonov, 225 let, 56-57; and Nikolai Tsimbaev, "Izdatel'skaia deiatel'nost' Moskovskogo universiteta v XIX-nachale XX v.," Vestnik Moskovskogo universiteta: seriia istorii, no. 3 (May-June 1981): 30.

⁵²Moscow, Universitet, Biblioteka, Periodicheskie i prodolzhaishchiesia izdaniia Moskovskogo universiteta, ed. M. I. Gurevich (Moscow, 1973), 39.

time continued to be Nikolai Karamzin's Vestnik Evropy.⁵³

The press was also an important tool for the revival by Murav'ev of scholarly societies at the University. The first, formed in May 1804, was the Obshchestvo istorii i drevnostei rossiiskikh (Society of Russian History and Antiquities) under the chairmanship of Khariton Chebotarev, the rector, and including all University professors as members. Honorary members included Karamzin and Count Aleksei Musin-Pushkin, the president of the Academy of Sciences. Its purpose was the publishing of ancient Russian manuscripts with corrections, notes, and critical commentary, and the tsar gave the Society permission to enter the Moscow Main Archive of Foreign Affairs, the Academy of Sciences, and all monasteries to locate manuscripts. For Murav'ev the Society fulfilled his idea of fitting Russia into the framework of universal history and "to unite Russian antiquities with the entire circle of Greek, Roman, and Egyptian antiquities."⁵⁴

In September 1804 the tsar chartered the Obshchestvo ispytatelei prirody (Society of Natural Scientists) to gather information on the mineral and plant riches of Russia, find new objects for Russian trade, and arouse interest in natural history. The University museum, whose

⁵³Trifonov, 225 let, 52; Shevyrev, Istoriia, 325-26; and Tsimbaev, "Izdatel'skaia deiatel'nost'," 36.

⁵⁴"Ob uchrezhdenii Obshchestva istorii i drevnostei rossiiskikh," Dopolnenie, 23-24; Shevyrev, Istoriia, 349-53.

director was also director of the Society, received all items discovered by or donated to the Society. Its publications began in 1805 with the Journal de la Société des naturalistes de Moscou (Journal of the Society of Moscow Naturalists), and in 1807 the Society received the "Imperial" title and an annual subsidy for its publications. The following year the tsar agreed to grant five thousand rubles for work on a systematic description of Moscow guberniia.⁵⁵

In January 1805 the Obshchestvo sorevnovaniia meditsinskikh i fizicheskikh nauk (Society of Medical and Physical Sciences), later known as Obshchestvo fiziko-meditsinskoe (Physico-Medical Society), formed to spread useful information about these disciplines by means of public sessions and announcements of discoveries in its journals. The Society published the monthly Mediko-fizicheskii zhurnal (Physico-Medical Journal, 1808-21) and Commentationes Societatis physico-medicae (1808-25).⁵⁶

Finally, the Obshchestvo liubitelei rossiiskoi slovesnosti (Society of the Lovers of Russian Literature) received imperial sanction in June 1811. The avowed aim of the new literary group was "to disseminate information about

⁵⁵"O pozhalovanii 5000 rublei Moskovskomu Obshchestvu ispytatelei prirody," Dopolnenie, 57-58; L. I. Kursanov and V. A. Deinga, "Moskovskoe Obshchestvo ispytatelei prirody," Uchenye zapiski, no. 54 (1940): 53-57.

⁵⁶Shevyrev, Istoriia, 349-53.

the rules and forms of sensible letters and to supply the public with polished works in Russian prose and verse." The Society soon became the battleground of a heated literary debate between classicists and romanticists like the poets Vasilii Zhukovskii and Prince Petr Viazemskii.⁵⁷ Through its publications and Trudy (Works, 1812-28), the Society aided the then-current search for a new literary language.⁵⁸

Problems did, however, beset some of the societies. The Obshchestvo matematikov (Mathematical Society), founded by some students at the University in April 1810, lasted less than a decade.⁵⁹ The Historical Society also had problems. When Pavel Golenishchev-Kutuzov became the new curator in 1810, he reported to the tsar on the "extremely meager results" produced by the Society to date; only eighty pages of text had been printed. The slowness stemmed from the fact that the Society was new in the publishing business and every member, in turn, edited each page of text before sending it to the printer. Since Golenishchev did not want to take responsibility for the Society's failure, he had the

⁵⁷Mizko, "Aleksei Merzliakov," 116; Kizevetter, "Moskovskii universitet," 72-74. The debate also involved Karamzin, who represented a new, more graceful use of the Russian language, and Admiral Shishkov, who sought to preserve a fully-Russian language.

⁵⁸"Ustav Obshchestvo liubitelei rossiiskoi slovesnosti," Sbornik postanovlenii, 1: 653-62; Lebedev, Istoricheskii vzgliad, 166.

⁵⁹Shevyrev, Istoriia, 401-02; Sushkov, Moskovskii universitetskii blagorodnyi pansion, 34.

tsar close the old Society in 1811 and established a new one in its place with an "Imperial" charter. It had the same purpose and received a state subsidy to finance the printing of the Russian Primary Chronicle.⁶⁰

To sum up, in the first decade of Alexander's reign, Moscow University entered a period of reorganization and expansion, much of which Murav'ev initiated. As a result of his efforts, the school's faculty and facilities increased in size and perhaps in quality. Also as a result of his work, the University further enlarged its ties to society by the formation of the four scholarly societies, the public lecture courses, and the direct control of the press. In some ways, the University, through these means, was playing an ever greater role in society, but the student body remained small, and though the professoriat underwent a sizeable expansion with qualified foreign scholars, their impact remained questionable.

⁶⁰"O zakrytii sushchestvuiushchago pri Moskovskom universitete Obshchestva istorii i drevnostei rossiiskikh i ob uchrezhdenii drugago," Sbornik postanovlenii, 1: 599; "Ustav Obshchestva istorii i drevnostei rossiiskikh," Sbornik postanovlenii, 1: 605-15; and Ivan Zabelin, "Istoricheskii ocherk deiatel'nosti Obshchestva istorii i drevnostei rossiiskikh," Chteniia, supplement (1888): vii-viii.