

The Volost Administration

It is organized along the same lines as the *okrug* administration, with smaller competence.

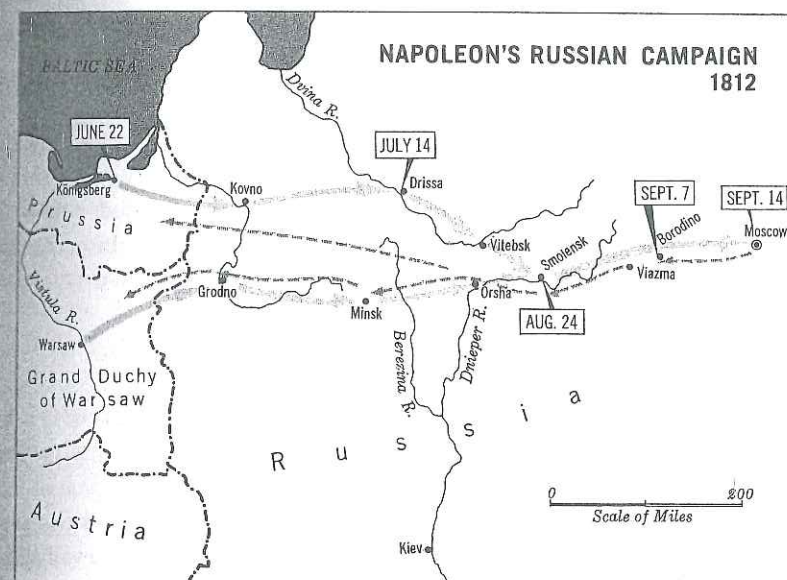
The same problems, except smaller in scope.

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The War of 1812

The most eventful episode in the reign of Alexander I (1801–1825) was Napoleon's invasion of Russia in 1812. Napoleon decided to undertake the campaign after Alexander's official withdrawal from the Continental System in December 1810. If successful, the undertaking would have eliminated the last obstacle in Napoleon's attempt to control Europe. His past record seemed to assure quick success, and to make his victory certain Napoleon assembled a force of over 600,000 men and led them into Russia in June 1812. But the Russian strategies of retreat and scorched earth upset Napoleon's plans, making it impossible for him to defeat the enemy or even to provision his own armies. The only engagement, the battle of Borodino, was costly and indecisive, as the Russians retreated in orderly fashion toward Moscow, which Napoleon's forces occupied in September 1812. Late in October, to avoid wintering his overextended forces in Moscow, Napoleon ordered the retreat, which has remained a classic military horror. The Grand Army lost some 400,000 men to battle casualties, exposure, and starvation, and about 100,000 were imprisoned. The Russian success was due in large measure to favorable natural circumstances, the strategy of Marshal M. I. Kutuzov, and the aroused patriotism which the tsar helped to stimulate by appealing to his subjects to defend the country, the Orthodox religion, and "liberty."

From General Sir Robert Wilson, *Narrative of Events During the Invasion of Russia by Napoleon Bonaparte and the Retreat of the French Army, 1812*. Edited by Herbert Randolph. 2d ed. (London: 1860), pp. 46–48, 368–369.



Alexander's Proclamation to the Nation, July 18, 1812

The enemy has passed the frontiers and carried his arms into the interior of Russia. Since perfidy cannot destroy an empire which has existed with a dignity always increasing for so many generations, he has determined to attack it by violence, and to assault the empire of the Czars with the forces of the continent of Europe.

With treason in the heart and loyalty on the lips, he flatters the ears of the credulous and enchains their arms; and if the captive perceives fetters under the flowers, the spirit of domination discovers itself, and he calls forth war to assure the work of treason! But Russia has penetrated his views. The path of loyalty is open to her: she has invoked the protection of God; she opposes to the plots of her enemy an army strong in courage, and eager to drive from her territory this race of locusts who consume the earth, and whom the earth will reject, finding them too heavy a burden to sustain.

We call out sufficient armies to annihilate the enemy. Our soldiers who are under arms are like lions who dart on their prey; but we do not disguise from our faithful subjects that the intrepid courage of our warriors actually under arms needs to be supported by an interior line of troops. The means ought to be proportioned to the object; and the object placed before you is to overthrow the tyrant who wishes to overthrow all the earth.

We have called on our ancient city of Moscow, the first capital of our empire, to make final efforts, and she is accustomed to make them, by sending

of Europe and Asia to unite themselves for the cause of humanity! We call on all our civil and religious communities to cooperate with us by a general rising against the universal tyrant.

Wherever in this empire he turns his steps he will be assured of finding our native subjects laughing at his frauds, scorning his flattery and his falsehoods, trampling on his gold with the indignation of offended virtue, and paralyzing, by the feeling of true honour, his legions of slaves. In every noble Russian he will find a Pojarskoi, in every ecclesiastic a Palitsyn, in every peasant a Minin.

Nobles! You have been in all ages the defenders of our country! Holy Synod! And you members of our Church! You have in all circumstances by your intercession called down upon our empire the Divine protection! Russian people! Intrepid posterity of Slavonians! It is not the first time that you have plucked out the teeth from the head of the lion, who sprung on you as upon a prey, and met his own destruction! Unite yourselves! Carry the cross in your hearts and the sword in your hands, and human force never can prevail against you.

I have delegated the organization of the new levies to the nobles of every province; and I have charged with the care of assembling the brave patriots who will present themselves of their own accord for the defence of the country the gentlemen amongst whom the officers will be chosen. The number of those who will be assembled ought to be sent to Moscow, where they will be made acquainted with the commander-in-chief.

Given at our camp of Polotzk, the 18th of July, 1812.

Alexander

*M. I. Kutuzov's Report to Alexander I Concerning
the Evacuation of Moscow, September 16, 1812*

After a very bloody, although for us victorious, battle of August 26 [1812], I was forced to abandon our positions at Borodino for reasons I have already had the honor of reporting to Your Imperial Majesty. As a result of that battle the [main] army was in great confusion while the second [reserve] army was greatly weakened. In such conditions we were approaching Moscow, where daily we encountered increased activity of the enemy's advanced units. Because of the close proximity [to Moscow] there was no desirable terrain where I could meet the enemy. Russian forces that we hoped to join were unable to link with us. The enemy organized two new columns: one was advancing

link with us. The enemy organized two new columns: one was advancing along the Borovsk highway, the other along the Zvenigorod, in order to harass the rear of my forces that were retreating to Moscow. For that reason I could not dare to have another battle whose outcome would have resulted not only in the destruction of my army, but also in a bloody peril to and turning of Moscow itself into ashes. In such a critical situation, after consulting with my leading generals, some of whom disagreed with my assessment of the situation, [it was decided that] I was to allow the enemy to proceed to Moscow from where all treasures, the arsenal, and practically all movable property, both state and private, were to be evacuated and where not one inhabitant was to be left behind.

I dare to report humbly to You, Most Merciful Sovereign, that the entry of the enemy into Moscow does not mean the subjugation of Russia. On the contrary, I am moving with my army along the Tula highway. This will enable me to protect the supplies that were prepared in our rich *gubernias*. Any other decision would have prevented me from achieving this goal, and would have denied me the opportunity of establishing contact with the armies of [Generals] Tormasov and Chichagov. While I am not minimizing the fact that the occupation of the capital could be a deeply felt wound, nevertheless, I do not waver between selecting this development and the results that may benefit us in saving our armies. Using all of my forces, I am currently preparing a counter-offensive along the Tula and Kaluga highways, whose aim is using my units to cut the enemy's entire communication line between Smolensk and Moscow. At the same time I am deploying every means to attack the enemy's rear guard units and, by attracting the enemy's attention, I hope to force him to abandon Moscow and to alter his operations. I have ordered General Winzingerode to hold his positions along the Tver highway. He has a cossack regiment at his disposal to guard the Iaroslav highway and to protect the inhabitants against enemy raids. Presently, I have assembled my forces not far from Moscow, and with firm resolve am expecting the enemy. As long as the army of Your Imperial Majesty is safe and is inspired by its well-known bravery and our diligence, the temporary loss of Moscow does not mean the loss of the Fatherland. I sincerely hope that Your Imperial Majesty will agree that these consequences are inseparably linked with the loss of Smolensk.

Prince [M. I.] Kutuzov
General of the Infantry

*Alexander's Victory Proclamation to the Army,
January 13, 1813*

Merecz, 13th January 1813

Soldiers,

The year has ended—a year forever memorable and glorious—one in which you have trampled in the dust the pride of the insolent aggressor.

The year has passed, but your heroic deeds survive.

Time will not efface their trace. They are present to your contemporaries—they will live with their posterity.

You have purchased at the price of your blood the deliverance of your country from the hostile powers leagued against its independence.

You have acquired rights to the gratitude of Russia and to the admiration of mankind. You have proved by your fidelity, your valour, and your perseverance, that when hearts are filled with the love of God, and devotion of their Sovereign, the efforts of the most formidable enemies resemble the furious waves of the ocean, which break in impotent lashings against indestructible rocks, and leave behind only confused sounds.

Soldiers! Desirous of distinguishing all those who have participated in these immortal exploits, I have ordered medals of silver to be struck, which have been blessed by our holy Church. They bear the date of the memorable year 1812; suspended to a blue ribbon, they will decorate the warrior breasts which have served as bucklers of the country.

Each individual of the Russian army is worthy to bear this honourable recompense of valour and constancy.

You have all shared the same fatigues and dangers; you have had but one heart, one mind; you will all be proud to wear the same distinction; it will proclaim every where that you are the faithful children of Russia—children on whom God the Father will pour His benedictions.

Your enemies will tremble on seeing these decorations; they will know that under these medals hearts are beating, animated with unconquerable valour, and imperishable, because it is not based upon ambition or impiety, but on the immutable foundation of patriotism and religion.

Alexander

Russian Losses (Human and Animal) in the War of 1812

<i>Gubernia</i>	<i>Human Losses</i>	<i>Animal Losses</i>
Kaluga	2,230	7,355
Moscow	58,811	31,664
Smolensk	172,566	128,739

Vilno	92,243	12,778
Bialystok oblast	321	734
Total	430,707[Sic]	230,677

December, 1812

A. Balashev

Minister of Police

Source: *Memuary sovremennikov i ochevidtsev* (Moscow: 1912), p. 105. Translation mine.

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*Russo-Polish Relations,
1815–1835*

The three partitions of Poland (by Russia, Austria and Prussia in 1772, 1793, and 1795) terminated the independent existence of that kingdom. Thereafter, although each partitioning power tried to integrate former Polish territories into its administrative, political, social, cultural, and economic system, the Poles tried every means to regain their political independence.

Because Russia had acquired the largest portion of Poland, relations between the two peoples (which historically were never friendly) became very tense. The Russians tried to pacify the Poles by granting them a fairly liberal constitution in 1815. Unfortunately, the constitution benefited only a small area of former Poland. In addition, in day-to-day operations Russian authorities seldom adhered to the constitutional provisions. This behavior antagonized many Poles, spawned tensions and conspiracies, and, in 1830–31, exploded in a violent anti-Russian rebellion. At the height of their initial successes, the Poles officially re-

From Le Comte D'Angeberg [Chodzko], *Recueil des traites, conventions et actes diplomatiques concernant la Pologne 1762–1862* (A Collection of Treaties, Conventions and Diplomatic Papers Concerning Poland, 1762–1862) (Paris: 1862), pp. 707–724. Translation mine.

nounced their allegiance to Russia and dethroned Nicholas I as their constitutional monarch. Nicholas I responded with military force and with total integration of "constitutional Poland" into the Russian Empire where it remained until 1917.

Polish Freedoms under the Constitution of 1815

Article 1

The Kingdom of Poland is united in perpetuity to the Russian Empire.

Article 3

The crown of the kingdom of Poland is hereditary in Our person and in those of Our descendants, heirs, and successors, on the basis of the order of succession established for the imperial throne of Russia.

Article 4

The constitutional charter established the mode and the principles of sovereignty.

Article 5

The king, in his absence, shall nominate a lieutenant who shall reside in the kingdom. The lieutenant is revocable at will. . . .

Article 8

Foreign policy relations of Our empire are the same as those of the kingdom of Poland.

Article 9

The sovereign alone shall have the right to decide whether the kingdom of Poland shall take part in the wars of Russia, as well as in the treaties of peace or of commerce that that power may conclude.

Article 10

In case Russian troops should be brought to Poland or Polish troops to Russia, or in case of transit of those troops through a province of the two states, their maintenance and cost of transportation will be borne by the state to which they belong. The army of Poland shall never be employed outside Europe.

Article 11

The Roman Catholic religion, professed by the majority of the inhabitants of the kingdom of Poland, shall receive the most careful attention from the government, without in any way diminishing the freedom of other sects,

which without exception shall be allowed to worship freely and publicly, and shall enjoy the protection of the government. Whatever distinction there may be between Christian sects, there shall be no distinction in the enjoyment of civil and political rights. . . .

Article 16

Freedom of the press is guaranteed. The law shall regulate the ways and shall repress abuses.

Article 17

The law shall protect equally all citizens without regard to their class or their status. . . .

Article 19

No person shall be arrested otherwise than according to procedures established by the law. . . .

Article 24

Every Pole is free to move his person and his property in accordance with procedures established by the law.

Article 25

All convicts shall be punished for their crimes in the kingdom; no person shall be deported except when banishment is provided by the law.

Article 26

All property, regardless of its nature, . . . is declared sacred and inviolable. . . .

Article 28

All administrative, judicial, and military public business, without any exception, shall be conducted in the Polish language.

Article 29

Public offices, civil and military, may be occupied only by Poles. The positions of presidents of courts of first instance, presidents of palatinal commissions and of courts of appeal, members of palatinal councils, the offices of nuncios and deputies of the Diet, and those of senators, may be given only to landowners. . . .

Article 31

The Polish nation shall have in perpetuity a national representative body. The latter will consist of a Diet composed of the king and two houses. The Senate

will be the first house; Chamber of Nuncios and Deputies of the Communes will form the second house. . . .

Article 33

Any foreigner who shall have acquired property, become naturalized, and shall have learned the Polish language shall be eligible to hold public office after five years residence, if his conduct be irreproachable.

Article 34

Nevertheless, the king may at his pleasure, or upon request of the Council of State, admit foreigners distinguished for their abilities to any public office except those designated in Article 90.

Article 35

The government is inherent in the person of the king. He exercises in all their fullness the functions of the executive power. All executive or administrative authority can emanate only from him.

Article 36

The person of the king is sacred and inviolable. . . .

Article 40

The right to declare war and to conclude all treaties and conventions whatsoever is reserved to the king.

Article 41

The king nominates senators, ministers, state councilors, *les maîtres des requêtes*, presidents of local commissions, presidents and judges of various courts, diplomatic and commercial agents, and all other administrative officials who are subordinate to him or to authorities to whom he had delegated the power.

Article 42

The king nominates archbishops and bishops of different cults, suffragan bishops and prelates.

Article 43

The right to pardon is reserved exclusively to the king. He alone has the power to commute punishment.

Article 44

The sovereign enjoys the right to issue statutes and to publish civil and military orders. . . .

Article 46

The right to grant titles of nobility, to naturalize and to distribute honorary titles, belongs exclusively to the king. . . .

Article 86

The legislative power rests in the person of the king and in the two legislative chambers in conformity with the provisions of Article 31.

Article 87

The Diet shall meet every two years in Warsaw at a time stated in the summons issued by the king. The sessions shall last for thirty days. The king alone may prorogue, adjourn, or dissolve it.

Article 88

The king may convoke an extraordinary Diet if he sees a need for it.

Article 89

A member of the Diet, so long as he shall be a member, may not be arrested nor judged by a criminal court, save by vote of the Chamber to which he belongs. . . .

Article 138

The judicial system is constitutionally independent. . . .

Article 140

The courts consist of judges nominated by the king and of judges selected in conformity with the organic statute.

Article 141

Judges nominated by the king are irremovable for life; judges selected are equally irremovable for the duration of their functions. . . .

Polish Dethronement of Nicholas I, 1831

I. A Proposal by Polish Deputy, R. Soltyk

A. By declaring its unconditional independence [from Russia], the Polish nation considers the Romanov Dynasty to have lost its right to the Polish Crown and renounces its [the Dynasty's] supreme right vis-a-vis the Polish nation.

B. The Polish nation renounces its earlier loyalty oath [to Russia and its Romanov Dynasty] because that oath was extracted [by force] and was, therefore, contrary to international law.

C. Finally, the Polish nation solemnly declares that the source of all authority resides in the people, and that the people who, by the Revolution of November 29 [1830], have regained their independence and rights, have thereby assumed their inalienable rights to determine their political destiny and to organize their best possible form of government.

II. The Act of Dethronement

All solemn and sacred agreements are inviolable as long as they are observed by both sides. Our long sufferings are universally well known. Numerous violations of freedoms which both monarchs [Alexander I and Nicholas I] had pledged to uphold, have freed the Polish nation from owing an allegiance to the present reigning monarch. The words, which Emperor Nicholas has expressed, that our first shot will be a signal for complete destruction [of Poland] have dashed all of our hopes of securing justice and have greatly disappointed us. Accordingly, represented by its *sejm* [that is, parliament] the Polish nation hereby declares its independence [from Russia] and expresses its right to bestow the Crown of Poland upon anyone worthy to wear it who will also offer solemn and safe guarantees and will pledge that he will sacredly and inviolably preserve our rights.

A Statement by Nicholas I to Polish Representatives, October, 1835

Gentlemen, I am aware that you want to address me. I even know the content of your statement. To free you from telling a lie, I would wish that it not be expressed in my presence. Gentlemen, yes, I wish to free you from telling me a lie, because I know that your personal feelings are entirely different from those you are trying to express to me.

How can I believe in your statements since you told me the same thing at the start of the revolution [of 1830-31]? Are you not the same individuals who, five or eight years ago, told me of your allegiance and devotion to me and gave me solemn assurances of your loyalty? And then, shortly thereafter, you violated your oaths and committed many horrors. . . .

Gentlemen, you have two options: you may persist in your determination to have an independent Poland; or you may live peacefully and be my loyal subjects.

Source: *Russkaia Starina*, vol. VII (1873), pp. 679-80. Translation mine.

Should you insist on cherishing the goal of being an independent nationality, that is, an independent Poland with all of its fantasies, then you will invite great misfortune upon yourself. I have decreed that a citadel be built in Warsaw [Alexander's Citadel], and I would like to inform you that, at the slightest provocation, I will order that your city be destroyed. I will destroy Warsaw and, obviously, will not rebuild its foundations.

It hurts me to tell you this because it is very difficult for a sovereign to talk in this manner to his subjects. But I am telling you this for your own benefit. Gentlemen, it is up to you to forget the past. You can achieve it only by your conduct and by your loyalty to my government. . . .

You can accomplish it by educating your children properly, and by instilling in them the fundamentals of religion and loyalty to their sovereign.

In spite of all the current upheavals that trouble Europe and in spite of all the ideas that threaten the social fabric of society, Russia is the only major power that is unaffected by them.

Gentlemen, believe me, to be a part of Russia and to be able to benefit by her protection is a singular happiness. If you behave properly and if you fulfill your obligations to me, then my fatherly concern will extend to all of you irrespective of what has transpired before. My government will always express concern about your well-being.

Please remember well what I have just told you.

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The Question of Imperial Succession

One of the most tragic problems in the history of Imperial Russia is the question of succession. A major concern of Peter the Great (see Chapter 3), it was also of importance in the reigns of Anna (see Chapter 6), Elizabeth (see Chapter 7), and Catherine II (see Chapter 10). To prevent palace revolutions or unlawful usurpations of power, Tsar Paul, soon after

The following three items are from Paul Lacroix, *Histoire de la vie et du règne de Nicolas Ier Empereur de Russie* (*History of the Life and of the Reign of Nicholas I, Emperor of Russia*) (Paris: 1864), vol. 1, pp. 238-239, 244-247, 395-399. Translation mine.

his ascension, issued a new law of succession (see Chapter 20), by which the throne of Russia was to pass from the father to the eldest son and, if there were no sons, to the next eldest brother of the tsar. Paul's death in 1801 (see Chapter 23) placed his eldest son Alexander I on the throne.

Because Alexander I had no sons to succeed him, under the 1797 law the throne was to pass at his death to his brother Constantine (1779-1831). Early in 1822, however, Constantine, who lived in Warsaw with hismorganatic wife, renounced his right to succession in favor of his younger brother, Nicholas (1796-1855). The arrangement was made with such secrecy that when Alexander died late in 1825 there followed a strange comedy of errors that helped to precipitate the Decembrist Revolution.

*Constantine's Renunciation of His Right to the Throne,
January 26, 1822*

Sire!

Encouraged by all the proofs of the infinitely sympathetic disposition of Your Imperial Majesty toward me, I am once more laying at your feet, Sire, a most humble prayer.

Not finding in myself either the genius, or the talents, or the force necessary to be elevated to the sovereign dignity to which I have the right by virtue of my birth, I beg Your Imperial Majesty to transfer this right to whomever follows after me, and thus to assure forever the security of the empire. As for myself, I will add by this renunciation a new guarantee and a new force to the engagement which I have voluntarily and solemnly contracted on the occasion of my divorce from my first wife.

All the circumstances of my own situation, bearing more and more upon this measure, prove to the Empire and to the entire world the sincerity of my views.

Sire, accept with good will my prayer; help me secure the consent of our Imperial Mother to this plan and sanction it with your Imperial assent.

In the sphere of private life, I shall pledge myself always to serve as an example to your faithful subjects, and to all those who are animated by a love for our dear country.

I am with profound respect for your Majesty, your most faithful subject and brother,

St. Petersburg, 26 January, 1822

Tsarevich Constantine

*Alexander I's Manifesto on the Succession,
August 28, 1823*

By the Grace of God, We, Alexander I, Emperor and Autocrat of all the Russias, etc., hereby make known to all Our faithful subjects:

From the moment of Our coming to the throne of all the Russias, We have constantly felt that it was Our duty toward All Mighty God not only to guarantee and increase during Our life the happiness of Our beloved country and Our people, but also to prepare and assure their security and their well being after Us by a clear and precise designation of Our successor in accordance with the laws of Our Imperial House and the interests of the Empire. We were unable to designate him immediately, as Our predecessors had done, because We waited in the hope that it would perhaps please Divine Providence to give Us an heir to the throne in a direct line. But as the years have passed, it has more and more seemed to Us Our duty to place Our throne in such a position that it will not remain vacant even for a moment.

While We bear this anxiety in Our heart Our well beloved brother, Tsarevich and Grand Duke Constantine, following the dictates of his own conscience, has addressed to Us, the request that We transfer his right to the sovereign dignity, a position to which he would one day be elevated by virtue of his birth, to a person who might possess this right after him. He revealed at the same time his intention to give new force to the additional act relative to the succession to the throne which We promulgated in 1820, an act freely and solemnly recognized by him insofar as that act concerned him.

We are profoundly moved by the sacrifice which Our beloved brother has felt that he should make in his own interests for the consolidation of the fundamental laws of Our Imperial House, and the unshakable peace of the Empire of all the Russias.

Having invoked the aid of God, having seriously reflected upon a subject as dear to Our heart as it is vital for the Empire, and finding that the statutes which exist on the order of succession to the throne do not deprive those who have the right of the power to renounce it, and because in this special circumstance it does not present any difficulty in the order of hereditary succession to the throne, with the consent of Our noble Mother, who is the supreme head of the Imperial family to which We belong, and by the absolute power which We possess from God Himself, We ordered and shall order:

First, the voluntary act by which Our younger brother, Tsarevich and Grand Duke Constantine, renounces his rights to the throne of all the Russias shall be irrevocable. The said act of renunciation shall be, in order to insure knowledge of its existence, preserved in the Cathedral of the Assumption in Moscow and in the three high Courts of Our empire; in the Holy Synod, in the Council

of the Empire, and in the Governing Senate. Secondly, on the basis of the strict provision of the statute on succession to the throne, be it known that Our successor shall be Our second brother, Grand Duke Nicholas.

As a result, We have the well founded hope that on the day it shall please the King of Kings to recall Us, following the common law of all mortals, from Our temporal reign to eternity, the properly constituted authorities of the Empire, to whom We have made known Our irrevocable wish in this matter, will hasten to swear submission and allegiance to the emperor whom We have just designated as heir to the indivisible crown of the Empire of all the Russias, of the Kingdom of Poland, and of the Grand Duchy of Finland. As for Ourselves, We ask that all Our faithful subjects, with the same feeling of love with which We have considered Our first responsibility on earth to be the care given to their constant prosperity, address fervent prayers to Our Lord Jesus Christ, that He might deign, in His infinite sympathy, to receive Our souls into His eternal kingdom.

Given at Tsarskoe-Selo, August 28, year of Grace 1823, and of Our reign the 23rd.

Alexander

*Nicholas I's Manifesto upon Ascending
the Throne, December 24, 1825*

By the Grace of God, We, Nicholas, Emperor and Autocrat of all the Russias etc., make known to all Our faithful subjects:

In the sorrow of Our heart, in the midst of the general sadness which surrounds Us, We, Our Imperial house, and Our dear country, humble Ourselves before the unalterable decrees of the All-Mighty, and seek from Him alone Our strength and Our consolations. He has just called to Him Emperor Alexander I, of glorious memory, and We have all lost a father and a sovereign, who, for twenty-five years, has worked for the well-being of Russia and of Us.

When, on December 9, We learned the news of this sad event, We took pains, even in this moment of sadness and tears, to perform a sacred duty and follow only the impulse of Our heart, and We took the oath of allegiance to Our beloved brother Tsarevich Grand Duke Constantine as the legitimate heir to the throne of Russia by the right of primogeniture.

We had just discharged this sacred obligation when We were notified by the Council of Empire that on October 15, 1823, there had been placed in their hands a packet, sealed with the sign of the Emperor, on which there had been written in the hand of His Imperial Majesty himself: "To hold in

the Council of Empire until I order otherwise; and in the case of my death to be opened at an extraordinary session, before proceeding to any other act." This sovereign order had been executed by the Council and the following items had been found in the said packet: (1) A letter of Tsarevich Grand Duke Constantine, dated January 26, 1822, addressed to the Emperor, by which his Imperial Highness renounced his succession to the throne which belonged to him by the right of primogeniture; (2) a manifesto of August 28, 1823, signed by his Imperial Majesty's own hand, by which, after having expressed his agreement to the renunciation of Tsarevich and Grand Duke Constantine, it is stated that, being next in age after him, We are, by virtue of the fundamental law, the proper heir to the throne. We were informed at the outset that identical documents had been deposited with the Holy Synod and in the Cathedral of the Assumption in Moscow.

The above mentioned facts did in no way change the determination which We had made. We recognize the acts of renunciation made by His Imperial Highness during the life of the Emperor and confirmed by the assent of His Imperial Majesty; but We have neither the wish nor the right to consider this renunciation as irrevocable since it has neither been published nor transformed into law. We wish thus to show Our respect for the first fundamental law of Our country on the unchanging order of succession to the throne; and faithful to the oath which We have taken, We insist that the entire Empire follow Our example. In this grave circumstance Our desire is not to contest the validity of the resolutions expressed by His Imperial Highness. He has again besought Us not to oppose the wishes of the later Emperor, Our father and common benefactor, wishes which We shall always hold sacred; We seek only to guarantee the letter of the law which rules the order of succession to the throne, to reveal fully the loyalty of Our intentions, and to preserve Our dear country in a moment of uncertainty over the person of the legitimate sovereign. This determination, conceived in the purity of Our conscience before God who reads the depths of Our hearts, was blessed by Her Imperial Majesty Marie, Our beloved Mother.

However, the sad news of the death of His Majesty, the Emperor, was taken directly from Taganrog to Warsaw on December 7, two days sooner than it was received here. Immovable in his resolution, Tsarevich and Grand Duke Constantine confirmed it on the following day by two acts, dated December 8, which he entrusted Our beloved brother Grand Duke Michael to bring to Us. These acts consist: first, of a letter addressed to her Imperial Majesty, Our beloved mother, a letter in which—renewing his earlier decision and resting upon a rescript of the late Emperor, dated February 14, 1822, which served as a response to his act of renunciation of which there was a copy attached—His Imperial Highness renounced definitively and solemnly

all his rights to the throne, and on the basis of the order established by fundamental law, made them known to Us as well as to Our heirs; second, a letter addressed to Us, in which His Imperial Highness reiterates the first expression of his determination, gives to Us the title of Imperial Majesty, reserving only for himself that of Tsarevich which he bore formerly, and calls himself the most faithful of Our subjects.

Regardless of how decisive these acts may have been, and regardless of their certainty up to that time, the evidence was clear that the decision of His Imperial Highness was absolute and irrevocable and the nature of the problem and Our feelings in the matter caused Us to defer the publication of the said acts until such time as His Imperial Highness had manifested his desires relative to the oath which We rendered to him as well as to that of the entire Empire. . . .

As a result of all these acts, and by virtue of the fundamental law of the Empire on the order of succession, with a heart full of respect for the unalterable decrees of Providence which guides Us, We ascend the throne of Our ancestors, the throne of the empire of all the Russias, and those of the kingdom of Poland and the Grand Duchy of Finland, which are inseparable, and We order:

1. That the oath of allegiance be taken to Us and to Our heir, His Imperial Highness Grand Duke Alexander, Our well beloved son;
2. That the time of Our accession to the throne be dated from December 1, 1825.

Finally We ask all Our faithful subjects to raise with Us their fervent prayers toward the All-Mighty that He grant Us the power of His support for the burden which Divine Providence has imposed upon Us, that He sustain Us in Our firm intentions to live only for Our beloved country and to follow in the footsteps of the monarch who preceded Us. Then Our reign will be only a continuation of his, and We shall be able to accomplish all the wishes which he conceived for the well being of Russia, he whose sacred memory nourishes in Us the desire and hope to merit the blessings of heaven and the love of Our people!

Given in Our imperial residence at St. Petersburg, December 24, in the year of Grace, 1825, and of Our reign the first.

Nicholas

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The Decembrist Movement

After the victorious campaigns against Napoleon, many Russian officers returned home with boxes crammed with books and heads full of ideas for improving their country. Small secret groups were organized, of which the most important was the Union of Salvation. In 1818 this group, composed of a southern and a northern branch, changed its name to the Union of Welfare. The southern branch, led by Colonel Paul I. Pestel (1793-1826), advocated, in the Jacobin tradition, drastic changes in Russia's social, economic, and political structure. The northern branch, headed by such men as Prince Sergei P. Trubetskoi (1790-1860) and Nikita M. Muraviev (1795-1826), proposed a more moderate plan. The first Russian revolution began on December 26, 1825, at the height of confusion within the imperial family over the succession following the death of Alexander I. The revolt proved a dismal failure, for many reasons. Many of the more resolute leaders were arrested and the others failed to act decisively; the expected popular uprising failed to materialize; and, finally, the armed forces remained loyal to the regime. The attempts of the Decembrists, as this group is commonly called, became an ideal of self sacrificing struggle against autocracy for later generations of Russian revolutionaries.

Statute of the Union of Welfare

Book One. Aims of the Union of Welfare

1. Convinced that good morals represent the firm foundation of national welfare and valor, and that all the efforts of the government to attain them will fail unless the governed take active part in realizing these well-intentioned aims, the Union of Welfare believes that it is its sacred obligation to disseminate the true rules of morality and enlightenment among fellow citizens, and to assist the government in elevating Russia to the level of greatness and welfare to which the Creator has predestined it.

2. Because its aim is the *welfare of the country*, the Union does not conceal it [its aim] from well-meaning citizens, but in order to avoid the censure of malice and jealousy its activity must be conducted in secrecy.

3. Because in all of its actions it will strive to observe strictly the rules of justice and virtue, the Union will not try to expose those wounds which it cannot remedy immediately, inasmuch as it is guided neither by lust for glory nor similar motives, but by a desire for the common welfare.

4. The Union hopes to receive benevolent support from the government; this hope is based on the following statements of the *Nakaz* by the late Empress Catherine II: "If their minds are inadequately prepared for them [the laws], then assume the responsibility of preparing them and you will accomplish thereby a great deal." And in another place: "That policy is bad which corrects through law what should have been corrected through manners."

5. The following four basic fields constitute the aim of the Union: (1) philanthropy; (2) education; (3) justice; and (4) national economy.

6. *First Field: Philanthropy* The Union supervises all philanthropic institutions in the state, such as hospitals, orphanages, etc., and also those places where mankind is suffering, namely, dungeons, prisons, etc. With zeal that befits its noble aim, the Union will seek to survey, and if possible to improve, the above mentioned institutions and to establish new ones. It will bring to the attention of the government all inadequacies and abuses that have been detected in those institutions. [The Union] is fully convinced that it [the government] is genuinely sympathetic with all of this, and that it is ready to extend a helping hand to all those who suffer. The Union also is concerned that invalids be cared for in appropriate places.

7. *Second Field: Section 1: Dissemination of moral principles* The Union will attentively disseminate among all estates of the population genuine principles of virtue and will remind and explain to all their obligations toward faith, neighbors, the country, and existing authorities. It will point out the unbreakable tie that exists between the people's virtue, that is, good morals and its welfare, and will use every means to eradicate the vices that have entered our hearts, especially preference for personal rather than public gains, baseness, vile passions, hypocrisy, extortion, and cruelty toward subordinates. In short, by enlightening all about their duties, it [the Union] will try to reconcile and to persuade all classes, ranks, and races in the state, and to encourage them to strive unanimously toward the government's aim: the *common good*, so that a general public opinion will emerge as a true tribunal of morality whose beneficent influence will complete the formation of good habits and thereby will place on a firm and indestructible foundation the welfare and virtue of the Russian people.

The Union will achieve this end through publication of periodical works consonant with the educational level of each class, [and] writing and translation of books pertaining to man's obligations. Personal examples and words [of members] will also contribute to this aim. Clergymen, belonging to the Union, are especially obligated to enlighten their parishioners, without exception, about their duties. Those clergymen who are not members of the Union should be encouraged to do the same.

8. *Section 2: Education of youth* The education of youth represents also a permanent aim of the Union of Welfare. Under its supervision should be placed without exception all national educational institutions. The Union should inspect them, improve them, and establish new ones. As far as the education of youth is concerned, special effort must be made to arouse in it a love for everything virtuous, useful, and elegant, and contempt for everything that is imperfect and low, in order to stop the strong impulse of the passions by the firm but just reminder of an enlightened reason and conscience.

With respect to private education, the Union should try subtly to persuade the parents to instill the principles of virtue in their children and to support all deserving educators; those, however, who under the guise [of educators] creep into households to sow dissension and debauchery the Union will try not only to expel, but will try to deprive them, as corrupters of youth's morals, from earning their daily bread in this profession. The Union will especially supervise foreigners who, in addition to sowing dissension and corruption in households, instill in the children contempt for [everything that is] native and an attachment to [things that are] foreign. The Union will seek to dissuade parents from educating their children in foreign countries. The education of the female sex, as a source of virtue in private education, is also of concern to the Union.

The Union will use the following means to attain this end: its own example, the spoken word, and periodical publications, which, among others, should include methods of education, names of recognized good educators, and books useful for that purpose.

9. *Section 3: Dissemination of knowledge* By all available means the Union will fight ignorance and will seek to instill genuine enlightenment by directing the minds to useful occupations and especially toward a knowledge of the fatherland. To this end it will write and translate books—good textbooks as well as those that will aid useful learning. It will try to disseminate education among the common people. It will use satire to divert people away from books that are contrary to the aims of the Union, or those that have no impact. Only the truly elegant will be allowed in literature and everything that is either bad or mediocre will be eliminated.

10. *Third Field: Justice* Next to good morals, justice is, without doubt,

one of the main aspects of national welfare and is therefore an integral part of the aim of the Union. The Union will supervise the execution of governmental measures; will encourage civil and religious officials to fulfill their duties; will keep informed of all pending cases, and will seek to direct everything to the path of justice; will support poor but honest and trusted officials; will compensate for losses incurred in the cause of justice; will promote genuinely deserving individuals; will try to direct the dishonest and depraved into a proper path, and, in case of a failure, will try to deprive them of the opportunity to do harm. The Union will also try to limit and eradicate the lust for power and disregard for human rights which we acquired during our up-bringing, and will try to convince everyone of the truth that *the general prosperity of the people is infallibly based on private [prosperity] and that every individual, regardless of his estate, has the right to use it.*

II. *Fourth Field: National economy* National economy as the foundation of national wealth should be the aim of the Union—because through trade and industry it unites not only all estates but all vast areas of the state, and because transfer of wealth from one hand to another equalizes fortunes and thereby provides everyone with the hope that through industriousness he can enjoy that part of prosperity he has envied in others. The Union will pay particular attention to agriculture and to all forms of cultivation of the soil in order to develop useful produce; it will support every useful industry in the state; it will supervise foreign and domestic trade and will seek to develop it, and through it to vitalize the unproductive regions of the country; it will support and call to the attention of the government that it [should] reward those merchants and industrialists who distinguish themselves in trying to do things for the general good; it will single out honest merchants, and will try to turn dishonest [ones] to their duties; and in general it will seek that more honesty be introduced in trade. The Public Treasury is also an object of interest of the Union.

Book Two. General Laws of the Union of Welfare

1. *Qualifications of the candidates* Having as its aim the *general welfare*, the Union of Welfare invites to membership all those who, by their honest life, have earned for themselves a good name in society, and who, feeling the nobility of the aim of the Union, are prepared to endure all the hardships that are associated with its attainment.

2. The Union does not consider differences in occupation and estates: all Russian citizens—nobles, clergy, merchants, townsmen, and free men—who agree with the above, who profess the Christian faith, and who are at least eighteen years old, are eligible for membership in the Union of Welfare.

Note: The Union considers to be Russian citizens those who were born in Russia and who speak Russian. Foreigners who left their country to serve a foreign state [Russia] do not deserve confidence by this act, and consequently cannot be considered Russian citizens. The Union considers worthy of this honor only those foreigners who have rendered important services to our country and who are passionately attached to it.

3. Women will not be admitted to the Union. Efforts should be made, however, to bring them subtly to organize philanthropic and *private societies*, whose aims are similar to those of the Union.

4. Anyone known to be a dishonest individual, and who has not improved his reputation, cannot be admitted to the Union of Welfare. In general, all those who are depraved, vicious, and subject to vile passions, are precluded from participating in the Union.

5. *Duties of the members* Every member, upon joining the Union, is required, depending on his qualifications, to enroll in one of the fields listed in the aims [of the Union] and contribute as much as possible to [the success of] its work.

6. Every member is unquestionably required to obey all lawful orders of the Union authorities, diligently execute all of their assignments, and cheerfully submit to all the reprimands which these authorities may impose for failure to carry out obligations.

7. Members of the Union not only should not avoid public obligations, but as true sons of the Fatherland, should accept them with pleasure and execute them with zeal; and by their faultless conduct, justice, and nobility, elevate the prestige of their position in the eyes of others.

8. In every occupation, in every position, a member of the Union is obligated to aid others, to show respect for virtuous and distinguished people and to try to establish contact with them, keeping the Union informed about it. He must oppose the evil and the depraved by all means, without violating public order.

9. Members of the Union should aid one another in public life; members of the nobility are obligated to aid members from among the merchants, townsmen, and husbandmen, while members from these classes must act in a similar manner among themselves and towards nobles. Members of the civil service must defend those in the military and the military must speak for the civilians. All this, however, should not be contrary to truth or to the benefit of vice or crime. In general, every [member] must disseminate this truth: that every class and service is useful to the state, must be equally respected by true sons of the Fatherland, and that only those persons who deviate from their obligations and prefer vice to virtue deserve contempt.

10. Every member, under the penalty of punishment, is obligated to report

to the authorities of the Union all illegal and shameful acts of his fellow members.

11. Other obligations of the Union members stem naturally from the aims of the Union. To the extent of his abilities, every member is obligated to accelerate the attainment of these aims. By his own example and word he must encourage everyone to virtue, disseminate ideas consonant with the aims of the Union, and speak the truth and defend it fearlessly; in short, he must strive to build a moral wall that will protect the present as well as future generations from all misfortunes of vice, and thereby erect an everlasting and unshakable foundation for the greatness and welfare of the Russian people.

12. Every member, upon joining the Union, must contribute annually *one twenty-fifth* of his income to the common treasury. In this matter the Union depends completely on the honesty of every member, because no other feeling than virtue induces everyone to contribute to the common good.

13. *Rights of the members* The difference in civil positions and ranks is abolished in the Union and is replaced by submission to the authorities of the Union. This, however, should not preclude normal respect for officials: a member of the Union must always and everywhere fulfill zealously his public obligations.

14. Every member has the right as well as the duty to participate within the legal framework in administration and legislation of the Union. He also has the right to submit in writing his views on any problem to lower as well as to higher authorities of the Union.

15. No member [of the Union] may be accused on grounds of suspicion alone; he may not be punished until sufficient evidence against him has been presented.

16. Every member has the right to organize or be a member of any society approved by the government, but he must inform the Union of everything that transpires in them and should subtly direct them to the aims of the Union. Members are prohibited from joining societies that are not approved by the government, because the Union, acting for the good of Russia, and for the aims of the government, does not wish to arouse the latter's suspicion.

17. No one may speak with outsiders about the work and affairs of the Union without specific permission; no one has the right, without special permission, to expound his thought in writing either against or in behalf of the Union; on the contrary, every member is obligated to refrain from revealing to non-members any disagreement within the Union; if there is a need he must defend the Union and its members with appropriate dignity.

18. If it should happen that some people, even those who have some virtue, and who have become fully acquainted with the aims and the per-

manent procedures of the Union, decide to leave it . . . the Union allows them to withdraw on condition that they keep secret everything they know.

Rules of Conduct for the United Slavs, 1820's

1. Do not rely on anyone except your close friends and your [weapons]. Your friends will help you and [your weapons] will protect you.
2. Do not aspire to have a slave if you do not wish to be a slave.
3. Everyone will hold you in high esteem if you will not seek pride and affluence.
4. Simplicity, sobriety, and humility are guardians of freedom and they will guarantee your peace of mind.
5. Do not aspire to have more than you have now and you will be independent.
6. Let the goddess of Enlightenment be your pennant and allow your kind disposition to prevail in your home.
7. Study sciences, arts, and crafts. Express your interest and enthusiasm for them and your friends will admire you.
8. Do not alienate your children through haughtiness, vanity or fanaticism. The latter are signs of the evil spirit of Beelzebub.
9. You must tolerate all religions and customs of all other nations but you are required to accept only the best [they have to offer].
10. You will try to eliminate all prejudices, and especially those pertaining to class distinctions, and the moment you acknowledge the existence of another human being, you yourself will become a human being.
11. You will become a virtuous person, and virtue in your entire life will give you the crown of peace for your conscience.
12. You may even use your [weapons], should it be required to defend innocent people from injustice, and you will not suffer as a result because your friends will protect you.
13. Using your wise judgment and your weapons, you will assist your friends and they, in turn, will assist you.
14. If you will remain loyal to these goals, the haughtiness of tyranny with its vanity will kneel before you.
15. If you are a [true] Slav, then you will build four fleets along the sea shores that surround you: the Black Sea, the White Sea, the Dalmatian Sea, and the Arctic Sea. In the center of your [Slavic] countries you will [symbolically] erect a statue honoring the goddess of Enlightenment and you will

set her up in the highest esteem. From her you will receive justice which you must respect, because without it you cannot reach the goal you have charted for yourself.

16. Trade and naval power will flourish in your Slavic ports, and justice will prevail in your inland cities.

17. Do you wish to have all of the above? If the answer is yes, then join your brothers who have been alienated from you because of the ignorance of your ancestors. You should set aside one-tenth of your annual income and you will dwell in the hearts of your friends. "*L'esprit de servitude paraît naturellement ampule comme celui de la liberté est nerveux et celui de la vraie grandeur est simple, voilà que vous devez observer*," that is, "The spirit of servility usually appears as arrogant, the spirit of freedom as good, and the spirit of true greatness as simple characteristics. You should remember this."

Project for a Constitution by Nikita M. Muraviev: Second Draft

Chapter I. The Russian People and Government

1. The Russian people are free and independent, and consequently are not, and cannot be, the property of any individual or family.

2. The source of *supreme power* is the people, who have the exclusive right to make *fundamental laws* for themselves.

Chapter II. Citizens

3. *Citizenship* is the right to participate, in accordance with the rules set forth in this Constitution, in the government—either *indirectly*, that is, through the election of officials or electors, or *directly*, that is, through being elected to any public office of the *legislative, executive or judicial branches*.

4. *Citizens* are those inhabitants of the Russian Empire who enjoy the abovementioned rights.

5. To be a citizen a person must meet the following qualifications:

- (a) Be twenty-one years old.
- (b) Have a known and permanent residence.
- (c) Possess a healthy mind.
- (d) Have personal freedom.
- (e) Pay public obligations on time.
- (f) Be unimpeached before the law.

6. An alien who was not born in Russia, but who has resided there continuously for seven years, has the right to petition *the court* for Russian citizenship, provided he has renounced under oath his association with the government whose subject he previously had been.

7. An alien who has not been granted Russian citizenship cannot perform any public or military duty in Russia, has no right to serve as a soldier in the Russian army, and cannot acquire lands.

8. Twenty years after the promulgation of this Constitution of the Russian Empire no person who has not become literate in the Russian language may be recognized as a citizen.

9. The right of citizenship can be lost *temporarily* through:

- (a) Court declaration of insanity.
- (b) Court-imposed prison sentence.
- (c) *Temporary deprivation* of rights by a court.
- (d) Declaration of bankruptcy.
- (e) Embezzlement of public funds.
- (f) Personal servitude.
- (g) Lack of permanent home, occupation, and means of livelihood.

[The right of citizenship may be lost] *forever* through:

- (a) Entering the service of another state.
- (b) Accepting service or obligation in a foreign country without the consent of his [the Russian] government.
- (c) Decision of a court for dishonorable punishment, which carries *the loss* of the citizenship rights.
- (d) Acceptance without the approval of the parliament, of a gift, pension, a sign of distinction, [or a] title, whether honorary or one which brings him gain, from a foreign government, sovereign, or people.

Chapter III. Status, Personal Rights, and Obligations of Russians

10. All Russians are equal before the law.

11. All native inhabitants of Russia, and Russian-born children of foreigners who are of age, are considered to be Russians until they announce that they do not wish to enjoy this privilege.

12. Everyone must fulfill his public obligations, obey the laws and authorities of the Fatherland, and come to the defense of the country whenever the law should require it.

13. Serfdom and slavery are abolished; any slave who reaches Russian soil becomes free. No distinction is recognized between noblemen and commoners, because this is contrary to our faith, according to which all men are *brothers*, all *well-born* by divine will, all *born for the good*, and all simply men: because all are weak and imperfect.

14. Everyone has the right to express freely his thoughts and feelings and communicate them through print to his countrymen. Books, similarly as all other acts, may be brought before the court by other citizens and must be tried before a *jury*.

15. All the existing merchant and craft *guilds* are abolished.
16. Everyone has the right to engage in any occupation he feels will benefit him most: *agriculture, cattle raising, hunting, fishing, handicrafts, industry, trade, etc.*
17. Every litigation involving property exceeding the value of one pound of pure silver (twenty-five silver *rubles*), goes before a jury court.
18. Every criminal case is tried by a jury.
19. Anyone suspected of a crime may be detained by lawfully constituted authorities in accordance with established procedure; however, within twenty-four hours (those responsible for his detention) must inform him in writing of the reason for his detention; otherwise he is set free immediately.
20. Unless he is arrested for a criminal offense, a prisoner is to be set free immediately if *bail* is posted for him.
21. No one may be punished except under terms of a law that had been properly introduced and duly promulgated *before the crime was committed*.
22. This Constitution will outline what officials, and under what circumstances, have the right to issue written orders *to detain a citizen, search his home, seize his papers, and open his letters*. Equally, it will outline the responsibility for committing such offenses.
23. The right to property, especially movable property, is sacred and inviolable.
24. The land belongs to landowners. The houses of villagers and their gardens, together with all of their agricultural implements and cattle belonging to them, are their property.
25. Economic and appanage peasants will be called *common owners*, as are *free agriculturists*, because the land on which they now live will be given to them in *common possession* and recognized as their property. The Appanage Administration is abolished.
26. Subsequent legislation will determine how these lands will be transferred from a *common to private ownership* of each of the villagers, and the rules that will determine the division of common land among them.
27. Villagers living on leased estates are also *freed*, but the land remains in the possession of the lessees for the duration of the lease.
28. *Military colonies* are abolished forthwith. Members of settled battalions and squadrons, and their families, join the class of *common owners*.
29. The division of men into fourteen classes is terminated. Civil ranks that were borrowed from the Germans, and which differ very little among themselves, are abolished in conformity with the ancient customs of the Russian people. Such titles and classes as freeholders, merchants, nobles, and *eminent citizens* are replaced by *citizen* or Russian.

30. The clergy will continue to receive their salaries. They are, however, freed from quartering and carting duties.
31. Nomadic tribes do not enjoy the rights of citizens. They have, however, the right to take part in the election of a *volost elderman*.
32. Citizens have the right to organize different societies and associations without requesting permission or authorization from anyone, provided their actions are not illegal.
33. Each of such societies has the right to make its own bylaws, provided the latter are not contrary to this Constitution or to public laws.
34. No foreign-based society can have a subordinate branch or a subsidiary in Russia.
35. No violation of the law may be excused by reference to orders from superiors. *The violator* of the law is punished first, then whoever authorized the illegal act.
36. Citizens have the right to address their complaints or petitions to the National Assembly, the Emperor, and the governing bodies of the states [of the Empire].
37. Underground dungeons and casements, and in general all the so-called state prisons, are abolished. No one may be imprisoned except in public prisons, designated for this purpose.
38. *Accused* should not be imprisoned in the same place together with *convicts*, nor should those imprisoned for debts or minor offenses be put together with criminals and villains.
39. Citizens should elect prison officials from among people of good conscience, who would be accountable for every illegal and inhuman act against prisoners.
40. The present police officials are released from duty and are to be replaced by officials elected by the inhabitants.
41. Any citizen who would violate free election of *national representatives*, by violence or bribery, will be brought before the court.
42. No one may be prevented from the exercise of his religion according to his conscience and feelings, as long as he does not violate the laws of nature and morality.

Chapter IV. On Russia

43. For legislative and executive purposes Russia is divided into thirteen states, two regions, and 569 districts or parishes. . . .

<i>State</i>	<i>Capital</i>
I. State of Bothnia	Helsingfors
II. State of Volkhov	City of St. Peter
III. Baltic State	Riga
IV. Western State	Vilno
V. State of the Dnieper [River]	Smolensk
VI. Black Sea State	Kiev
VII. Caucasian State	Tiflis
VIII. Ukrainian State	Kharkov
IX. Trans-Volga State	Iaroslavl
X. State of the Kama [River]	Kazan
XI. State of the Lower Steppe	Saratov
XII. State of the Ob [River]	Tobolsk
XIII. State of the Lena [River]	Irkutsk
Moscow Region	Moscow
Don Region	Cherkassk. . .

Chapter VI. National Assembly

59. *The National Assembly*, consisting of the *Supreme Duma* and the *Chamber of People's Representatives*, is invested with all legislative power.

Chapter VII. The Chamber of Representatives, Number, and Election of Representatives

60. The Chamber of Representatives consists of members elected for two years by the citizens of the States.

61. At the time of his election a representative must reside in the state that elects him.

62. Until they have fulfilled them, individuals who have public works contracts cannot serve as representatives. . . .

Chapter VIII. The Supreme Duma

73. The Supreme Duma consists of three citizens from every state, two from the Moscow Region, and one from the Don Region, a total of forty-two members. Members of the Supreme Duma are elected by the governing institutions of the states and regions, that is, by *State Dumas* and the *Chambers of Electors* at joint sessions.

74. Immediately upon arrival in the capital, members of the Supreme Duma are divided into three equal groups. Members of the first group will terminate their position in the Duma in two years; members of the second group after four years; and members of the third group after six years. Thus, one-third of the membership of the Duma will be elected every two years. . . .

75. Criteria indispensable for membership in the Supreme Duma are: thirty years of age; nine years of Russian citizenship for a [naturalized] foreigner; residence in the state that elects him; immovable property worth 1500 pounds of pure silver, or movable property worth 3000 pounds of pure silver. . . .

77. Within the competence of the Supreme Duma belongs the impeachment of ministers, supreme court justices, and all other officials of the Empire who have been accused by people's representatives. No one can be sentenced except by the judgment of two-thirds of the members present. The Duma has no authority to impose any other sentence except to declare that *the accused is guilty and to deprive him of the seat and position he occupies*. . . .

Jointly with the Emperor, the Duma participates in the conclusion of peace, in the appointment of judges to superior courts, commanders-in-chief of land and naval forces, corps commanders, chiefs of squadrons, and chief keeper of the order. Consent by two-thirds of the members of the Duma are required for this.

Chapter IX. Power and Prerogatives of the National Assembly, and the Law-making Process

78. The National Assembly meets at least once a year. . . .

79. Each Chamber decides on the rights and credentials of its members

80. Each Chamber has the right to censure its members for unbecoming conduct or in case of crime, *but never for expressing an opinion*; it may expel a member by a *decision* of two-thirds of the members.

81. The sessions of both Chambers are public. At the Emperor's request, however, both Chambers may deliberate behind closed doors, having removed [from the premises] all unauthorized persons. . . . Women and minors under 17 years of age are not admitted to the sessions of either Chamber.

82. Each Chamber keeps minutes of its daily proceedings and publishes them periodically, except those that they decide to keep secret. . . .

83. Members of the Supreme Duma and representatives are remunerated from the State Treasury for each day of their service. . . .

84. In no instance, except *treason*, or transgressions or violations of public order, may members of the National Assembly be arrested during the session, or during their trip to the capital, or during their return home. Never should they be threatened for what they have said in their Chambers, and no one

has the right to demand that they explain their speeches. A member accused of transgression is suspended by his Chamber until a court verdict.

85. No official in public service may be a member of either Chamber as long as he retains his official position.

86. No member of the Duma or a Representative may be appointed to any government office during the entire term for which he has been elected.

89. To attain force of law, each bill passed by the Duma and the Chamber of Representatives must be submitted to the Emperor. If the Emperor approves the bill, he signs it; if he disapproves, he sends it back with his comments to the Chambers where it was initiated; the Chamber enters into its minutes all of the Emperor's comments against the bill and reopens debate on it. If, after this second debate on a bill, two-thirds of the members favor it, then the bill goes with all of the Emperor's comments to the other Chamber where it is debated anew, and if a majority approves it, then the bill becomes law.

92. The National Assembly has the power to make and annual laws dealing with the judiciary and the executive; that is:

- (a) Issue a civil, criminal, commercial, and military code for Russia.
- (b) Declare through a law, in case of invasion or rebellion, that a given region is on a war footing and under *martial law*.
- (c) Make public the law of *amnesty* . . .
- (d) Declare war.
- (e) [Supervise] taxes, loans, auditing of expenditures, pensions, grants, all revenues and expenditures; in short, [have control over] all financial matters. But it cannot approve a budget for more than two years.
- (f) [Concern itself with] all governmental measures pertaining to industry, national wealth, postal service, maintenance of old and creation of new land and water ways, and establishment of banks.
- (g) Protect sciences and useful arts, and grant authors and inventors exclusive right to derive benefits from their works and inventions for a specific number of years. . . .
- (h) Receive reports from ministers in case of physical or mental illness of the Emperor, and on his death or abdication declare a regency or proclaim the heir Emperor.
- (i) Elect governors of states.

93. The National Assembly has no power to make new *constitutional laws* or annul the existing ones; it has no right to issue measures on any matter not listed as belonging within its competence.

94. The *National Assembly*, composed of men elected by the Russian people and representing them, assumes the character of their majesty. . . .

98. The National Assembly does not have authority to establish or to

prohibit any denomination or sect. Faith, conscience, and views of citizens, so long as they do not violate any law, are not within the competence of the National Assembly. . . . The National Assembly has no authority to infringe freedom of speech or press. . . .

100. . . . Powers which this Constitution does not delegate to any of the herein designated assemblies or officials belong to the entire Russian people.

Chapter X. The Supreme Executive Power

101. The Emperor is the Supreme official of the Russian government. His rights and privileges are as follows:

- (a) His power is hereditary in direct line from father to son, but from the father-in-law it passes to the son-in-law.
- (b) In his person he concentrates the entire executive power.
- (c) He has the right to halt the action of the legislative branch and to compel it to review the law.
- (d) He is commander-in-chief of land and naval forces.
- (e) He is the supreme chief of any branch of militia on active duty for the Empire.
- (f) He may demand a written statement from chief officials of any executive department on any matter related to their duties.
- (g) He negotiates and concludes peace treaties with foreign states with the advice and consent of two-thirds of the voting members of the Supreme Duma. A treaty concluded in this manner becomes a supreme law.
- (h) He appoints ambassadors, ministers, and consuls, and represents Russia in all of her relations with foreign states. He appoints all officials not listed in this Constitution.
- (i) He may not include in treaties any article that would violate rights and property of citizens within the Fatherland. Equally, without the consent of the National Assembly he may not include any provision to attack a country or to relinquish any territory belonging to Russia.
- (j) He appoints judges to Supreme Court vacancies with the advice and consent of the Supreme Duma. . . .
- (k) During the session of both Chambers, he must present before the National Assembly a report on the state of Russia, and recommend to it adoption of measures which in his view are either indispensable or desirable.
- (l) He has the right to call both Chambers into session, and [to convene] the Supreme Duma in case of treaty negotiations or impeachment.

- (m) He may not use military forces inside Russia, in case of rebellion, without submitting a request concerning it to the National Assembly, which must satisfy itself through an immediate inquiry of the need for a state of siege. . . .
- (n) He receives ambassadors and plenipotentiaries of foreign governments.
- (o) He supervises the strict execution of public laws.
- (p) He grants titles to all officials of the Empire.
- (q) He is entitled His Imperial Majesty; no other title is permitted. . . .
- (r) At his assumption of the reign, the Emperor takes the following oath in the National Assembly:

I solemnly swear that I will faithfully execute the duties of Russian Emperor, and with all my might shall preserve and defend this Constitution of Russia.

- (s) Members of the Imperial family are not distinguished from other individuals; they are subject to the same rules and the same acts of the government as all other [citizens], and enjoy no special rights or privileges. . . .

105. The ruler of the Empire cannot be absent from it without creating serious difficulties. . . .

106. The Emperor's departure from Russia is considered tantamount to his abandoning it and abdicating his imperial title; in such cases the National Assembly immediately proclaims the heir Emperor.

Excerpts from Pestel's Testimony

Until the age of twelve I was brought up in the home of my parents. In 1805, with my brother who is now Colonel in the Regiment of the Cavalier Guard, I went to Hamburg, and from there to Dresden, from where I returned in 1809 to my parents' home. During our absence from the fatherland, our education was guided by a certain Seidel, who, upon entering Russian service, was on the staff of General [Nicholas] Miloradovich in 1820. In 1810 I was assigned to the Corps of Pages, from which I graduated in 1811 as a lieutenant of the Lithuanian Life Guard [Regiment], which now is called the Moscow Life Guard Regiment. Until I began preparing for entrance to the Corps of Pages, I had not the slightest conception of political sciences, whose under-

standing was required for admission to the upper class. I studied them then under Professor and Academician [Karl F.] Hermann [1767-1838], who at that time taught these sciences in the Corps of Pages.

After I left the Corps of Pages, military and political sciences interested me most, but I was fascinated primarily by political and then by military [matters].

During the winter of 1816-1817 I attended a course in political science [offered] by Professor and Academician Hermann in his quarters on Vasilevskii Island. I learned from him then very little that was new, because in his lectures he presented almost the same material that I already had heard from him at the Corps of Pages. The format of his lectures was different, but the subject matter was the same.

I cannot name any single individual who was responsible for imbuing me with free thinking and liberal ideas. Nor can I state definitely the time when these began to emerge, because this did not happen suddenly but little by little and in the beginning without making any great impression on me. I have the honor now to tell the [Investigating] Committee honestly and with complete frankness [how it all occurred]. After I received the fundamentals of political science I became infatuated. I had a burning desire and with all my heart I wished to do good. I saw that prosperity and disaster of kingdoms and peoples depends to a great extent on governments, and this belief directed me increasingly to those studies that discuss these problems and show the way to them. But in the beginning I was preoccupied with these studies as well as with the reading of political works in a good natured manner and without any free-thinking, and with but just one aim: to be sometimes at an appropriate time and place, a useful servant of the sovereign and of the fatherland.

This activity later induced me to think whether in the structure of the Russian government the rules of political science were observed or not. I did not question yet the supreme power, but thought only of ministers, of local government, of individual officials, and similar problems. I then discovered that there were many contradictions within the rules of political science, as I understood them, and I began to study various problems in depth; namely, what kind of decrees could change, supplement, or improve them. I also directed my thoughts and attention to the condition of the people, and serfdom affected me always very strongly, similarly as did the privileges enjoyed by the aristocracy. I considered the latter as a kind of wall between the monarch and the people—a wall which, for the sake of its own advantages, tried to hide from the monarch the true condition of the people. With time I began to develop thoughts on diverse topics and doctrines: namely, privileges of the annexed provinces; rumors about military colonies, the decline of trade, in-

dustry and general prosperity; lack of justice, and corruption of the courts and other departments; the burden of military service for soldiers; and many similar topics which, in my judgment, could contribute to individual dissatisfaction; and when I put these [problems] together I saw the whole picture of national poverty. Then a grumbling against the government began to emerge within me.

I believe that the turning point in my political views, understanding, and thinking, was the restoration of the House of Bourbon on the French throne. As I reflected on this development I began to realize that a majority of the basic propositions introduced by the revolution were not only retained at the restoration but were even acknowledged as useful; this in spite of the fact that everybody, including myself, had always been opposed to revolution. This led me to conclude that a revolution is really not as bad as they say, and that it can even be quite valuable. This thought led me, in turn, to another proposition; namely, that those states that did not have any revolution were deprived of similar privileges and institutions. These thoughts began then to merge with those noted earlier, and simultaneously they gave birth to constitutional and revolutionary thoughts. The constitutional [thoughts] were fully monarchial, while the revolutionary [thoughts] were rather weak and unclear. Slowly the former became fixed and clear, while the latter became strong. The reading of political books strengthened and developed within me all those thoughts, views, and understanding. The horrible consequences that occurred in France during the revolution forced me to seek means to prevent their occurrence [in Russia], and this led me to develop the idea of a provisional government as a necessary means to prevent civil war.

I moved from monarchial-constitutional to republican thinking as a result of the following facts and reflections: The work of Destut de Tracy [1754-1836], in French, exerted a powerful influence on me. He shows that every government wherein one person is the head of state, especially if it is hereditary, will inevitably end in despotism. All newspapers and political works so strongly applauded the growth of prosperity in the United States of America, attributing it to the governmental structure, that it appeared to me as a clear indication that the republican form of government was superior [to all other forms].

[M. I.] Novikov [1777-1822] spoke to me about his republican constitution for Russia, but at the time I still favored monarchy; subsequently I began to recall his views and agreed with them. I recalled the glorious time of Greece when it was a republic and its pitiful condition thereafter. I compared the mighty glory of Republican Rome with its lamentable fate under the rule of the emperors. The history of Great Novgorod likewise strengthened in me republican ideas. I discovered that in France and England, constitutions are

only covers that in no way prevent English ministers of French kings from doing what they want. Because of this I preferred autocracy to such constitutions, for I thought that under the autocratic form of government the unlimited power [of the ruler] is open for everyone to see. In constitutional monarchies, on the other hand, there also exists limitless power, but it acts slowly, and as a result cannot quickly correct a mistake. As for the two chambers, they exist only as mere covers.

It seemed to me that the main trend of our times was the struggle between popular masses and all kinds of aristocracies, whether based on wealth or on hereditary rights. I thought that these aristocracies would ultimately emerge stronger than any monarch, as was true in England, that they represented the main obstacle to the prosperity of the state, and that they could be removed only by a republican form of government. Developments in Naples, Spain, and Portugal then exerted a profound influence on me. I found in them the irrefutable proof of the instability of monarchial constitutions and sufficient causes for distrusting the sincerity of the monarchs who accepted them. The latter considerations greatly strengthened my republican and revolutionary thinking.

From all that has been said, the Committee will note that I was influenced in developing my views by reading of books, by thinking of various developments, and also by exchanging my ideas with those of other members of the Society. All this led me to become a convinced republican, and I could not visualize any greater prosperity or higher aspiration for Russia than a republican form of government. When I discussed this problem with other members of the Society who asked my thoughts, visualizing the whole picture of happiness which Russia, in our judgment, would then enjoy, we all were excited to the point of ecstasy, and I and the other members were willing not only to agree to try everything but to do everything possible to strengthen and realize our system. We were very cautious to remove or to prevent every form of political chaos, disorder, or civil war, which I always considered to be an implacable enemy.

Having openly and candidly presented the development of my liberal and free-thinking ideas, it is appropriate now to add that during the entire year 1825 my ideas became weak and I began to view things somewhat differently. It was, however, too late to turn back. I could not write the *Russkaia Pravda* [Russian Justice] as easily as before. They demanded that I finish it. I tried, but the work produced no results and I did not write anything during the entire year, but only corrected here and there what had already been written before. I was very frightened of civil war and internal chaos, and this problem cooled me off as it did also our aim. In our conversations I still would get excited, but only for a short time; everything was different than it formerly

was. Finally, the fear that our Society had been discovered by the government brought me back into the movement. I did nothing serious, however, and remained with the regiment in complete inactivity until my arrest [on December 25, 1825]. . . .

In 1816 or 1817—I do not recall exactly where—during a discussion about the [Welfare] Society with me and Nikita Muraviev, [M. S.] Lunin spoke of executing a regicide on the road to Tsarkoe Selo, to be carried out by a group of masked members when the time should arrive to start the action. Whether Lunin or Nikita Muraviev informed anyone else about this I truly do not know. During meetings of the Society itself, Lunin's suggestion was never mentioned while I was present. I paid no attention to this suggestion at the moment because I thought that the time to begin a revolution was quite distant, and because I believed that it was first essential to prepare a constitution, and then write various decrees and regulations so that simultaneously with the outbreak of the revolution the new order could be fully introduced. I did not yet entertain any idea of a provisional government. On account of my beliefs, Lunin facetiously suggested that I planned to write an encyclopedia first and then start a revolution.

I was preoccupied with the elaboration of my constitution, more than with the realization of a revolution itself, though I frequently gave thoughts to that problem as well.

In conclusion I would like to state before the Committee that all the inadequacies that the Committee has noticed or may notice [in my testimony] are exclusively my own. They stem either from my perplexity or from lack of memory. They are not by-products of dishonesty, because with all my fortitude I have always tried to present all the facts very frankly and am now undeniably prepared to reveal everything that pertains to me. The proof that I always did everything candidly has never been more strongly demonstrated than now.

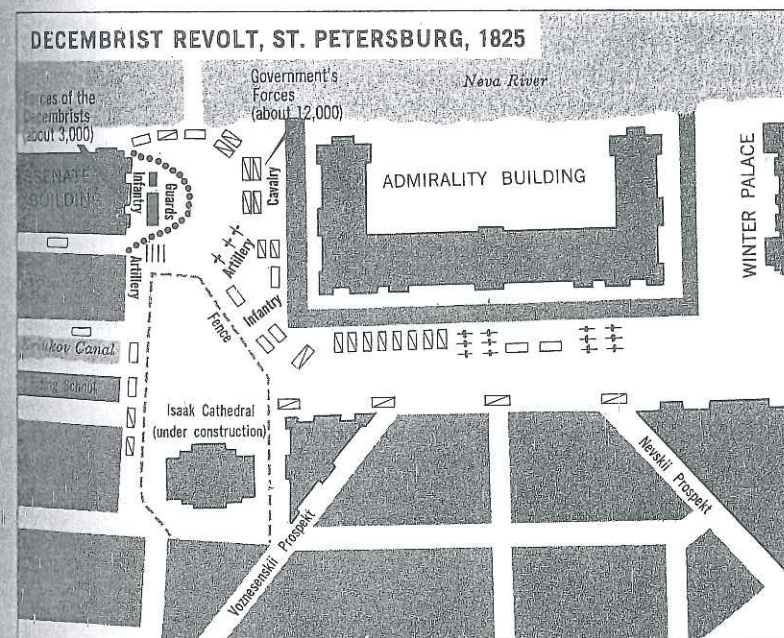
A Manifesto of Prince Trubetskoi

Lord save Thy people and give [them] Thy blessing.

A Manifesto of the Senate makes hereby known that:

1. The old government has been overthrown.
2. A Provisional Government has assumed authority, pending elections and formation of a new government.

From *Vosstanie dekabristov. Materialy* (The Decembrist Uprising. Sources) (Moscow-Leningrad: Gosizdat, 1925), vol. 1, pp. 107–108. Translation mine. Words in brackets are mine.



3. Freedom of the press [is hereby established] and accordingly censorship is abolished.
4. Freedom of religious worship is extended to all religious faiths.
5. Slavery is [hereby] abolished.
6. Equality before the law of all social strata [is hereby established], and accordingly military courts and all kinds of judicial commissions whose decisions are brought before civil courts are hereby abolished.
7. Every citizen has the right to make such a living as he wants, and therefore a nobleman, a merchant, city inhabitant, and a peasant have the right to serve in the army, civil service, clergy, and engage in wholesale or retail trade upon payment of established sales taxes. [Everyone] has the right to acquire property such as land and homes in cities as well as villages. [Everyone] has the right to enter into relations with another and bring him [in case of a violation] before the court of justice.
8. Collection of soul taxes is hereby discontinued.
9. Monopolies on salt and hard liquor are hereby abolished, and accordingly free distilling and salt extraction is established with a tax on the amount of salt and of vodka produced.
10. Recruiting systems and military colonies are hereby abolished.
11. Reduction of the military service for lower social ranks is hereby es-

tablished. The exact amount of military service will be set following the equalization of military obligation among all social strata.

12. Everyone without exception who has served fifteen years will be released from the military service.

13. *Volost*, *uezd*, *gubernia* and *oblast* administrations are to replace all officials appointed by previous administration.

14. Open courts are hereby established.

15. Introduction of jurors in criminal and civil courts is hereby established.

A Provisional Government of two or three persons is established. To this government all branches of the central government—all Ministries, the Council, the Committee of Ministers, Army, and Fleet—are to be subordinated; that is, the entire executive but not the judicial or the legislative branches. The judicial branch will have its own ministry, subject to the Provisional Government, but cases not decided by lower courts will be handled by civil and criminal departments of the Senate which will pass final judgments. Members of these departments, until the new elected government shall take control, will be the same as they are now.

The Provisional Government is charged with solution of the following problems:

1. Equalization of the rights of all layers of society.
2. Organization of local *volost*, *uezd*, *gubernia* and *oblast* administrations.
3. Organization of domestic militia.
4. Organization of the judicial branch of the government with jurors.
5. Equalization of recruiting obligations among all social strata.
6. Abolition of the permanent army.
7. Devising of a system of election for the legislative branch, whose members will decide on the composition of the government and the nature of the fundamental law.

*A. S. Pushkin's Poem, "To Siberia,"
Honoring the Decembrists, 1827*

Deep in the Siberian mines,
Keep your patience proud;
Your bitter toil shall not be lost,
Your noble thought will remain unbowed.

Hope, the true companion of human fate,
In your gloomy dungeon's cells,
Will awaken your courage and joy,
And the welcome day will come.

Love and friendship will then reach you,
Through the gloomy dungeon bars;
The same way my free voice is now reaching you,
In your current prison cells.

Then the heavy chains will fall,
The dungeons will crumble at a word;
And freedom will greet you at the gate,
And brothers will give you back the sword.

*A. I. Odoevskii's Response to
A. S. Pushkin's Poem, 1827*

The ardent sounds of your prophetic words
Have reached our ears;
Our hands reached out for swords,
But were stopped by heavy chains.

You, bard, be assured that we
Are proud of our fate;
And behind the prison gate
Continue to defy the tsars as before.

Our bitter toil will not be lost!
From a spark a fame will grow,
And our well-informed people
Will gather under the sacred banner.

Then we will forge swords from our chains,
Will rekindle the flame of freedom,
Will surprise and challenge the tsars,
And all nations will sigh with joy!