

OUTLINE

THE DECEMBRIST REVOLT

I. WHY THE DECEMBRISTS WERE ^{Rebellious,} ~~DISCONTENTED~~.

II. The Secret Societies

III. IDEAS and Aims of the Decembrists

IV. THE DEATH OF ALEXANDER AND THE CONFUSION Surrounding the Succession.

V. The Events of Dec. 14, 1825. in St. Petersburg

VI. The Rebellion in the South.

VII. WAS THE Failure of the Decembrists Inevitable?

VIII. ^{Punishment} ~~OF~~ OF THE DECEMBRISTS.

Do I have Mazour?
Yes, in my office

SHORTEN TO
1 LECTURE

(instead of 1½)

(67)

THE DECEMBRIST UPRISING

(Read Magouar + Zetlin)

I. BEGINNINGS OF THE 19th CENTURY REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT.

This semester, which will be concerned largely with ~~the 1917~~ ^{the 1917} revolution, its causes and origins, starts off with a revolution -- the ~~1825~~ revolt of December 1825.

Although unsuccessful, the Decembrist Uprising had a tremendous influence: ~~on the following generations~~

- Inspired many to become revolutionaries, reformers.
- Decembrists -- became heroes, martyrs.
- Their ideas -- influenced later generations (like Herzen)

II. WHAT HAPPENED. (Dec. 1825)

A group of ~~army men~~ ^{army men, mostly nobles} tried to overthrow the govt, ~~abolish~~ abolish the autocracy, set up a ~~constitutional regime~~

constitutional regime. →

See "Decembrists in Exile" in Russian Thought + Politics (Karpovich)

Mikhail Zetlin, The Decembrists. NY: Internat'l University Press, 1958.

Why did it happen? DECEMBRISTS

III. REASONS FOR DISCONTENT UNDER ALEXANDER I.

1. Conditions in the Armed Forces:

a. Enlisted Men -- drafted for 25 years. - *extended for bad conduct.*

- (learned that in Poland was 8 yrs, while Finns had no draft at all)
- Corporal punishment (running gauntlet)
 - poor food, pay.

b. Officers -- Incessant drilling, parades (which Alexander loved as much as his father Paul.)

- Found peace dull after the excitement of the Napoleonic campaigns. Boredom of barracks life.

(Most of Decembrists were army officers.)

*Harsh discipline, extreme punishments.
mutiny of Semionovsky Regiment (1820)*

2. Effect of Travel in France and Other Countries.

Both officers and enlisted men had in the ~~preceding~~ years between 1812 and 1825 spent a lot of time abroad, during the Napoleonic campaigns, and afterwards in the armies of occupation in France. Shocked at how much better things were outside of Russia:

- Living standards higher. *more cultured, civilized.*
- Freedom.
- Revolutionary ideas. *(Like W.W. II)*

"Along with the souvenirs that they carried back in their knapsacks, they carried subversive ideas in their heads."

Occupation Corps in France -- When they returned to Russia in 1818, they were so disaffected that the units were disbanded.

Some joined liberal societies while in France.

3. Spread of Liberal & Revolutionary Ideas.

French Ambassador wrote in 1820 -- "The entire youth, and particularly the Army officers, feed on and are imbued with liberal doctrines. The boldest theories are the ones that please the most.... Already they imagine, nay, approve, the excesses, the very crimes to which the love of freedom can lead!"

Poems - in revolutionary spirit, by Pushkin, etc. in manuscript.

4. Alexander's Liberalism -- in France, Poland, Finland.

Why not in Russia also?

5. ~~Alexander's Reactionary practices in latter part of his reign.~~

He helped to popularize & spread liberal ideas & aspirations, especially in the early years of his reign.

THE DECEMBRIST UPRISING

I. FACTORS LEADING TO THE DECEMBRIST MOVEMENT.

1. Alexander's Liberalism -- encouraged the ~~liberals~~ liberals.

Always spouting liberal ideas, especially in early years.

Constitutions -- ^{had been} granted to Finland, Poland, France.

Russians resented that they had not been given constitution.

5. ● Bad conditions in the Government, Society.

Corruption, inefficiency, graft.
Taxes impoverishing everyone.
Economic stagnation.

Class ignorant, often immoral.

6. ● Peasantry -- Serfdom. Desire for ~~serf~~ emancipation.

● Conditions in Armed Forces.

Enlisted men -- drafted for 25 years.

Pay almost nothing.

Enlistment could be extended beyond the 25 yrs for bad behaviour.

Quartermaster Dept -- notoriously corrupt.

Guards Units -- the elite, around the capital.

Incessant drilling.

Alex and his brothers never tired of parades.

Precise rules.

Mutinies (Semenovsky regiment, 1820)

Had led many palace revolutions in 18th c.

~~Most of leaders of the Decembrist movement were Army Officers.~~

● Foreign Travel. (like after W.W.II)

Especially in Western Europe during Napoleonic campaigns, and during occupation of France.

Picked up foreign, "subversive" ideas.

Saw how much greater freedom, progress existed in other countries.
Wanted to imitate constitutions, etc. (like after W.W.II?)

Revolutionary Poems -- by Pushkin, others. Circulated in handwritten copies.

(reasons for Decembrists)

6. Reactionary Practices of the Regime. - especially in Alexander's later years.
- Censorship. - Arakcheev. - Military Colonies.
 - Police.
 - Dominance of religious mysticism, or later of militant orthodoxy.
 - Holy Alliance -- seemed the defense of all that was old and outmoded and unjust.

Intervention in Spain and Italy to suppress revolutions.

Failure to intervene in Greece to help revolutionaries ag. Turks.

7. SERFDOM - many felt it an evil, should be abolished.

~~8. Revolutions Elsewhere as Inspiration.~~

In Spain, Naples, Piedmont, Portugal, Greece, Latin America -- was an epoch of many revolutions.

Russian liberals decided that Russia needed a revol also.

7. The Masonic Movement. -- Today harmless, but then ^{somewhat} radical.

Catherine II in later years had tried to suppress the movement.

Tolerated under Alex I, ^{until 1822, as mostly they} were weak and timid, and did not usually deal with political & social questions.

Many of Decembrists were members, ~~some~~ got into the habit of secret meetings, ritual, etc.

8. Revolutions Elsewhere as Inspiration. French Revol. of 1789

In Spain, Naples, Piedmont, Portugal, Greece, Latin America -- was a period of many revolutions.

Russian liberals decided that Russia needed a revol also.

Influence of America and American Revolution. →

9. Serfdom - common feeling that it was an evil, should be abolished.

9. Influence of the United States on the Decembrists.

a. Radischev -- had been exiled to Siberia by Catherine the Great, partly because of his praise of Benj. Franklin.

b. N. Novikov -- in 1784 published a brief sketch of life of Geo Washington.

Said Washington a great hero because "he established a Republic, which of course will be the asylum of liberty for those fleeing from European decadence and abuses."

~~was~~ In the latter part of the 18th c. and early part of 19th c. the American Revolution, the American Republic, and its leaders enjoyed a great vogue among Russian liberals. ~~led to the~~ Paved way for Decembrists.

c. Mr. Jefferson -- another great Virginian.

Indirect influence on the Decembrists.

Sponsored, perhaps even helped ~~write~~ to write, a commentary on the famous book by Montesquieu, "The Spirit of the Laws,"

Commentary written by Frenchman, named de Tracy (not Dick Tracy)

Consisted largely of arguments against monarchical form of govt, in favor of Republic.

This book read by several of the Decembrists, ~~including~~ (including Pestel), considered by them "the apogee of wisdom."

Pestel -- at the trial of the Decembrists, ^{Pestel,} the top leader testified:

"de Tracy's book impressed me immensely. He proves that...where the State is headed by one person.../it/ will inevitably end in despotism. All newspapers and political writings have so much glorified the growth of prosperity in the United States, ascribing the cause to its form of govt, that this seemed to me a proof of the superiority of a republic."

One Decembrist said to Pestel -- "You will become another George Washington."

Nikita Muraviev -- drew up a draft constitution for Russia, ~~similar~~ similar to the constitution of the U.S. (But a limited monarch)

(U.S. formerly looked to by oppressed peoples as the symbol of revolutionary change. ~~Now~~ Now Soviet Union has stolen this role from us. Formerly we appeared modern. Now old-fashioned. Oldest constitution.)

Summarize

CHAPT. XII. THE SECRET SOCIETIES

When the young army officers returned from abroad in 1813-14, they formed various clubs, circles, etc, literary, social and political.

I. THE UNION OF SALVATION, 1816

Officers of, ~~the~~ ^{an army} Semionovsky regiment formed a political organization, its aim being a constitutional form of govt. Pavel Pestel -- came to dominate it. Chose the conspiratorial ~~the~~ Carbonari as his model, got such a constitution adopted. Most of the members were liberal minded dreamers or mystics, but he had definite ideas.

II. UNION OF WELFARE, 1818

When Pestel, ~~was~~ ^{was transferred, one member} Mikhail Muraviev prevailed upon the members to adopt a new constitution, modeled after German Jugendbund, changed the name to Union of Welfare. Program moderate, to cooperate with the govt for the betterment of the condition of the people.

4 Branches of activity:

1. Philanthropic, improvement of peasant conditions.
2. Educational, chiefly among army. Schools.
3. Betterment of Justice. Projects for the new courts.
4. Economic.

III. ^{FAKE} DISBANDING OF UNION OF WELFARE, 1821

Mutiny of the soldiers of Semionovsky regiment aroused Alex, altho was not due to revolutionary work of societies. ~~Moscow~~ ⁽¹⁸²⁰⁾ Diet of 1820 meanwhile rejected all the bills introduced by the govt. and revolution broke out in Naples.

So Alex disbanded the regiment, dispersed its members, who then ~~formed~~ ^{formed} revolutionary cadres thruout the empire. Union of Welfare decided to disband because of tense mood of govt.

IV. THE SOUTHERN SOCIETY

(a trick, to mislead the govt. Continued as:
Pestel, in ^{Ukraine,} ~~Ukraine,~~ refused to disband, but continued ~~under~~ ^{under} name of Southern Society, ~~in three branches.~~

V. THE NORTHERN SOCIETY, 1822

~~They~~ ^{They} managed to revive the organization in Petrograd, ~~the~~ ^{did not follow his idea.} There Nikita Muraviev worked out a different constitution.

Pestel proposed to overthrow the govt with a military coup d'etat, and organize a military dictatorship of a jacobine type, with strong central govt.

Muraviev's constitution was monarchical, but with monarch's power strictly limited. Federalist.

Movement divided - between radicals like Pestel & moderates like Muraviev.

Nikita

SOCIETIES NOT REALLY "SECRET"

Pi Kappa Kappa or Σ Phi

Were "secret" only in the sense that ~~college fraternities~~ are secret -- meetings not open to the public.

Alex I knew about their existence, was personally acquainted with many of the members, and read some of their schemes. On one ~~one~~ occasion he advised a certain member to resign.

Police - never molested them. Up until Aug. 1822 participation in such bodies by govt. officials was permitted.

Discussion Groups -- were looked upon as such, and to ~~some~~ some extent they were.

But ended by plotting revolution, regicide.

WHO WERE THE DECEMBRISTS?

Leaders mostly from distinguished families.

1. Nobility -- not proletarians, or even middle class.
2. Young -- Of the 121 on trial, only 12 were over 35 yrs of age.
3. Traveled in Western Europe -- Compared conditions there with situation in ~~Russia~~ Russia. Pestel said he became a republican in France.
4. Sons of Catherinian Free-thinkers. -- Their fathers had espoused with superficial enthusiasm the enlightened ideas of Voltaire, Rousseau, Diderot, etc.; had ~~spoken~~ spoken high ideals, but had ignored the Russian actuality.

Sons converted their father's philosophical abstractions into concrete political aspirations.

Put these ideas into action.

5. Army officers - including - Generals + Colonels

6. Nationalists

IDEAS AND AIMS OF THE DECEMBRISTS

I. GREAT DIVERSITY.

1. Fatal Weakness -- in contrast with the Bolsheviki of 1917, the ~~the~~ members of the revolutionary societies of 1825 were sharply divided as to aims, methods, tactics

Some didn't even want a revolution, but preferred simply to infiltrate the government and exert pressure for change in a peaceful way.

Divided into: Moderates and Radicals.

II. CONSTITUTION OF NIKITA MURAVĖV - *moderate, democratic.*

1. Modeled after the United States govt, except that he wanted to have a limited monarchy.
2. Federation of 13 regions (like the 13 American states).
3. Bi-cameral National Assembly (*like U.S. Congress, including a House of Representatives.*)
4. Serfs -- to be freed.
5. Civil Liberties, trial by jury for everyone.
6. Education, propaganda-- the means by which these changes to be brought about. (*Not by revol.*)

III. "RUSSKAYA PRAVDA" ^(Russian Justice) OF PESTEL

1. Authoritarian -- For a centralized, monolithic, totalitarian state, with complete control over the ~~the~~ population, whose welfare the state will bring about.
2. Police -- to be strong, with a secret service whose job would be to spy on the citizenry.
3. Morals -- to be controlled ~~the~~ by the state, with drinking, card-playing, and other dissipations to be forbidden.
4. Serfdom -- to be abolished. ~~A kind of semi-socialist agriculture in which half the land will be nationalized and periodically redistributed to ensure equality among the peasants. But other private property will be inviolable, and rich people will continue to exist.~~
5. Provisional Govt -- to be set up after the insurrection, would institute the new form of govt, and rule for 10 years or more to get the new system firmly established. Others opposed this as undemocratic.

a temporary dictatorship.

IV. ARISTOCRATIC FEAR OF THE MASSES.

1. Though the conspirators may have differed over many points, most of them agreed in their fear of the masses, and their desire not to have a popular revolution. In fact, one of their ~~main~~ concerns was to keep the revolt within bounds, so as to avoid participation ~~in~~ by the peasants, lest ~~they~~ they produce a Frankenstein monster which they could not control.
2. ~~-----~~ ^{One} member of Northern Society, ^{warned that:} -- "In Moscow alone there were ninety thousand house serfs ready to seize knives, and the first victims will be the sisters, aunts, grandmothers of the conspirators."

Weakness of the Movement -- Limited almost entirely to a few members of the aristocracy. Little popular support, for they did not try to organize it. Wanted their sympathy, but not their participation.

V. TALK OF REGICIDE.

Many of the members assumed that it would be necessary or desirable to ~~kill~~ kill the emperor, and perhaps the whole royal family.

Others wished to arrest them and send them abroad.

Volunteers -- One young sub-lieutenant, who was unhappy over a love affair, suggested that he shoot the Emperor as he came out of Uspensky Cathedral.

Gallows -- One member commented, ~~perhaps~~ jokingly, that they build an "economy gallows," tall enough to hang the tsar and his relatives in one long chain, one hanging from the feet of the other

Captain Yakubovich -- Had a personal grievance against the Tsar ~~because~~ because, after a duel, he had been transferred to the Caucasus. Wanted to assassinate the Tsar, but was persuaded to wait until the proper moment.

VI. PLOTTERS WERE NATIONALISTS.

1. Nationalism -- a common element among the conspirators, along with their liberalism. One of the things they held against Alexander was his supposed favoritism for Poland, and rumors that he was going to restore the Western provinces to Poland.
Nationalism inspired by the Napoleonic wars, especially the campaign of 1812.

VII. IMPRACTICAL.

Fuzzy-minded dreamers. Spent most of their time drawing up blueprints for the new society to come after the revolution, not much time in figuring out how the revolution could be brought about.

#

Alexander - no children.

3 brothers:

1. Constantine - oldest
2. Nicholas - next oldest

3. Michael

(69)

I. DEATH OF ALEXANDER I.

(on Sea of Azov, near Rostov)

Died at Taganrog, -- Nov. 19, 1825.
News reached the capital -- Nov. 27.

Nicholas -- in Petersburg.

Constantine -- in Warsaw, where he was Governor General of Kingdom of Poland.

II. Constantine Had Renounced Throne.

~~Question of...~~ But news kept secret.
~~Manifesto of Alexander I...~~ married a Pole, lived in Poland.

II. POPULARLY ASSUMED THAT CONSTANTINE WOULD SUCCEED.

1. Title of Tsarevich -- equivalent of "Crown Prince", heir. Had always been used in connection with Constantine.
2. No public statement about his renunciation of throne.

III. UNPOPULARITY OF NICHOLAS.

1. Guards -- didn't like him, because he was a severe military disciplinarian, a martinet. Cold, ~~more~~ strict.
2. Constantine -- Much the same personality, but the military units in Petersburg not so aware of his faults, because he was far away in Warsaw.
 Rumors that he was a much kinder person.
 Polish Army -- better equipped, better paid. Enlisted men drafted for only 8 years instead of 25. ~~in~~
 Serfdom -- rumor that he favored its abolition. Not true.

IV. QUESTION OF OATH OF ALLEGIANCE.

1. Manifesto of Alexander I (1823) -- Had named Nicholas as heir, but kept secret. Copy in hands of Archbishop of Moscow, and govt officials.
 But some said this document not legal, because had not been promulgated during life of Alexander.

Nicholas unsure of its legality.

V. DECISION TO MAKE OATH TO CONSTANTINE.

1. Nicholas -- knew about his unpopularity ~~in~~ with Guards units. Feared that if he announced himself Emperor, he would be suspected of trying to usurp his brother's throne, would precipitate a revolution.
2. Oath administered -- when news came of death of Alexander, Nicholas proclaimed Constantine Emperor, gave oath of allegiance to him, ordered that the same be done ~~everywhere~~.
So done everywhere except in Warsaw. *elsewhere.*

Sent messenger to Constantine, -- ~~he~~ explained what had been ~~done~~ done, asked that he come to St. Pete and publicly renounce ~~the~~ throne. *

3. Constantine -- furious at this. Feared a trick or accident might force him to take over the job he didn't want.

Refused to come.

Thus for period of ~~2~~ weeks Constantine officially Emperor.

*Alex died - Nov. 19. Oath to Constantine - Nov. 27.
Constantine nominally his successor - till Dec. 14
(4 week gap after death of Alex.)*

VI. PLANS OF CONSPIRATORS.

1. ^{Had} Planned uprising for 1826 -- but now seized upon this as their chance.
2. Agitation -- among troops in capital. Spread rumor that Alexander had issued an order shortening the no. of years of required army service, but that Nicholas had suppressed the order.
3. Plan -- ~~the~~ Through the troops would exert pressure on the Senate and State Council not to take oath to Nicholas, but instead ~~to~~ to set up provisional govt, call ~~it~~ a constitutional assembly representative of the people, which would then set up a new govt.
4. Lies to the Troops -- said the legitimate Tsar, Constantine, was being held in chains, and should not swear allegiance to Nicholas. ~~Thus~~ Thus the revolutionaries, instead of calling upon the people to rise up in the name of freedom or ~~human~~ human rights, ~~instead~~ instead appealed ~~in~~ in the name of legitimacy, the conspirators pretending to be defenders of the old order. Thus the revolt was to some extent robbed from the first of any ~~its~~ ideological significance. *(yarmolinsky 37)*
5. Small Group - only about 60 members of Northern Society.

VII. ON THE EVE OF THE UPRISING.

1. "Dictator" -- elected as the person to lead the insurrection a "mild-tempered, rather irresolute man of moderate views," Prince Sergei Trubetskoy. 35 yrs old.

2. Ryléev -- former army officer, romantic poet. Busy making plans, uttering emotional ~~spontaneous~~ declarations.

"The tactics of revolution," he said, "may be summed ~~up~~ up in one word -- daring. If we come to grief, our failure will serve as a lesson to those who come after us." (~~grunwald-5~~)

3. Prince Odoevski -- a lieutenant in the Horse Guards: "Death is waiting for us, but what a glorious death!"

4. Nicholas -- had been warned ~~of the conspiracy~~ of the conspiracy.

To his wife -- "We do not know what awaits us; promise me to be brave and to die honorably if we must die." (grun-2)

To his Commanding Officers -- "If misfortunes come, an Emperor of Russia must die sword in hand....Should I be Emperor for only one hour, I shall prove myself worthy of the honor."

Nich. Wrote to an officer -- On the day when the oath is supposed to be taken, "I shall ^{be} either ~~a~~ a sovereign or a corpse."

A Crazy Revolution

VII. EVENTS OF DEC. 14, 1825.

1. Oath of Allegiance -- ~~Nicholas~~ Nicholas announced that ^{oath to him} he would be made on that day.
Conspirators - to prevent this. But:
2. ~~State Council~~ State Council -- ~~took~~ took ^{the oath} on evening of 13th. Senate -- took it early in morning of 14th. (7 a.m.)
3. Troops -- most of them took it, without trouble, morning of 14th.
4. Disloyal Troops -- Some units refused to take oath. Marched to Senate square. Told by Decembrists ~~to~~ not to support Nicholas, but insist upon Constantine. (a ruse) About 3,000 soldiers.
5. "Constantine and the Constitution" -- Constantine's wife.
6. Yakubovich -- The day before he had accepted the assignment to occupy the Winter Palace with armed sailors and arrest all possible claimants to the throne. Now he refused to do this, but instead marched his troops to the Senate Square. Nobody attacked the Winter Palace. (yarmolinsky 40)
7. Kakhovsky -- had promised to get into the Winter Palace and assassinate Nicholas. But now ~~backed~~ backed out. All the plans fouled up. (around 9 a.m.)
8. Disloyal Troops -- Marched into Senate Square, ^(around 9 a.m.) lined up in battle formation near the statue of Peter the Great. No point in going there, as the Senate was no longer in session, ~~had~~ had already taken the oath. About 3,000 troops.
~~Because~~ A change in plans was needed, but no one did anything because the officer who had been assigned the job of "dictator," Prince Trubetsky, didn't show up. *Rylov went to look for him, never returned. Leaderless.*
9. Nicholas -- knew about the conspiracy from informers. Unsure how he would make out. Wrote ~~an~~ to an officer, "I shall either be a sovereign or a corpse." *Prince Obolensky, - liar, inexperienced*
Surrounded the area with loyal troops.
10. Disloyal troops -- Shouted "Constantine" and ~~the~~ "Constitution".
Waited, presumably for reinforcements. Some came. But not Trubetsky.
11. Governor of St. Petersburg -- urged the troops to give oath. Shot, killed. (by Kakhovsky)
12. Civilians -- crowds of civilians, mostly plebian, swarmed the square, expressing sympathy with the rebels, and throwing rocks at the Tsar's entourage. Someone shouted "Give us arms, and in half an hour we'll turn the city upside down."
Rebels didn't want that.

67

Nicholas - brave, even reckless. Talked to crowd, asked them to go home.

~~11. Nicholas~~

~~11. Nicholas~~ ^{He} had hoped to avoid bloodshed.

But when efforts at persuasion failed, and when it began to get dark, he decided it would be dangerous to postpone a resolution of the affair until the next day. Some other guards units might join the rebellion.

Artillery brought up -- shot into the rebel troops, and they fled. Everything over by 5 p.m. *about 100 killed.*
Tried to cross ice, but ice broke.

(65)
VIII. THE REBELLION IN THE SOUTH.

(Dec. 30 - Jan. 3)

1. Optimism -- Just before the uprising in ~~the~~ St. Pete, a message had arrived from the Southern Society with the assertion that 100,000 men there were ready for action. (A "slight" exaggeration.) Planning no more skillful there. (*by about 99,000*)
2. Government -- had known about the Southern Society for some time. Pestel -- arrested on the day of the ~~the~~ revolt in the north.
3. News of St. Pete Revolt -- reached them only on Dec. 24, i.e., 10 days later. Knew that they must act at once, or ~~the~~ other members of the Society would be arrested also.
4. Men of Lt. Col. Sergei Muraviev-Apostol -- fanatically loyal to him. He got together 2 companies of his men, who were ~~the~~ joined by 4 other companies stationed in a small village near Kiev. (*over 900 men*)
5. March -- ~~the~~ This force, ~~the~~ led by several members of the Society, spent several days marching around the countryside, searching in vain for other army units which might join them. Hoped to avoid any fighting. Afraid to march on Kiev.
6. "The Orthodox Catechism" -- Officers spent their nights drafting statements and appeals to the people, including one called the "Orthodox Catechism," which in many ~~the~~ places resembles the American Declaration of Independence. Called upon the people to "take up arms against tyranny and restore faith and freedom in Russia."

Read to the soldiers. One trooper is reported to have said:

"I'm all in favor of a republic, but who is going to be tsar?"

After a few days they

7. Met Opposing Troops -- After one ~~the~~ volley from the opposing cannon, the rebels gave up without firing a shot.

Thus the rebellion in the South also ended in fiasco.

The Decembrist Revolt had ended in failure.

Easy enough to laugh at them. But -
Were the Decembrists Bound to Fail? No.

1. One of leaders of revolt ~~did not even know of the existence~~ ¹ of secret societies. (Shows disorientation war widespread.)
2. Many officers knew about the conspiracy, but only one reported it.
3. Civilian crowds - sympathetic
4. Nicholas - unpopular. (6) Kiev - might have seized arsenal, taken the city.
5. Troops - more might have been swayed had it seemed success possible. Finnish troops were wavering.
- 6 (Bolsheviks - also much bungling in 1917.)

Inspiration to Later Generations.
(Success out of failure.)
Pushkin - poems.

Herges - "The 14th of December really opened a new phase in our political education... What the Russians lacked was not liberal tendencies or awareness of abuses; what they lacked was a precedent which would give them the courage to act. Theories inspire convictions, but examples form conduct."
(Mazour, vii)

Lenin -- also paid tribute to the Decembrists.

Censorship - The ban on any mention of the uprising in the press made it easier for the spread of myths glorifying the revolutionaries.
If the whole truth had been known, many would have laughed into obloquy.
(been)

THE "SECRET" SOCIETIES.

Were "secret" only in the sense that college fraternities are secret -- that their meetings were not open to the public.

Alexander I knew about their existence, was personally acquainted with many of the members, and read some of their schemes. One occasion he advised a certain member (Nikolai Turgenev) to resign.

Police never molested them. Up to August 1822 participation in such bodies by ~~the~~ govt officials was permitted.

DECEMBRISTS COMPARED WITH EARLIER PALACE REVOLUTIONS.

1. Similar to those of the 18th century, in that those who took part were members of the Guards regiments, and since ~~it~~ it happened in connection with the succession to the throne.
2. But important difference -- Although the mass of the soldiers were told to revolt in behalf of a certain person, Constantine, ~~the~~ the leaders of the movement ~~could~~ ~~not~~ ~~talk~~ ~~about~~ ~~one~~ ~~name~~ ~~or~~ ~~another~~, ~~since~~ ~~they~~ were working not for a particular person, but for a system.

None of the 18th century coup d'états had been put forward in behalf of a program, for a change in the form of govt, but merely on behalf of a particular person or clique.

The first army revolt designed to change the form of government.

~~WHO WERE THE DECEMBRISTS?~~

1. ~~Mommsen~~-Nobility. Young -- Of the 121 on trial, only 12 were over 35 in age.
2. Sons of Catherinian freethinkers.
3. Remembered the enthusiasm with which Alexander's coronation had been greeted -- thought it opened up an era of reform. Disappointed. Had been in Western Europe, compared conditions.
4. Fathers had spoken high ideals, but had ignored Russian actuality. The sons converted their fathers philosophical abstractions into political aspirations.
The Catherinian freethinker's careless, sentimental cosmopolitanism became, in the Decembrists, a patriotic despondency.

5. *Radical ideas from France -- army of occupation*
Pestel said he became Republican in army.
(Like Red soldiers after W.W. II)

52

TRIAL OF THE DECEMBRISTS.

I. INVESTIGATION.

Nicholas much concerned. Considered that it represented a huge, nation-wide conspiracy. (But 1 writer estimates 6,000 involved)

Investigation Commission appointed.

only

almost
Hearings --lasted/6 months.

About 600 persons investigated.

II. NICHOLAS TAKES ACTIVE ROLE.

Personally supervised the investigation. Attended meetings of the Investigation Commission.

Questioned the conspirators. Visited some of them in prison.

Used great skill in getting them to talk. Convinced some that he shared their goals, was almost a revolutionary.

III. BEHAVIOUR OF DECEMBRISTS.

1. Confessions -- most of them told about the whole business, some of them implicating their comrades.

Nicholas egged them on, encouraging them to believe that he might show clemency.

Feelings of remorse - regretted what they had done as soon as it was over.

2. ~~Secret~~ -- Pestel promised that if freed he would serve the Emperor loyally for rest of his life.

IV. TRIALS.

Special court -- 121 defendants.

Sentences -- 5 condemned to death (were hung) (Pestel, etc.)

Some sentenced to forced labor.

More than 100 ~~Some~~ exiled to Siberia, ~~with forced labor~~

Some demoted to rank of private in army for life.

#