



Title	Student Interests and Student Politics--Kazan University before the Crisis of 1862
Author(s)	KIMBALL, Alan
Citation	Acta Slavica Iaponica, 6, 1-15
Issue Date	1988
Doc URL	<a href="http://hdl.handle.net/2115/7973">http://hdl.handle.net/2115/7973</a>
Type	bulletin (article)
File Information	KJ00000034135.pdf



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## ARTICLES

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### Student Interests and Student Politics: Kazan University before the Crisis of 1862

Alan Kimball

A close examination of the political and social activism of Russian university students in the years just after the Crimean War and before the political crisis of 1862 reveals much the same pattern as the political and social activism of other major groupings in the era of great reforms.<sup>1</sup> For students as for peasants, gentrymen, urban professionals and intellectuals, and national minorities, the era opened when the tsar himself pronounced ill-defined but inspirational promises of positive change "to make a better life" for all. Agencies of the central state quickly acted to introduce reforms or simply allow new departures to be taken in a wide range of endeavors.<sup>2</sup> The state initiated student activism in this period, just as it initiated the other major social and political trends. By 1861, much of the promise appeared to have been withdrawn. For all these groupings the political crisis of 1862 arose from such a sequence of events. The state inspired organization or mobilization of social activism. Then followed disappointment and reversal.

To illustrate these points I propose to look at the effect of new university policies introduced before formal, legal changes were made in the reformed university statute of 1863. Events at Saint Petersburg and Moscow universities are more widely known, so I propose to concentrate on student activism along the middle-Volga River, in connection with Kazan University.<sup>3</sup> Student experience at Kazan University produced some of the most active participants in the political crisis of 1862.<sup>4</sup> As a background to the understanding of that crisis, the question here is, what was it about the daily experience of students that made them political activists?

The reign of Nicholas I (1825-1855) had done great damage to Russian universities. The 1835 statute which governed the imperial universities had fallen hopelessly out of date. Whole disciplines, such as philosophy, ceased to be taught. The life of the mind, as well as the more mundane training needs of the expanding bureaucracy, ceased to be served well by the universities at all. Beginning in 1856, the old ways were overturned. Everyone seemed to agree that the universities ought to be freer and more in tune with the modern world, so it was "permitted." The changes however did not assume legal form, they took place without anything more formal than bureaucratic permission [*razreshenie*]. At the universities where they were experienced, the changes seemed powerful; in the bureaucracies where they were permitted, the changes were ephemeral. A renaissance in the universities proved to be a passing whim in the corridors of power.

Saint Petersburg University set the pace for the whole system. A new Rector, Gregory A. Shcherbatov, granted students a surprising and unprecedented measure of independence in the organization of their own affairs. Attendance at lectures was no longer strictly enforced. The regime of examinations was made less burdensome.

Most significantly, he invited students to form “corporative organizations” to increase their own levels of responsibility and participation in the moral and intellectual life of the university. He approved creation of a student library, a reading room, a student fund [*kassa*] which was empowered to grant aid to poor comrades. In order to manage these new corporate institutions, students were permitted to elect their own administrations, and to that end they were allowed to meet in *skhodki* [general assemblies] in which deliberation and voting took place. These assemblies were naturally also empowered to deliberate on all issues pertaining to their *kassa* and, for that matter, all issues pertaining to their scholarly lives. Beyond their needs in the day-to-day realm of self-governance, the students were permitted to hold literary assemblies and to publish their own anthology of student essays.<sup>5</sup>

Shcherbatov’s changes were quickly broadcast throughout the whole edifice of higher education via the Ministry of Education as well as other, less formal avenues of communication. Other universities, including Kazan, followed in nearly exactly the Saint Petersburg pattern. The result of the new style of university administration was that students became masters of their own fate like nearly no other definable segment of the imperial population. The principles of elected administration and open deliberation in general assemblies were, naturally, the most easily generalized political principles of the 19th century. No serious observer could have failed to imagine the broader implications or to have felt the implied prediction for the future of the whole nation.

In the middle-Volga region, student activism, and social activism in general, were concentrated in Kazan and Saratov cities. Kazan was the university town and the location of the most important regional theological academy. Saratov did not yet have a university, nor did it have a theological academy. The central office of the regional educational establishment was in Kazan. Yet Saratov boasted a gymnasium and seminary of national quality. Nicholas Chernyshevskii and Gregory Blagovetlov graduated from the seminary.

Chernyshevskii returned home from Saint Petersburg to teach briefly at the gymnasium in 1851-1853. Many of the best from the Saratov gymnasium and seminary entered university training in Kazan.

The close ties that Chernyshevskii forged with his students were maintained in subsequent years. Alexis Studenskii and Michael Voronov came to Saint Petersburg to be his secretaries.<sup>6</sup> Several transferred to Moscow and established an important student organization, the Library of Kazan Students.<sup>7</sup>

Some measure of spirit or inspiration from gymnasium days very likely accompanied those ex-students of Chernyshevskii to Kazan and other universities where they played a big role in student organizations. In the political development of these Saratov college lads, however, the conditions of student life at the universities were far greater influence than one innovative teacher in their high-school years. As these young students matured toward political opposition, four aspects of student life were most decisive: (1) unendurable poverty and the expectation that education would somehow change that, (2) some measure of liberalization of student life accompanied by grand promises for positive change from the imperial throne, (3) maltreatment at the hands of local officials, accompanied by an apparent erosion of the actual power of these officials, along with a surprising growth of the actual power of student organizations, and finally (4) the heartbreaking withdrawal of the promises from the imperial throne as the time of peasant emancipation came.

It might still be best, without reference to sophisticated theories of revolution, to

begin with the misery. A typical family of five, living in the middle-Volga, could eke out a living on 40 rubles per month for housing, heating, lighting and food, excluding expenditures for clothing, footwear, subscriptions to journals or newspapers and of course entertainment. Of this sum, expenditures for housing, heating and lighting represented more than 10 rubles, while food represented 30 rubles (i. e., less than 6 rubles per month per person). A family of five paid 12 rubles 50 kopecks per month for flour, hulled cereal grain for making porridge (grouts: *krupa*), potatoes, meat or sugar, tea and water. On the banks of the Volga safe water had to be purchased. This level of expenditure allowed each member a monthly ration of about 22 ounces of bread and baked goods (including flour devoted to the preparation of *kvas*), under six ounces of potatoes, about a half ounce of *krupa*, and about four ounces of meat (or about an ounce of sugar). This represented a bare subsistence allowance.

Yet a monthly income as high as 40 rubles was uncommon. Average income of petty officials ranged from five to ten rubles per month. Secretaries, controllers and lesser department heads might make 30 rubles per month. Entry salaries were more nearly in the range of only three to four rubles per month.<sup>8</sup> Daniel Mordovtsev, the editor of the unofficial section of the provincial news, calculated that the average monthly salary of these people equalled the cost of about 100 eggs.

Even when we look at the sort of people who sent their children to the gymnasium, the local gentry, officialdom and intelligentsia, we find little wealth and comfort. In 1864 twelve gymnasia in the Volga and Ural regions enrolled 1,944 students of noble status and 903 students of the commoner classes (33.4%).<sup>9</sup> A teacher at the gymnasium writing in the provincial news reported that perhaps as many as one-fifth of Saratov students were from impoverished families hardly able to afford school uniforms. One student family (mother and two sons) earned a monthly income of only ten rubles, five of which the student himself earned giving lessons. This was not an unusual situation. Over ninety percent of the students dropped out of school before graduation, often for financial reasons.<sup>10</sup>

Table1: *Number of Poor Medical Students  
at Kazan University*  
[Based on Vul'fson(1963):9]

Year	state grants	Tuition waivers	subtotal	As percent	Of total
1854	32	47	79	48.0	164
1855	32	54	86	56.2	153
1856	34	47	81	48.2	167
1857	34	57	91	57.9	157
1858	34	65	99	57.9	169
1859	46	59	105	58.9	178
1860	44	64	108	60.3	179
1861	46	59	105	58.7	179
1862	44	34	78	50.4	141
1863	34	29	63	60.0	105
1864	21	8	29	47.3	61

From the ranks of these marginally solvent folk came the much expanded student body of imperial universities. The universities admitted “children of the poor aristocracy, petty and middling bureaucrats, individuals of the ‘liberal professions,’ merchants, meshchanstvo, and even well-to-do peasants, in a phrase, youths who were striving ‘to become somebody.’”<sup>11</sup> The following table gives some idea of the growth of the student body at Kazan and particularly of that part which suffered financial hardship.

This table does not give full measure of the generally more impoverished part of the student body, the ‘auditors.’ They were from exceptionally poor families, and their numbers grew in the post-Crimean years. There were only three at Kazan in 1853; there were eighty-eight in 1862.<sup>12</sup>

In 1855 the limits placed by Nicholas I on the number of students in the imperial universities were lifted. For example, seven years after enrollment limits were removed, Saint Petersburg University, which was allowed a total of 300 students under Nicholas, had nearly that number in its senior class and granted 272 undergraduate degrees.

Table2: *Graduates, Saint-Petersburg University, 1855-1864*

1855	1856	1857	1858	1859	1860	1861	1862	1863	1864
96	103	74	88	68	162	206	272	114	22

[Source: V. V. Grigor’ev, *Imperatorskii S.-Peterburgskii Universitet...*(SPB: 1870): xcix-cxvii. See also Sladkevich, “Peterburgskii...”: 109.]

Thus we see that the imperial universities experienced something of a population explosion, and the remarkable increases were largely due to a flood of middling and lower-class students into what they fully expected to be a bright new world with great promises beyond.

First impressions were, however, stark. The gross incompetence and ill will of the authorities who had come to govern the Nicholas university, and who still survived the infamous Emperor into the first months of the new reign, were the first inspiration — a negative inspiration — to student activism. The vision and effort of Chernyshevskii and of other leaders of thought in this time, for example, Alexander Herzen, were of unquestionable importance here too. But their active inspiration follows after, and in a sense looks far above the immediate circumstances out of which the student movement arose. Chernyshevskii and Herzen — we might say “ideas” in general — helped the students toward an understanding of the connection between their daily misery and history’s assumed promise of human progress. In the origins of student activism, misery came first, and was nearly universal. The promise was understood later and quite variously. The “intellectual” quality of student politics distinguished it from the plainer peasant politics. But with the student, as with the peasant, threats to daily welfare and hope for a better life formed the negative and positive poles of their political activities.

Collective efforts to deal with collective misery were natural. Saratov students at Kazan University formed a “hometown” kruzhek, like other regional student organizations. Siberian, Ukrainian and other “zemliachestva,” as they were called, were uniformly animated by a powerful sense of future work, careers which in the new epoch would make them an active part of the effort “to make a better life for all”

[*uluchshenie byta vsekh*], employing the euphemism by which they were allowed to mention emancipation of the privately owned serfs and other great reforms contemplated in that era.<sup>13</sup>

Students established libraries. One book bought and read by 30 students seemed a rational allocation of limited budgets. They created cafeterias, common rooms where they could have a smoke, take a cup of tea, perhaps nap and just get in out the pitiless cold. They also read *Sovremennik* and *Kolokol* there, and anything else they could get their hands on. Books and periodicals turned their thoughts to larger, sometimes visionary social theories. If these libraries inflated student minds, they also, as Khudiakov claimed, deflated other capacities, at the opposite end of the epistemological scale, simply by providing a place other than local taverns and brothels to while away idle hours. Students created *kruzhoks*, treasuries, cafeterias, smokers, and libraries under the influence of a full menu of both heavenly and earthly needs. University officials sluggishly resisted, but the students prevailed.

In 1858 a Kazan professor observed that for the first time a consciousness of “corporateness, solidarity, general interests” made its appearance among the students.<sup>14</sup>

In Kazan and other cities of the Volga region the thought that students represented a force to be reckoned with put down roots. Students increasingly were gripped by a conviction that they represented not only an independent element in the university — i.e., that they not only had the right to manage their own student affairs by means of *skhodki* and assemblies of elected deputies, which from this time they began to employ without any obstruction being put in their way, to organize their affairs within the walls of the university, to establish their own treasuries, reading rooms, etc. — but also that they represented an element capable of influencing the direction of university life in general, to conduct their own particular university policy.

All that was needed were episodes in which student power and confidence might successfully exercise themselves against malevolent and incompetent authorities. In February of 1859 a great scandal arose when local police cruelly mistreated the student Kolpakov. This was but one in a remarkable series of town-gown outrages. Kolpakov was returning home at night, drunk, when he was attacked and robbed by the police. Police officers bound him hand and foot, and “dragged him roughly along the street to the station, abusing him verbally along the way.” At the station, in response to Kolpakov’s request for a drink, a guard struck him in the chest with the butt of his rifle, and later an officer whipped him twice.

When an investigation of this incident got under way, the police sensed that they were in great trouble and accordingly resorted to provocation. An ex-chief of police, Stolbovskii, tried to rile the students into extreme action. He plied students with drink at Herman’s, a local confectionary and wine shop, and urged them “to assemble all their corporations and insist that the police chief punish those who are responsible for the cruelty to Kolpakov.” The ex-chief told the students that all the local inns, taverns, and brothels had been ordered to lavish special hospitality on the students. They were not to abuse them no matter what they did. The students did not fall for this trick. When word of the provocation got around the students were praised by the new inspector of schools, Filippov, for having “conducted themselves with as much caution and propriety as anyone could possibly hope.”<sup>15</sup>

Herzen's *Kolokol* shed the powerful light of *glasnost'* on the incident.<sup>16</sup> The lessons seemed clear. Students exposed officials for their incompetence and malfeasance. In the process they showed themselves, rather than local officials, to be the best representatives of the virtues that a reforming society might want to promote. Student self-image expanded yet further. The police in Kazan hereafter were so afraid to get in trouble again that they all but ceased to exercise their authority.<sup>17</sup> A sense of power grows as opponents weaken.<sup>18</sup>

Two fresh sources of inspiration entered into student life from Siberia in 1860. Afanasy Shchapov became a professor of history at Kazan, and the student V. I. Malinin reorganized the old Saratov kruzhek on a broader and more distinctly political basis. Members now included V. O. Portugalov, V. A. Manassein, A. V. Petrov, D. I. Petrov, P. A. Peskov, N. A. Petrov, and Alexander Khristoforov. Soon Ivan Umnov, Michael Elpidin, and Shchapov were actively associated.<sup>19</sup> Here we have a remarkable concentration of future political figures, some of whom were to be active in oppositional politics into the 20th century.

The kruzhek expanded the range of its discussions somewhat beyond the immediate corporate interests of students. Will Russia experience an industrial development like England, or will it remain essentially agricultural? Will Russia develop a proletariat? If so, will it be an agricultural or factory proletariat? What about the peasant assembly and commune? These were the very issues being discussed also at the learned assemblies of the Imperial Free Economic Society in Petersburg. Also like the Free Economic Society, these students took a lively interest in the promotion of literacy [*rasprostranenie gramotnosti*].<sup>20</sup>

The promotion of literacy had a direct "proto-professional" relationship to the self-image and future prospects of these fledgling intelligents. They were the main organizers of a local affiliate of the Economic Society's *Komitet gramotnosti* and founded the largest free school for the people, a so-called Sunday school. As of October, 1860, fifty-three of the sixty-five teachers in the largest Kazan Sunday school were university students. As he came into greater influence over the student kruzhek at Kazan, in February 1861, on the eve of emancipation, Afanasy Shchapov designed an apparently elaborate plan to create a literacy society under the direction of kruzhek.<sup>21</sup> In this endeavor he worked closely with Umnov and Khristoforov.

The new organizational vigor of the student kruzhek was reinforced by a complex networking which evolved among provincial centers and with the capitals. Kazan and Saratov activists were in constant touch with activists in the capitals, but also with activists up and down the Volga, and throughout the empire, wherever would-be citizens gathered themselves in active societies.

The story of politics in Kazan and Saratov simply cannot be reduced to the story of the unfolding of one centralized organization, from the metropolis to the periphery. Larger trends contributed to events in Kazan and Saratov, but not in the form of a coherent, expanding conspiracy. Situations similar to those at Kazan conditioned the growth of student organizations at other national universities, at Kiev, Khar'kov, Moscow and Saint Petersburg. Furthermore, it became obvious, as lateral ties of correspondence simply bypassed the metropolises, that urban societies in Khar'kov, Ekaterinburg, Saratov, Nizhniyi Novgorod, Kazan, etc., had something to offer one another.

When Portugalov arrived in Kazan, he did not bring some vague bacillus of student activism with him, infecting locals with desire to be part of the "Khar'kov-Kiev Secret Society," or any other supposed national conspiracy. He did bring specific ex-

perience in a wide variety of new social enterprises: a public library, the first Sunday schools organized by Plato Pavlov in Kiev, and the "Pickwick Club" in Ekaterinburg.<sup>22</sup>

Similarly, in January 1861, Mitrofan Muravskii wrote to Manassein, sharing some of his experience in Orenburg and Perm.<sup>23</sup> It is good, he wrote, if the university can draw close to the gymnasium, seminary and Theological Academy. He recommended publication of a student journal, if only in manuscript form, creation of a student treasury, and teaching of history in their Sunday school. The ideas of Shchapov, he suggested, ought to go well with the narod. He recommended getting involved in literary evenings, readings and dramatic presentations in the city. The teachers in the rural schools and the priests in local parishes must also be brought into active life. Muravskii described his own local societies, one for the promotion of literacy and useful knowledge, another for mutual aid, yet another to maintain a communal kitchen. He mentioned also a commercial shareholders society devoted to acquisition of cheaper household goods.<sup>24</sup> His suggestions were coals to Newcastle in a letter to Kazan students, but still important in so far as such correspondence carried the subtextual and most fundamental message: we can and should organize ourselves and become openly and independently active in those areas of local and national life for which our talents and training most suit us.

All their combined experience and outlook encouraged easy connections between their local plight and much broader political issues, and reinforced comradeship among members of kruzhsoks and between regional associations.<sup>25</sup> It was not precisely Herzen or Chernyshevskii who inspired students to their very inflated sense of significance. Events themselves brought student organizations into line with the scores of other social initiatives of the epoch — the Komitet gramotnosti, Sunday schools, etc. The grand promise of social transformation suggested itself in the unprecedented vitality of social self-organization, of which student organizations were a part. If one were to insist on identifying centralized insitutional coordination of these energies, one would have to concentrate on the Komitet gramotnosti, the only organization with a clearly identifiable national network of affiliates and agents at this time.<sup>26</sup>

Yet the daily problems of student corporate life pressed hard on these larger social endeavors, even in this most tense moment of national political life in 1861. Later that year, Manassein identified immediate student interests, impinging on the quality of university training and their very futures, as the central issues:<sup>27</sup>

The majority of our professors are below average, the [official university] library is in terrible disorder, the students' [library] amounts to nearly nothing because of a lack of funds, the clinics are below all criticism, there is only one laboratory..., offices are hardly started... In a word, there are almost no facilities for work, and for that reason all our strength has to be devoted to the acquisition of as much more freedom to work as possible (bring an end to tutorials, term exams, obligatory attendance at lectures etc.). We must support the better professors, and in that connection we must hound out all the deadheads. We must gain the right to voice our opinions not only in connection with the lectures of professors, but also in connection with all university business in general.

In January, 1861, student opposition to unpopular professors stiffened. Students began to operate like personnel review committies. But now professor

Struve resisted, even though he and his colleagues might have by now despaired of any support from higher authorities against growing student intrusion into matters that professors do not often like to admit students. The university administration now perceived that this was a test of student solidarity against the ability of the professors to defend their own interests, and against the independent power of university administration. The faculty and administration pulled together this time and leading organizers of the student *kruzhok* were expelled, including Khristoforov, Manassein, and Umnov.<sup>28</sup>

Khristoforov was out of the university, and soon would be exiled to Saratov. Two more events over the next eight months severed other activists from the university: the shocking military action against balky peasants in Bezdna district, not far from Kazan, in April, and then the nation-wide university disturbances in the fall. Three medical students active in student politics rushed to Bezdna in the hope that they might be able to lend aid to the wounded. Samuel Klaus, Nicholas Aristov, and Michael Elpidin were stopped by authorities long before they reached the scene.<sup>29</sup> Shortly thereafter, a eulogy service for victims of the Bezdna massacre, organized by Shchapov and other members of the *kruzhok*, resulted in arrests.<sup>30</sup> Shchapov was taken under guard to Saint Petersburg. P. A. Peskov, a native of Saratov, assumed leadership in the *kruzhok*.

The university disturbances in the fall were, however, the most important event in the life of the university in the year before the political crisis of 1862. From the winter of 1861 and over the next nine months, the state initiated a deliberate program of retrenchment in its earlier expansive reform programs. The state observed university students in Kazan and elsewhere, broadening the realm of self-organization and activity, and it became alarmed. Two figures, Minister of War Dmitry Miliutin and Minister of Interior Peter Valuev assumed important leadership roles in the badly immobilized central administration. The blunt measures taken against the now five-year-old practices in the universities provoked student unrest and contributed significantly to the coming of the political crisis of 1862.

Miliutin was most insistent that measures had to be taken to restore "order and discipline" in the universities. In the highest councils of state it was determined in particular that it was necessary to suppress student *skhodki*. This had become clear even before Bezdna, as early as the beginning of 1861. In February the unpopular Delianov turned to the professors with a request that they help restore order in the universities. Significantly, this may be taken as the beginning of a short-lived professorial rebellion. In answer to Delianov's request, the professors put forth a whole project of regulations of their own invention, which were favorably inclined toward student *skhodki* and expansion of professorial authority as well. For example, the professors suggested that the existing system of inspection (*inspektsii*), which they considered nothing but police-style policy, be replaced by a system wherein the professors had final authority over student life. In other words the professors took this opportunity to recommend internal self-jurisdiction over the life of the university, mainly in the hands of the professors.

The state rejected the professors' project. Beginning in May the Ministry of Education began issuing a series of regulations that had as their aim to crush student organizations ("disorder") and to squelch the professorial grab for self-rule. The *skhodki* were suppressed. Tuition fellowships for poor students were all but suspended. New entrance, midterm and degree examinations were ordered which had the combined effect of limiting the number of students who could graduate from the

university. As if to invite further trouble, the state did accede to some part of the professors' project. Inspection was transferred to a "Prorector" who was to be one of the professors elected by their Soviet and confirmed by their court. Getting tough in one direction, the state seemed to make itself vulnerable in another.<sup>31</sup>

In another act of apparent weakness, the state withheld public notice of the new regulations until students were on summer vacation. Egor Kovalevskii, a man of famous "liberal" views, resigned as Minister of Education. He was replaced by Admiral Putiatin, whose only possible virtue in this position was the habit of strict organizational subordination and discipline. Miliutin opposed his appointment, considering the old sailor too harsh, given to despotism, and a martinet. Putiatin saw only one goal: "restore discipline among the disorderly crowd of students."<sup>32</sup>

Trying to understand the relationship between Miliutin and Putiatin opens before us some of the deeper mysteries of state politics in the era of reform. Miliutin complained that Putiatin wished only to restore discipline, and that he saw the students as mob. Isn't this very much like Miliutin's own perception? The difference is that Miliutin felt that he had a sense of university traditions; he recognized them still beneath all the turmoil, Putiatin did not and could not. Also Miliutin might have been disposed to cooperate with what he took to be the wholesome elements among the professors, Putiatin was not. Even if Putiatin was disposed to work with the solid elements on the faculty, he had no authority in their eyes. While neither Miliutin nor Putiatin saw any purpose in formal discussions with the students themselves, Miliutin at least conceded that students had needs which should be addressed, even if only from on high. Putiatin failed even to recognize the students' and professors' demand for more control over their own affairs. Miliutin recognized it, but would not accept it. These are some of the subtle differences between what have been called the conservative and liberal factions in the tsarist administration.

The behavior of the two, the final policy positions of Putiatin and Miliutin, are for the most part indistinguishable: neither was prepared to grant any degree of authentic independence to the university. And when the university — i. e., either professors or students — sought independence even against state refusal to grant it, both Putiatin and Miliutin concluded that "extremists and evil connivers" had subverted the university, and that their assemblies were little more than "a noisy disturbance." Both General Miliutin and Admiral Putiatin were inclined by analogy to see professors as knowledgeable unter-officers and students as a higher class of soldier or sailor. When all else fails, at least there should be discipline and order among them. Here Miliutin and Putiatin thought precisely alike, and were in no fundamental discord with Peter Valuev, the Minister of Interior, who assumed much the same attitude toward the rest of society.

Putiatin demanded a most strict application of the new and apparently reactionary regulations. The *skhodki* were suppressed without any appeal. The student library and kassa were put under strict outside control. The Rector was given authority over the dispersal of aid to poor students. All students were required to pay the 50 ruble tuition fee. The elite gymnasia were given control over the administration of entrance examinations. Stricter midterm and degree exams were introduced. Students who failed to pass or take exams were not allowed to continue their educations.

It was thought to issue every student a little booklet with these new regulations attached — a booklet called "Matriculation." These thus would serve not only to instruct students but would also serve as "documents" and bring more control over stu-

dent life. "Matriculation" for the first and only time officially explained to the students what was going on. In other words, students were able officially to discover the new regulations profoundly altering the conditions of student life only after they accepted them.

In July Putiatin sent a memo to professors urging them to fulfill the new regulations. In supercilious tones, he warned them to work harder and not to entertain "flippant indiscretions" or "false understanding of their obligations such as have already caused so much woe for many young people."<sup>33</sup> In this way Putiatin only deepened the professorial revolt. He dispatched his request to the university Soviet for their deliberation, although he seemed to mean for their execution, as if orders from headquarters. The university Soviet returned Putiatin's memo, after discussion, saying that none of the measures contained in it would work very well.

The Soviet found itself unable to "carry out" Putiatin's orders. This of course stiffened Putiatin. He stood even more solidly for total suppressions of *skhodki*, subordination of the student library and reading rooms, swift introduction of entrance documents for admission to university grounds, tuition charges even for auditors, and expulsion of those who did not take the exam in the previous year. Furthermore, Putiatin scolded the Soviet and demanded that they find someone to be Prorector temporarily — one year.<sup>34</sup>

The professors, much as the students, were in a tough position. They understood fully what was wrong with Putiatin's measures, but they had no way to "talk back" or adjust; no deliberations or consultations were allowed. With Putiatin, the paths of communication were from commander to his command. The meeting of the Soviet lasted four hours. The professors refused to vote one of their own into the impossible position of Prorector. The Ministry of Education took this to be nothing more than another anti-state disorder and appointed Alexander Fitsum-fon-Ekstedt, a sixty-year-old who had been for 23 years Inspector of students and was known to have no respect from professors or students. Nothing at all was done to inform students; they learned everything they could from newspapers or rumors.<sup>35</sup>

The state conducted itself in stark contradiction to the policies of the previous five years and in complete disdain of faculty and students. If student energy in the direction of self-organization is the bright side of the emerging political crisis, state measures over the summer of 1861 are the dark side. If there had been no Chernyshevskii or Herzen, no European "bourgeois-liberal" revolutions in Europe since 1789 or no socialist ideology, the political crisis of 1862 would still have occurred. Altruism, inexperience, idealism, ideology and pranksterism are the foreground, not the background, to this political crisis. Rather, the crisis arises from a very serious, quotidian conflict of interests. University students (aided at critical moments by professors with different but parallel interests, at least at first) were locked in a political struggle with the interests of the central state. The struggle was exceedingly unequal. The microcosm of this struggle was fully congruent with the macrocosm of political struggle that gripped the whole Empire in 1862.

In October, Kazan students joined in nation-wide university disturbances occasioned by the drastic reversal of earlier university policies. In Kazan as elsewhere, the state placed extreme limitations on the range of student self-organization and restricted tuition waivers and stipends, with the effect that the majority of the students in the university through the spring of 1861 would not be able to continue their studies in the fall. Officials closed the student reading room under the pretext that it had to be moved. Open expressions of approval or disapproval of professors were disallow-

ed, the right to hold their own courts of justice was suspended. Students feared that very soon they would lose the right to maintain a treasury, or even to own individual libraries.<sup>36</sup> Investigation of the Kazan disturbance took more than a year. In the end, sixty-six students were expelled in this connection, including Michael Elpidin, Dmitry Karakozov, D. I. Petrov, and Peskov. Over the full year, 1861, 83 students were expelled, more than one fifth of the whole student body.<sup>37</sup> We recognize the name Karakozov, for it will be he who in 1866 makes a clumsy effort to assassinate the Emperor, symbolically ending the "liberal" phase of Alexander II's rule.

The promises and invitations of Alexander II seemed by 1861 to have been withdrawn, five years before Karakozov's senseless attack. Reactionary measures were themselves creating a more resolute and widely organized radical opposition. About two dozen of the demonstrators were exiled to Saratov. The students regrouped under Khristoforov's leadership in Saratov and were soon in active alliance with a *kruzhok* formed out of local professionals and intellectuals who were a decade or two the students' elders.

Events at Kazan University up to winter of 1862 thus represent an immediate and major regional tributary, flowing into the political life of Saratov over the next couple of years. University experience had perfectly prepared them for an alliance with the adult activists of Saratov. The Mordvinov-Belov *kruzhok* to which they were drawn, included Russians, Poles, Ukrainians, German "colonists," men, women, rich and poor, sons of priests, poor gentry, merchants, *raznochintsy* and middling folk. It included an aristocrat of ancient lineage and empty pockets, Paul Rovinskii, the son of a Cossack farmer, Daniel Mordovtsev — currently editor of the unofficial section of the provincial journal — and a powerful *chinovnik* grandee, Nicholas Mordvinov. Mordvinov was the leading political activist in the *kruzhok*.<sup>38</sup>

Political events along the middle-Volga in the years leading up to the political crisis of 1862 have none of the characteristics of a highly coordinated and centralized political opposition, wherein everything seems to be threaded through one thick knot on Nicholas Chernyshevskii's desk at *Sovremennik* in Saint Petersburg, and from there through a tighter knot on Alexander Herzen's editorial desk at *Kolokol* in London. Instead, it appears that an increasingly large, self-conscious and active body of urban professionals and a much expanded student body in the schools and universities variously came into conflict with authorities as they stretched themselves and stirred with the first independent efforts at organization. The two *kruzhoks* in Saratov, one made up of teachers, doctors, administrators, and intellectuals, the other of students, are representative of a good deal of provincial social activism in this period. Rovinskii, working with some of those students expelled from Kazan, created the most important Volga branch of Land and Liberty in the late spring of 1862.

For the time being, the state won in its struggle with its subjects. The fate of university activism was repeated in other sectors of national life. Peasant efforts to gain more generous land allotments and more decisive liberty were smashed by military actions. Gentry committees were shackled and smothered. Urban social organizations were suppressed or tightly circumscribed. The national minority movement was also crushed, most notably in the Polish uprising. As the state took firm measures to regain control over the reform process, it contributed to the formation of Land and Liberty, the first modern revolutionary organization in Russia. When activists in Saint Petersburg and Kazan reluctantly joined the Polish uprising, the short-lived underground organization Land and Liberty was destroyed.

Students and professors had initially responded to the early promise of the reform

epoch with an unpredicted enthusiasm and energy. They took vigorous measures to promote and defend their perceived interests. They were guided by reasonably clear concepts of group interests and an appetite for significantly greater control over their own lives. In the early going, they quickly overwhelmed opponents in the administration who had been demoralized in any event by sudden shifts in imperial policy. Their very particular interests seemed suddenly to fit perfectly with some of the grandest imaginable schemes for the whole nation. The state did not significantly waver in its desire for effective reform measures, but it awoke to the possibility that it was losing control over events and moved suddenly to cancel promises, reverse "liberal" measures, and shore up the defenses of the imperial structure which had been damaged by necessary reform.

For students, as for the other groupings, it became clear that the state was motivated by its own interests, that it did not in any notable way have their interests in mind, and that it intended to shape things to its own needs without allowing significant independent participation on the part of those being "reformed." Disorders broke out on nearly every campus of the imperial university system, just as in the other sectors of national life most directly effected by the state-centered reforms. Students were arrested, expelled, exiled without trial, or just suspended temporarily. Professors resigned or were dismissed. Having stripped the universities of their own internal organizational momentum toward modernization and liberalization of higher education, the state then moved ahead on its own. University disturbances created the first cadres of modern, underground revolutionary activists.

The most significant conclusions that flow from an analysis of this pattern, as expressed in the experience of the tsarist universities, 1859-1862, are the following. 1) The state is the central political actor in the drama of the first revolutionary situation; it called the situation into existence and crushed it. 2) Political divisions occurred along institutional rather than class lines, i. e., the vertical struggle between the state and its subjects is more important here than any of the lateral tensions or potential struggles between social classes. 3) Reasonably discrete and local interests motivated the political or social activism of students. 4) Ideas or ideologies, as well as the great thinkers, writers, and political pundits, like Alexander Herzen and Nicholas Chernyshevskii are important only in so far as they gave "vision" to these local interests. 5) Revolutionary conspiracy resulted from the defeat of the university movement, not the other way around.

## Notes

- 1 A police report on the eve of student disorders in the fall of 1861 observed, "Intellectual fermentation does not appear exclusively in the student *soslovie* [class], unfortunately it belongs to *obshchestvo* [society].... It does not transmit itself from students to *obshchestvo* but the other way around." A student at Moscow University asserted that the political activism of students at the university could not by itself spark a wider social conflagration; the university was "only an expression of things transpiring beyond it, in *obshchestvo*." T. G. Snytko, "Studencheskoe dvizhenie v russkikh universitetakh v nachale 60-kh godov i vosstanie 1863 g.," in *Vosstanie 1863 g. i russko-pol'skie revoliutsionnye sviazi 60-kh godov: Sbornik statei i materialov*, edited by V. D. Koroliuka and I. S. Miller (Moscow, 1960) : 179-180.
- 2 On the reforms and the revolutionary situation see Daniel Field, "The Reforms of the 1860's," in S. H. Baron and N. W. Heer, eds., *Windows on the Russian Past* (Columbus, Ohio, 1977) ; and Alan Kimball, "Revolutionary Situation in Russia (1859-1862)," *The*

- Modern Encyclopedia of Russian and Soviet History*, 31: 54-57.
- 3 For Saint Petersburg and Moscow universities, see N. G. Sladkevich, "Peterburgskii universitet i obshchestvennoe dvizhenie v Rossii v nachale 60-kh godov XIX v.," *Vestnik leningradskogo universiteta*, No. 8 (1947) : 105-116; G. A. Tishkin, "N. A. Serno-Solov'evich i studenty Peterburgskogo universiteta v 1861-1862 gg.," *Vestnik leningradskogo universiteta*, Vypusk 1: "Istoriia, iazyk, literatura" (Leningrad, 1969) : 169-174; P. S. Tkachenko, *Moskovskoe studenchestvo v obshchestvenno-politicheskoi zhizni Rossii vtoroi poloviny XIX veka* (Moscow, 1958) ; and Abbott Gleason, *Young Russia: the Genesis of Russian Radicalism in the 1860s* (New York, 1980) , chapters 4, 5: 114-159.
  - 4 G. N. Vul'fson and E. G. Bushkanets, *Obshchestvenno-politicheskaia bor'ba v Kazanskom universitete v 1859-1861 godakh* (Kazan, 1955).
  - 5 Information about university policy and student movements, in addition to sources cited above, may be found in S. Ashevskii, "Russkoe studenchestvo v epokhu 60-kh godov," *Sovremennyi mir*, No. 6-11 (1907) : 12-26 (June) , 19-36 (August) , 48-85 (September) , 48-74 (October) , 108-134 (November) ; R. G. Eimontova, *Russkie universitety na grani dvukh epokh: ot Rossii krepostnoi k Rossii kapitalisticheskoi* (Moscow, 1985) ; M. K. Korbut, *Kazanskii gosudarstvennyi universitet imeni V. I. Ul'ianova Lenina za sto dvadtsat' piat' let, 1804-5~1929-30*, 1 (Kazan, 1930) : 153-209; and Thomas J. Hegarty, "Student Movements in Russian Universities, 1855-1861," PhD dissertation, Harvard University, 1965.
  - 6 L. F. Panteleev, *Vospominaniia* (Moscow, 1958) : 464; and M. V. Nechkina, *Vstrecha dvukh pokolenii (Iz istorii russkogo revoliutsionnogo dvizheniia kontsa 50-kh—nachala 60-kh godov XIX veka)* *Sbornik statei* (Moscow, 1980) : 297-300.
  - 7 E. G. Bushkanets, *Ucheniki N. G. Chernyshevskogo po gimnazii v osvoboditel'nom dvizhenii vtoroi poloviny 1850-kh—nachala 1860-kh gg.* (Kazan, 1963).
  - 8 V. Mokshantsev, "Neskol'ko slov ob uluchshenii byta sluzhashchikh i ob ustroistve zashtatnykh chinovnikov," *Saratovskie gubernskie vedomosti*, No. 18 (5 May 1862) : 195-6. See also "Mestnye izvestiia," *Saratovskie gubernskie vedomosti*, No. 13 (26 March 1860) : 115; G. N. Vul'fson, *Raznochinno-demokraticeskoe dvizhenie v Povolzh'e i na Urale v gody pervoi revoliutsionnoi situatsii* (Kazan, 1974), pp. 85-89 [hereafter, Vul'fson (1974)] See also G. N. Vul'fson, *Iz istorii raznochinno-demokraticeskogo dvizheniia v Povolzh'e i na Urale: Raznochinno-demokraticeskoe krugozh'e Kazani i vozniknovenie Kazanskogo otdeleniia "Zemli i voli" 1860-kh godov* (Kazan, 1963) [hereafter, Vul'fson (1963)].
  - 9 Vul'fson (1974): 99.
  - 10 A. Bertal', "Neskol'ko slov po povodu literaturnogo vechera v pol'zu Saratovskoi tiuremnoi shkoly," *Saratovskie gubernskie vedomosti*, No. 47 (25 November 1861) : 370.
  - 11 Snytko: 190.
  - 12 Vul'fson (1963): 9.
  - 13 Ibid: 18.
  - 14 Ashevskii: 50.
  - 15 Ashevskii: 54-5.
  - 16 *Kolokol: Pribavochnye listy k "Poliarnoi zvezde"* (15 April 1859).
  - 17 Ashevskii: 55.
  - 18 The future Minister of War, Dmitrii Miliutin, noticed exactly this nuance as he observed similar political developments at Saint Petersburg University. When Shcherbatov resigned in 1858, his replacement, Ivan D. Delianov, seemed "a person with narrow views, a chinovnik in spirit." Students lost respect for university leadership, their attitude toward authority darkened, student skhodki and societies fell under the influence of "extremists," and they became "noisy bands of youths unrestrained by any sort of moral authority." ROGBL [Rukopisnyi otdel Gosudarstvennoi Biblioteki imeni Lenina] f. 169 (Miliutin),

- carton 13. 4, p. 104.
- 19 Vul'fson (1974): 234. Most members were from the medical department (7 of 13 students) [Vul'fson (1963): 30-33].
- 20 A. I. Khodnev, *Istoriia imperatorskogo Vol'nogo Ekonomicheskogo Obshchestva s 1765 do 1865 goda* (SPB, 1865), chapter "O rasprostrostraneni v masse naroda gramotnosti." 357-60; K.I. Dikson and V. Ketrits, *Sankt-Peterburgskii Komitet gramotnosti* (SPB, 1915); D. D. Protopopov, *Istoriia Sankt-Peterburgskogo Komiteta gramotnosti, sostoiavshogo pri Imperatorskom Vol'nom Ekonomicheskome Obshchestve (1861-1895)* (SPB, 1898).
- 21 *Byloe*, No. 1 (1907): 200; Korbuto, 1: 173.
- 22 Snytko: 197; M. V. Nechkina, ed., *Revoliutsionnaia situatsiia v Rossii v seredine XIX veka: Kollektivnaia monografiia*. Collective authorship: "Gruppa po izucheniiu revoliutsionnoi situatsii v Rossii Kontsa 50-kh—nachala 60-kh godov XIX veka" (Moscow, 1978): 80-1, 165; F. O. Iastrebov, *Revoliutsionnye demokraty na Ukraine: vtoraiia polovina 50-kh—nachalo 60-kh godov XIX st.* (Kiev, 1960).
- 23 M. K. Lemke, *Ocherki osvoboditel'nogo dvizheniia "shestidesiatykh godov" po neizdannym dokumentam s portretami* (SPB, 1908): 313-5.
- 24 Vul'fson (1963): 40.
- 25 Vul'fson (1963): 35-6, is disinclined to accept the undisciplined Soviet historiography which is always searching for "leaders" in local cells of a vast national organization. He blasts Linkov's idea of the great Kazan-Perm revolutionary organization [see Ia. I. Linkov, "Problema revoliutsionnoi partii v Rossii v epokhu padeniia krepostnogo prava," *Voprosy istorii*, No. 9 (September 1957): 57-70; and *Revoliutsionnaia bor'ba A. I. Gertsena i N. P. Ogareva i tainoe obshchestvo 'Zemlia i Volia' 1860-kh godov* (Moscow, 1964)]. He also criticizes G. I. Arsen'ev, *V. A. Manassein ("Zhizn' i deiatel'nost'"), 1841-1901* (Moscow, 1951):19: "In his work Manassein was guided by instructions [received from] his higher 'center' — 'Father Mitrofan,' i. e., Muravskii." Vul' fson does not believe, nor do I, that Manassein was a "revolutionary leader."
- 26 Iu. N. Korotkov, "U istokov pervoi 'Zemli i Voli' (neopublikovannaia stranitsa iz tetradi A. A. Sleptsova)," *Istoricheskie zapiski*, No. 79 (1966): 194, says that there is no basis for the conclusion that these several projects were inspired by a unified center. More likely, they appeared independently of one another, "expressing the demands of the times." The promotion of literacy, "which never knew political parties or social clubs," was the sort of task which broad circles of educated society might wish. Sunday schools, which arose everywhere in 1859, also contained in embryo the idea of a unification and represented, according to Paul Annenkov, the "first step toward the realization of the very plan of a Society for the promotion of literacy." However it might be worthwhile, continued Korotkov, to devote specialized study to the possibility of ties between the initiators of these societies, and about the presence among them of conspiratorial plans, or their dependence on Nicholas Ogarev's conspiratorial models. No such study has yet been done.
- 27 Ashevskii: 59; *Byloe*, No. 1 (1907): 201.
- 28 When in 1907 Manassein published his materials on this period, highlighting the purely student and corporate side of student activism, Khristoforov wrote a refutation: "When our kruzhok ... decided to publish a journal with a *revolutionary* tendency, Shchapov wrote for this publication ... a very original program, powerful in thought and expression" [Vul' fson (1963): 37]. If a program for a journal, never published, can be taken as a program for an organized kruzhok, then fine. But unfortunately, having described Shchapov's plan, Khristoforov does not outline the program. Looking back at these early years from over the high plateau of nearly a half century of activism, including nearly a quarter century abroad, in the early 20th century Khristoforov asserted that after the Struve episode,

“all student disturbances and protests have a *kastal’nyi* character, so it is necessary to broaden the realm of the movement and carry on a struggle not for university interests, but for popular [*narodnye*] interests.”

- 29 *Vosstanie 1863 goda: Materialy i dokumenty: rusko-pol’skie revoliutsionnye sviazi*, subtitle: “Powstanie styczniowe: Współpraca rewolucyjna Polsko-Rosyjska,” 2 (Moscow: 1963):270.
- 30 Daniel Field, *Rebels in the Name of the Tsar* (Boston: 1976): 31-111.
- 31 These deliberations are carefully described by Miliutin who participated fully; ROGBL, f. 169 (Miliutin), carton 13.4, p. 106.
- 32 ROGBL f. 169 (Miliutin), carton 13.4, pp. 105 ob.-106.
- 33 ROGBL f. 169 (Miliutin), carton 13.4, p. 107.
- 34 ROGBL f. 169 (Miliutin), carton 13.4, p. 108.
- 35 ROGBL f. 169 (Miliutin), carton 13.4, pp. 108-108 ob.
- 36 Vul’ fson (1963): 66-7.
- 37 Almost all of these were *raznochintsy* in social background. Vul’ fson (1963): 66. Much harsher treatment was accorded Kazan students than Saint Petersburg students. Ashevskii: 63-4.
- 38 Members: Rovinskii, Mordovtsev and his wife, Mordvinov, Eugene Belov (a teacher at the gymnasium and inspector of the Noble Girls’ Institute), Dr. N. N. Minkevich, L. G. Ernst (the principal at the Noble Girls’ Institut), Auguste Klaus (German colonist and administrator), V. G. Varentsov, I. A. Gan, Dr. S. F. Stefani. See Vul’ fson (1974): 154; and N. N. Novikova, *Revoliutsionery 1861 g.* (“*Velikoruss*” i ego komitet v revoliutsionnoi bor’ be 1861 g.) (Moscow, 1968): 244-45. Belov and Mordovtsev were on the mailing list to receive copies of the proclamation “*Velikoruss*,” Novikova: 333.