A SOURCE BOOK FOR RUSSIAN HISTORY
FROM EARLY TIMES TO 1917

VOLUME 2
Peter the Great to Nicholas I

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3. The rector shall have supervision over university courses and over the performance of instructors. . . . The deans, as chairmen of the faculties, are the rector’s closest assistants, sharing with him direct supervision over the successful conduct, the appropriate progress, and particularly over the spirit and direction of instruction.

4. Before the beginning of his lectures, every professor must submit to his dean a detailed syllabus of his subject, explaining the scope, sequence, and method of instruction, and giving complete information about the works to be used as texts, either in full or in part. . . . The syllabus thus prepared must be reviewed and confirmed at the faculty meeting, with all members participating, and consequently must serve as the chief basis for the professor’s lectures. . . .

7. No lectures may be delivered prior to the faculty’s ratification of the syllabus and the rector’s approval. The only exceptions to this rule are theological and philosophical subjects (logic and experimental psychology), whose syllabi are approved by the Ministry of Public Education in consultation with the authorities of the Orthodox church. . . .

11. In reviewing each syllabus, the following must be kept constantly in mind: (a) that the subject must be presented fully, in accordance with the requirements of university study; (b) that the general outlines as well as the specific points of the syllabus must strictly conform to a scholarly and moral purpose; (c) that the contents of the syllabus should not cover anything at variance with the doctrine of the Orthodox church or with our system of government and the spirit of our national institutions; and (d) that, on the contrary, reverence for everything holy, devotion to the sovereign, and love of the fatherland should be given clear and positive expression wherever reasonably applicable.

12. The dean shall see to the proper fulfillment of the syllabi by the professors of his faculty, attending their lectures for this purpose as often as possible.

13. If he notices that a professor permits himself to deviate somewhat, no matter how harmlessly, from the curriculum, or injects into his lectures remarks having no direct connection with the subject and therefore useless to the students, the dean shall immediately notify the rector of this fact.

14. If the rector and dean establish that this infraction of the predetermined order was without any reprehensible intention, they shall make the proper admonition to the professor in private and shall intensify their joint surveillance over his lectures.

15. If, contrary to expectation, the professor should not heed this private admonition, or if he should permit himself harmful utterances to the students during his lectures, the rector and dean must report this without delay to the district superintendent and the latter must, upon proper verification of the soundness of their information and the immediate adoption of the requisite measures to halt the evil, report the matter to the minister of public education.

16. The dean has the right at any time to demand of the professor the manuscripts of his lectures, or to collect from the students their lecture notes, compiled from the professor’s words, for closer comparison of the actual teaching with the syllabus.

XIV:40. THE WESTERNIZERS: GRANOVSKII’S WRITINGS OF CA. 1840-1855

Timofei Nikolaevich Granovskii (1813-55), professor of European history at the University of Moscow from 1839 to 1855, was extremely influential in fostering a wide understanding of Western culture among his students. The first selection below, intended as part of the introduction to his textbook, was found among his notes after his death and was first published in the third edition of his works, in 1892.


[From Granovskii’s textbook on universal history:]

Universal history presupposes the concept of the unity of mankind, which did not and could not exist in a pagan world—which presented the spectacle of people divided by countless, mutually hostile religions. Only Christianity, which proclaimed that all men are the children of one Father and united them into a single spiritual family, has brought
into man's life those ideas that ultimately made possible the development of our discipline.

Above all the laws of historical development discovered by science, there is one supreme law, the moral law, the fulfillment of which constitutes humanity's ultimate purpose on earth. The highest benefit of history, therefore, is that it imparts to us a rational conviction of the inevitable triumph of good over evil.

... Mankind, which is to be merged by Christianity into one spiritual family, already constitutes a natural family, united by its common forefather Adam. If we admit this kinship as existing among all the inhabitants of the earth, we must also necessarily accept its logical corollary that all races of men possess equal capacity for education and perfectibility.

[From Granovskii's correspondence: a letter to N. V. Stankevich, February 1840:]

I know very well the weaknesses of the Kireevskiis. Their convictions differ from mine; I even consider these convictions harmful and fight against them within my own sphere of activity. As a teacher, I shall always attack like views. As a writer (if I should write), I will do the same. But as a private individual I enjoy visiting them. Whatever one might say, they are educated people: they think (even if their ideas are wry); they have profound interests and high integrity.

[From a letter to A. I. Herzen, 1854:]

Why did you cast a stone at Peter [the Great], who by no means deserved your accusations, since your facts are incorrect? The more we live, the more colossal does Peter's image loom before us. To you, who have been cut off from Russia and have lost touch with it, he cannot be as near and as comprehensible. Seeing the faults of the West, you lean toward the Slavs and are prepared to extend your hand to them. But if you lived here for awhile, you would speak differently. One must have much faith and love to preserve any hope for the future of even the strongest and sturdiest of the Slavic peoples. Our soldiers and sailors are dying gloriously in the Crimea. But no one here knows how to live.

[From a letter to the historian K. D. Kavelin, January 1855:]

I have never seen such beauty. ... All evening I looked at this portrait of the man [Peter the Great] who gave us the right to history, who was perhaps the only one to proclaim our historic mission. All evening my mind was filled with thoughts of him. He was the sole topic of our conversation with Pogodin and Samarin. It will be a shame and a sin, Kavelin, if you do not contribute something toward a history of Petrine institutions. It seems to me that you alone among us can accomplish such a work with honor. Peter has waited a hundred and thirty years for someone who can truly appreciate him.

[From a letter to Kavelin, October 2, 1855:]

Not only would Peter the Great be useful now, but even his stick, which taught the Russian fool some sense. There is misfortune on all sides. Things are bad within and without, yet neither society nor literature reacts to the situation with a single sensible word. ... In general, the public is more afraid of publicity than of the Third Section. ... Samarin, having joined the militia, argues that the present events are important because after the war is over officers who served with the militia will be permitted to wear beards. Hence the blood of the defenders of Sevastopol' was not spilled in vain, having helped to establish the countenance of the Aksakovs, Samarins, and their ilk. These men are as repugnant to me as graves. They exude the odor of putrefaction. Not a single enlightened idea, not a single noble view. Their opposition is sterile, because it is based solely on the negation of everything that has been accomplished in our country during the past century and a half. I am delighted that they have started a journal. ... I am delighted because this philosophy should be given ultimate expression; it should emerge into the open in all its glory. They will perforce have to divest themselves of all the liberal adornments with which they have succeeded in deceiving such children as you. It will be necessary to say the last word of the system. And this last word is Orthodox patriarchy, which is incompatible with any form of forward movement.
XIV:41. THE SLAVOPHILES: KIREEVSII IN 1852

Trained at German universities, where he studied under Hegel, among others, Ivan Vasilievich Kireevskii (1806-56) is sometimes referred to as the father of the Slavophile movement. His famous article of 1852 in the Slavophile journal Moskovskii sbornik, “The Character of European Education and Its Relation to Russian Education,” from which this excerpt is taken, was said by Chernyshevskii to be the best single summary of Slavophile thought. It must be noted, however, that Kireevskii came to this position very late, having been strongly pro-Westerner during the 1830s and early 1840s.


These three elements of the West—the Roman church, ancient Roman civilization, and state organization born of violent conquest—were entirely unknown to ancient Russia.

... Christianity penetrated the minds of Western peoples only through the teaching of the Roman church. In Russia it was kindled in the tapers of the whole Orthodox church. Theology in the West assumed the character of rational abstractness; in the Orthodox world it retained an inner wholeness of spirit. ... There, the church became merged with the state, combining the spiritual power with the temporal power, and fusing church and secular values into a single system of mixed character. In Russia, the church remained apart from secular purposes and organizations. In the West, there were universities for scholasticism and law; in ancient Russia—monasteries for prayer, concentrating within themselves all higher knowledge. There, the rational and scholastic study of higher truths; here, the striving toward an active and complete understanding of them. There, the mutual growth of pagan and Christian civilization; here, a perpetual effort to purify truth. There, a state organization based on violent conquest; here, one based on the natural development of the people's way of life, permeated with the unity of a fundamental belief. There, a hostile division of classes; in ancient Russia, their harmonious association in all their natural variety. There, the artificial bond between knights' castles and their properties led to the formation of separate states; here, the common consent of the whole country expressed spiritually its indivisible unity. There, ownership of land was the prime basis of civil relationships; here, property was only an accidental expression of personal relationships. There, a formally logical system; here, one arising from custom. There, a propensity in the law toward the appearance of justice; here, a preference for the essence of justice. There, jurisprudence strives for a logical code; here, instead of formal connections, it seeks the intrinsic bond between legal principles and the principles of faith and custom. There, laws stem artificially from prevailing opinion; here, they are born naturally from life itself. There, improvements were always accomplished by forcible changes; here, by harmonious natural growth. There, the tumult of partisan spirit; here, the stability of fundamental convictions. There, the whims of fashion; here, the steadfastness of a way of life. There, the precariousness of each individual regulating himself; here, the firmness of family and social bonds. There, the foppery of luxury and the artificiality of life; here, the simplicity of basic needs and the courage of moral fortitude. ... In short, there, the splitting of the spirit, the splitting of thought, the splitting of knowledge, the splitting of the state, the splitting of classes, the splitting of society, the splitting of family rights and duties, the splitting of morals and emotions, the splitting of the totality and of all the separate forms of human existence, both social and individual: in Russia, on the contrary, the primary aspiration toward the oneness of existence, both internal and external, social and individual, intellectual and worldly, artificial and moral. Therefore, if what we have said above is correct, then splitting and wholeness, rationality and wisdom will be, respectively, the ultimate expression of Western European and ancient Russian civilization. ... The root of Russia's civilization still lives in her people and, most important of all, it lives in her Holy Orthodox church. Hence, it is only on this foundation, and on no other, that must be erected the firm edifice of
Russian education, which has until now been
built out of mixed and largely foreign materials
and must therefore be rebuilt with pure ma-
terials of our own.

XIV:42. THE SLAVOPHILES: KONSTANTIN AKSAKOV IN THE 1850s

Known in Moscow as "the Slavophile Belinskii," Konstantin Sergeevich Aksakov (1817-60) was
an ebullient and vigorous publicist with a deep interest in history. These excerpts suggest some
of his views on the character and fate of what he saw as two worlds—the western European and
the Slavic-Russian.

Reference: Pochne sobraniye sochinienii K. S. Aksakova, ed. I. S. Aksakov, 2 vols. (Moscow,
1861-71), 1:7-9, 13, 19, 49, 52, 53, 150, 154, 251, 291-92, 296-97, 300, 301; K. S. Aksakov, Zamechaniiia na novoe administrativnoe ustroistvo krest'ian v Rossii (Leipzig, 1861), pp. 5, 10,
52. For a recent translation of other excerpts giving Aksakov's views on Russian history see
Raff, Russian Intellectual History, pp. 231-51.

[From his manuscript "Concerning the
Fundamental Principles of Russian History," probably written about 1850:]

Russia is a completely original [samo-
byrnat] country, entirely unlike European
states and nations.

The history of our native land is so original
that it was different from its very first
moments. It was there, in its very origins, that
the Russian way diverged from the western
European, until the moment when, strangely
and forcibly, they were brought together,
when Russia took a terrible detour, abandoned
its own way and joined the Western.

All European states are formed by con-
quiest. Their fundamental principle is enmity.
Government appeared there as a hostile and
armed power and established itself by force
over subdued peoples. One people, or more
accurately a single armed band, would con-
quer a people and form a state whose funda-
mental principle was enmity, which has lasted
throughout their history.

The Russian state, on the contrary, was
founded, not by conquest, but by a voluntary
invitation to govern. Hence, its basis is not
hatred but peace and harmony. Our govern-
ment came as a desirable, not as a hostile,
authority, as a defender, and was established
with the consent of the people.

And so, the Western state rests upon a
foundation of coercion, slavery, and hostility.
The Russian state is founded on free will,
liberty, and peace. These principles represent
an important and decisive difference between
Russia and western Europe and determine the
history of each.

Their paths are entirely different, so dif-
fferent that they can never converge, and the
peoples following them can never agree in
their attitudes. The West, turning from slavery
to rebellion, mistakes rebellion for freedom,
boasts of it, and sees slavery in Russia. Russia,
on the other hand, has always kept the govern-
ment she has herself acknowledged, has main-
tained it voluntarily and freely, and therefore
regards the rebel merely as the reverse side of
the slave.

And these paths diverged still further when
a question of utmost importance to mankind
was added—the question of faith. Bliss de-
scended on Russia. She adopted the Orthodox
faith. The West took the road of Catholicism.

The land [zemlia] or people [narod] tilled
the soil and engaged in its various occupations
and commerce. It supported the state with
money and, in case of need, it rallied to the
banners. It constituted a vast entity, which
needed the state to enable it to live its own
life and to preserve serenely and without in-
terference its religion and its traditional way
of life. The tsar [in the Muscovite period],
the first champion and protector of the land,
supported the communal principle, and the
people governed itself, under the supreme
authority of the sovereign. The village com-
munal elected their own elders, sworn assis-
tants, and other officials. From time to time
the tsar summoned the land for council and
made it a participant in political affairs.

The Russian people . . . is a Christian
people in the true sense of the word, always
aware of its sinfulness. The history of the
Russian people is unique in the world. It is
the history of a people that is Christian, not only in profession, but also in its life—at any rate, in the aspirations of its life.

[From his manuscript "Concerning Volume I of the History of Russia, by Solov'ev," written ca. 1851:]

The Petersburg Period. The state carried out a revolution, broke its alliance with the land, and subjected it to the state, instituting a new order. It hastened to build a new capital, its own, having nothing in common with Russia and no Russian memories. Betraying the Russian land, the people, the state also betrayed its national character [narodnost'] and organized itself according to the example of the West, where statism [gosudarsvennost'] had developed to its utmost and introduced imitativeness to foreign lands, to western Europe. Everything Russian was subjected to persecution. State officials and service people went over to the side of the state. But the people, strictly speaking the common people, retained its former principles... Russia was divided in two, with two capitals. On the one hand, there was the state with its foreign capital Saint Petersburg; on the other, the land, the people, with its Russian capital, Moscow.

... The West is the victim of formal law. Formal law demands only obedience to its rules and fulfillment of its dictates, without caring or appealing to man's conscience, and thus it relieves man of the need for an inner moral voice. It is obvious that the prevalence of formal law in society weakens man's moral fiber, teaching him to act without inner moral reasons, and in such a way as to be right only before the (formal) law. But the purpose of mankind is to realize the moral law on earth.

Wherever we look, especially among contemporary Western states, we see worship of the state. Everywhere we see that its ideal, the ideal of order, of outward harmony, of an adroitly adjusted, so to speak, mechanical organization, has captured men's minds. Some hope to achieve this ideal through monarchy; others, through a constitution; still others, through a republic, or through communist institutions. But belief in the state, in external truth, is strong everywhere in the West and has resulted everywhere in the impoverishment of the inner man, of the free man, of himself. This is least true of England. For: England is supported, not by the strength of its law, but by the strength of custom, not by the state, but by national character.

[From his article "Concerning Volume VI of the History of Russia, by Solov'ev," published in Russkaia Beseda in 1856:]

As soon as there was a single state over a single Russian land; as soon as the state began to sense its wholeness; as soon as the grand prince of Moscow became the tsar, then the united state turned to the united Russian land and summoned it to hold council. The first tsar convoked the first zemskii sobor. At this sobor the land and the state met and established a free union. The relations between the tsar and the people were defined: to the government went the power of authority; to the land, the power of opinion. These two powers were solemnly recognized at the zemskii sobor as the two harmonious forces governing Russia: state authority and public opinion.

... The assembly of the entire land, the zemskii sobor, was not an accidental phenomenon, but a fundamental, basic, and organic phenomenon of ancient Russia.

[From his article "Concerning Volume VII of the History of Russia, by Solov'ev," published in Russkaia beseda in 1858:]

The state [during the Moscow period] was always considered by the land as something outside, something necessary for its external defense. The state always recognized the land's independent existence and moral right of opinion, thought, counsel, and custom. Of course, under these conditions, the land was the prime factor. It was clearly understood that the land did not exist for the state, but the state for the land. The source of life, of moral achievement, of the spirit lies unquestionably in the commune [obshchina], in the people. The state is secondary and, by its very idea, cannot instill a soul in the people, but can at best impart to it only mechanical motion.

[From his manuscript "Short Historical Sketch of the Zemskii Sobor," written ca. 1859:]

The commune is the supreme, the true, principle which can no longer discover any-
thing higher than itself but need only flourish, purify, and elevate itself. . . .

The commune is an association of people who have renounced their egotism, their individuality, and who manifest their common accord: this is an act of love, a noble Christian act. . . . The commune thus represents a moral choir; and just as in a choir a voice is not lost but, subject to the general pattern, is heard in the harmony of all voices, so, in the commune, the individual is not lost but, renouncing his exclusiveness for the sake of general accord, he finds himself in a higher, purified state, in harmony with equally selfless individualities. . . . The commune is the triumph of the human spirit.

Formal truth belongs to the state, intrinsic truth, to the land; unlimited power, to the tsar, complete freedom of life and spirit, to the people; freedom of action and of law, to the tsar, freedom of opinion and expression, to the people.

The right to spiritual freedom—in other words, freedom of thought and expression—is the inalienable right of the land; but with this right it wants no political rights, leaving unrestricted political power to the state. Moral force—this freedom of thought and expression—is the element in which the land lives and moves, and when it possesses this it renounces all political power. But, besides living always in moral freedom, the land is summoned to council by the state whenever the latter deems it necessary. Then, at the call of the sovereign, men elected from all estates gather from every corner of Russia, and this convocation of elected representatives is called a zemskii sobor or a zemskai a duma.

Recognizing the state as a necessary, unavoidable evil, regarding it merely as an extraneous means, and not the goal, not the ideal of their national existence, the Slavs (in Russia) did not transform themselves into a state, did not draw up its structure from their own midst, but summoned the state from overseas, from outside, from an alien place, as an alien phenomenon. Having summoned the state, the Slavs placed it alongside the people's life, the life of the land, and preserved their council, their veche.

Thus, there were now two elements in Russia: the land and the sovereign. These two elements, different in essence, did not intermix, and because of this, perhaps, the business of each was carried on in amity and harmony. . . . The state . . . protected the land, but did not overstep its limits. The land did not infringe upon the rights of the state, nor did the state infringe upon the rights of the land. These two elements—the land and the state—lived in amity under a system of mutual noninterference, or better, mutual nonencroachment, and the state was useful for the land.

[From his book Zamechaniiia . . . (“Comments on the New Administrative Organization of the Russian Peasants”), 1861:]

Letter to A. S. Khomiakov, 1857:
. . . Can Petersburg—our governing city—do anything good while it governs? The best and most beneficial thing that Petersburg could do for Russia would be to drown itself in the sea that is so conveniently near. But such magnanimity is not to be expected of it.

Letter to N. N. [Member of the Editorial Commissions], 1859:
After all, you are dealing not with cattle, but with the people, which has much more understanding of social matters than you, the members of the noble assembly of the gentry, with your right of voting in the celebrated gentry elections.

[Comment on the Mir:]
In its essence, the mir is a self-regulating samozakonnoe, supreme manifestation of the people, fully satisfying all the demands of legality, social truth, and social justice—in short, the social will. The mir, as a higher phenomenon, combines within itself all powers, since it is the source of every power.

XIV.43. THE SLAVOPHILES: KHOMIAKOV IN THE 1840s AND 1850s

Aleksei Stepanovich Khomiakov (1804-60), a philosopher and layman theologian (like Vladimir Solov'ev; see Items XVI:50 and 51, below), wrote on a wide range of topics. His two main ideas were those of sobornost' (“togetherness in spirit”) as the basis of the church and obshchinnost’ (“communality”) as the basis of society.

[From his essay “On the Opinion of Foreigners about Russia,” 1845:]

We are always warmly concerned with the fate of our foreign brethren, both with their sufferings and with their achievements, hopes, and glory. But we never find a response to this friendly impulse, this sympathy—never a word of affection or fraternal feeling, almost never a word of truth or impartiality. We encounter only one response—ridicule and abuse; only one feeling—a mixture of fear and contempt. This is not what one man wants from another.

It is difficult to explain these hostile feelings on the part of the Western peoples, who have nurtured so many good seeds and brought mankind so far along the road of intelligent enlightenment. Europe has often showed sympathy even for savage tribes, entirely alien to her and lacking any ties of blood or spiritual kinship. Of course, even this sympathy contained an element of contempt, of an aristocratic pride of blood... of course, the European, despite his constant talk of humanity, has never quite attained the idea of man; nevertheless, he has manifested, though rarely, sympathy and some capacity for love. It is strange that Russia alone appears privileged to evoke the worst emotions in the European heart. It would seem that we have the same Indo-European blood as our Western neighbors, the same Indo-European skin (and the skin, as we know, is a matter of great importance, which entirely alters all moral relations among men), and an Indo-European language—and what a language! The purest, almost Indian! And yet our neighbors do not consider us brothers.

The hostility of other peoples toward us is evidently based on two factors: a deep awareness of the difference in all the fundamental principles underlying the spiritual and social development of Russia and western Europe; and an involuntary annoyance with this independent force which has demanded and taken all the rights of equality in the community of European nations. They cannot deny us these rights—we are too strong. But neither can they admit that we deserve them.

[From his essay “On the Possibility of the Existence of a Russian School of Art,” 1847:]

Certain journals mockingly refer to us as Slavophiles, a word of foreign cast, but which would mean in Russian translation, *Lovers of Slaves*. For my part, I am willing to accept this designation and will readily admit that I love the Slavs... I love them because there is no Russian who does not love them, no Russian who is not aware of his fraternity with the Slav, and particularly with the Orthodox Christian Slav. Whoever wishes may inquire about this from the Russian soldier who took part in the Turkish campaign, or at the Moscow bazaar where the Frenchman, the German, and the Italian are treated as foreigners, while Serbs, Dalmatians, and Bulgarians are welcomed like brothers. Therefore, I accept the ridicule of our love for the Slavs as willingly as the ridicule of the fact that we are Russians.

[From his manuscript “On I. V. Kireevskii’s Article ‘About the Nature of European Education,’” 1852:]

It would be unreasonable not to value the wealth of useful knowledge we have drawn and are still drawing from the tireless labors of the Western world. And to use this knowledge while speaking of it with ungrateful disdain would be not only unreasonable but also dishonest. Let us leave to the despair of certain Westerners, who are frightened at the suicidal development of rationalism, their dull and partly feigned contempt for science. We must accept, preserve, and develop science with all the intellectual scope it requires. But at the same time we must constantly subject it to our own criticism, enlightened by those high principles that were bequeathed to us from olden times from the Orthodox Christianity of our forebears. This is the only way in which we can elevate science itself, impart to it the integrity and completeness it still lacks, and repay in full, or even with interest, our debt to our Western teachers.

[From his essay “A Few Words by A Russian Orthodox Christian about Western Denominations,” 1853:]

A surface unity which denies freedom and