

THE EDUCATIONAL POLICIES
OF CATHERINE II

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Presented to
the Faculty of Graduate Studies
University of Manitoba

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Philosophy

by
George Epp
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A dissertation submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies of
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PREFACE

At the end of the seventeenth century there emerged a new intellectual movement in Europe which was spearheaded by the English empiricists, Hobbes and Locke. It reached its zenith in eighteenth century France where Montesquieu, Voltaire, and the Encyclopedists enhanced its powerful appeal and prestige. This movement, known as the Enlightenment, challenged old traditions, seeking to regenerate society. Nothing escaped the scrutiny of the philosophes of the Enlightenment, and their critical analysis of society eventually shook the political structure of Europe. The philosophes also stimulated an unprecedented interest in education.

The Era of the Enlightenment coincides with a growing interest of man in the world as a whole, and Europe experienced a growing spirit of international cooperation. The philosophes demanded that man's institutions be founded on "sound reason", which, according to them, would promote peace and progress. A flourishing literature spread their optimistic, and sometimes naively utopian theories about

the future of mankind, a future when man would be "free from all prejudices and wrong conceptions". They believed that education could solve most problems of society. There was no unanimity of theory or method among the prophets of the Enlightenment, but they shared an unshakable faith in reason and in man's innate goodness and equality.

This faith in man led Rousseau to the conclusion that man was a product of his environment and of education. He argued that a perfect society could be created by educating children in isolation from the influences of a corrupt society. His educational philosophy, partly inspired by Locke, tolerated no coercion. Educators, he argued, should be ideal men who by example and sound argument could guide students to perfection. Adopted and further developed by Felbiger, Basedow, Pestalozzi, and others, these educational theories eventually conquered most of western Europe.

Russia was the one important European country that remained almost untouched by the Age of Reason. Peter the Great (1689-1725) attempted to westernize Russia, but for him westernization meant only modernization in a technical sense. The philosophical aspects of the European Enlightenment remained unnoticed by him, and his heirs were even less

prepared to grasp the significance of that movement. It is true that toward the middle of the eighteenth century there were a few Russian disciples of the European Enlightenment (such as Betskoy and Ivan Shuvalov), but due to the general backwardness of the country prospects for change in Russia seemed to be very remote. Russian rulers were ignorant of European intellectual life, and furthermore, Russia lacked a middle class, that segment of society which was mainly responsible for the success of the western European Enlightenment. Yet, in 1762, with the ascendance of Catherine II, the situation began to change, and an astonished Europe witnessed the emergence of a Russian Enlightenment.

Catherine the Great of Russia was one of the most colorful personalities of her time. Russian influence during her reign expanded rapidly, and, for the first time, Russia became a superpower. It is not surprising, therefore, that Catherine's international involvement has attracted more attention from historians than her domestic policies. Yet, it would seem that during the first years of her reign Catherine was at least as much interested in domestic reforms as in international adventures. In fact, she was the only enlightened despot of her time to start a reign with a program for peace and domestic reforms. A disciple of the

western philosophes, she believed education to be the key to happiness and success, and one of her first concerns was the education of her nation.

The question as to the relationship between eighteenth century educational trends and twentieth century developments is no longer irrelevant, since it has become increasingly obvious that a strong element of continuity in Russian history cannot be denied. Therefore, Catherine's educational policies seem to deserve special attention.

It is generally accepted that, for one reason or another, the beginning of the Russian Enlightenment coincides with Catherine's reign. With the public school legislation of 1786--the first Russian school act to affect the whole nation--Catherine launched the Russian school system. This act promoted the Enlightenment in a direct way, and hence it is important to study Russian education in the context of the Russian Enlightenment.

In analysing Catherine's educational policies there are several questions that need clarification. What motivation was behind Catherine's reforms, and to what extent did western educational developments influence Russian reforms? It should be noted that while Russia was the most backward of the larger states of Europe when Catherine

became ruler in 1762, public education had not yet been introduced by any European country. Thus, Russia was not really far behind Prussia and Austria, for example, in initiating educational reforms, but the general conditions on the eve of the reforms in Russia were far behind those in Prussia and Austria. There were more than a dozen German universities serving the German speaking area of central Europe, while Russia's one university and the Academy still depended on a German speaking faculty. Most important, Austria and Prussia had a well educated ecclesiastical class, while Russia lacked that pool of educated people who could serve as the first teachers. In view of these conditions the question must be asked: How effective could Catherine's reforms be and to what extent have they really affected Russian education?

Catherine's emphasis on education was so great that every significant legislative act reflected her educational philosophy. She believed that all legislation should serve an educational purpose. In studying Catherine's educational policies this constitutes a problem, since it is difficult to isolate her educational reforms from other domestic policies. This study will focus on Catherine's educational policies, attempting to interpret her educational acts in

the broader context of her legislative effort. The intention is to gain insight into the relationship of Catherine's educational policies to the western Enlightenment, and to test the foundation of Russian education by investigating its roots in the Russian Enlightenment of the eighteenth century.

The study will be divided into six chapters. The first chapter will be designed to trace the setting in which Catherine's educational policies emerged. Chapters two to four will analyse three stages in Catherine's educational effort, and chapter five will attempt to throw light on Catherine's philosophy of education by examining her writings and the education of the Russian Grand Dukes. Finally, chapter six will draw some conclusions and attempt to evaluate Catherine's total contribution to Russian education.

The realization that North American students of Russian history are not really handicapped by a lack of literature was one of the reassuring experiences of this study. English sources on Russian education are few, but excellent Slavic collections can be found in a number of universities, and the achievements of Russian scholarship during Russia's Golden Age compare well with the achievements of Russia's celebrated novelists. The author is

collection Imperial Russia comes to life.

The Dnevnik A. V. Khrapovitskogo [Diary of A. V. Khrapovitsky] throws light on Catherine's private life. Khrapovitsky was Catherine's secretary from 1782 to 1793. The day by day record is kept in short-hand style and lacks the quality of well written biographies, but the factual record is a welcome addition to the more subjective accounts.

Gribovsky's, Zapiski o imperatritse Ekaterine Velikoi [Reminiscences about the Empress Catherine the Great] is of a different flavor. He was Catherine's secretary during the last seventeen months of her reign. Thus, he knew the old, less admirable Catherine. His Reminiscences were written after Catherine's death.

Two contemporary western sources must be mentioned in this context. The Memoirs, Letters, Miscellaneous Papers of Prince De Ligne, and the Memoirs and Recollections of Count Louis Philippe de Segur are of real value for students of Catherine's reign. These French diplomats were perhaps Catherine's most qualified western critics.

Of the biographical works, A. Brückner's Katharina die Zweite [Catherine the Second], 1883, is still one of the best critical works on Catherine II. Ikonnikov's, Znachenie tsarstvovaniia Ekateriny II [The Significance of

the Reign of Catherine II], 1897, is also very useful. Of the more recent biographies, G. P. Gooch's, Catherine the Great, 1966, is an objective study, but Hans Rimscha's, Katharina II, 1961, and Mary Lavater-Slonam's, Katharina und die russische Seele [Catherine and the Russian Soul] 1958, also throw new light on Catherine's personality and on her work.

Excellent sources on Russian education are: Vladimírsky-Budanov's, Gosudarstvo i narodnoe obrazovanie v Rossii XVIII veka [The State and Public Education in Eighteenth Century Russia], 1874; S. V. Rozhdestvensky's, Ocherki po istorii sistem narodnogo prosveshchenia [Survey of the History of Public Education in Russia], 1912; and D. A. Tolstoy's, Gorodskie uchilishcha pri Ekaterine II [City Schools During the Reign of Catherine II], 1886.

No bibliography of Russian history would be complete without two major classics. Sergei Soloviev's, Istoriia Rossii s drevnikh vremen [The History of Russia from Early Times], 1879; and Vassilii O. Kliuchevsky's, Kurs rosskoi istorii [A Course in Russian History], 1911, are still the most comprehensive works on Imperial Russia.

Finally, it should be mentioned that the Russian Golden Age also produced a number of excellent scholarly

journals. Zhurnal ministerstva narodnogo prosveshchenia [Journal of the Ministry of Education], 1834-1917; Vestnik Evropy [European Messenger], 1866-1917; and Russkaia Starina [Russian Past], 1870-1918, are only several of the most useful sources for the historian.

The author is indebted to many other sources, but at this point he will refer the reader to the bibliography at the end of this thesis.

The Russian Enlightenment cannot be discussed without reference to its European mentors. The writings of Voltaire, Diderot, D'Alambert, and other Encyclopedists helped to shape Catherine's philosophy. Montesquieu and Beccaria gave her the concept of an ideal society, and Locke, Rousseau, Basedow, Grimm, and Aepinus influenced Catherine's educational concepts. However, an interpretation of specific works of the philosophes will not be attempted, although reference will be made to them.

It will also be necessary to clarify the use of several terms and concepts in this study. The "enlighteners" concept of "education", and especially the Russian understanding of that word is not quite synonymous with the term "education" as it is used today. The Russian term "prosveshchenie" is closer to Catherine's concept of education. "Prosveshchenie" actually means "enlightenment",

but the term is used synonymously with "obrazovanie" [forming], implying "character forming". Both terms are stronger and more inclusive than the English word "education". The term "narodnoe prosveshchenie" has been used by Russians, since the Russian Enlightenment of the eighteenth century, and it can be best translated by the German word "Volksaufklärung" [enlightenment of the people]. Education, as Catherine II and the Russian enlighteners understood it, was not a mere exercise in fact finding or training for a profession, it was rather seen as the process of transforming illiterate and "uncivilized" subjects into "cultured" ideal citizens. Indeed, character-forming seemed to be more important to the enlighteners than knowledge itself. Therefore, Catherine's educational efforts were not limited to the creation of a school system--the idea of national education [prosveshchenie] was underlying her literary endeavors as well as her legislative work.

The term "Enlightenment" will also be used for the German "Aufklärung", although sometimes it may be convenient to use "Aufklärung" for that later stage of the European Enlightenment.

The term "enlighteners" will be applied to the activists of the Russian Enlightenment, although there is no equivalent for this term in Russian. The closest Russian

translation of "enlightener" is "prosveshchenets", which actually means "educationist". This helps to understand the Russian enlighteners' thinking--they saw themselves as the educators of the nation.

For Catherine's Instructions for the Legislative Commission of 1767-1768, the author has chosen to use the Russian title Nakaz, to avoid confusing this important document with other "Instructions" of the Empress.

The term "gubernia" is frequently translated with province, but since there is an administrative unit, known as "province", within the Russian gubernia, "gubernia" will not be translated in this study. The gubernia is the largest administrative unit within the Russian Empire.

It is also necessary to point out the occasional discrepancy of dates in Russian history texts. The Russians used the Julian calendar until 1923, when in the process of modernization the Gregorian calendar was introduced. There is now a difference of thirteen days between the two calendars, but it must be kept in mind that before 1900 the difference was only twelve days and in Catherine's century it was eleven days.

Finally, the reader should be made aware of the fact that the spelling of Russian names and titles in English

sources is not always uniform. This is due to the problem of transliteration. North American historians favor an English transliteration [Library of Congress], while European scholars and a growing number of American linguists advocate the use of the Czech alphabet, which has adapted the Latin alphabet to the Slavic sound system.

In this thesis the Library of Congress system will be used, because that system is generally used by Canadian and American historians.

CHAPTER I

CATHERINE II
AND ENLIGHTENED ABSOLUTISM IN RUSSIA

Russia is a European state.

Catherine II

In February 1744, a fourteen year old princess of a petty German principality of Anhalt-Zerbst arrived in St. Petersburg, the capital of Russia. Sophie of Anhalt-Zerbst was poor. The Russian government had paid for her traveling expenses and even for the three or four dresses that she carried in her luggage. As a prospective bride of the Russian Crown Prince, she had to pass an examination by the reigning Empress Elizabeth. Her intelligence and good appearance were noted, but most important were her title and her health.

Sophie was born April 21, 1729, in Stettin. Her father, Christian August of Anhalt-Zerbst, was a Prussian general and governor of Stettin who had distinguished himself in the War of Spanish Succession and eventually become one of Frederick the Great's most trusted military

administrators. He was a staunch Protestant and his austerity and integrity were admired by his subordinates as well as by the Prussian monarch. Sophie's mother, Johanna Elizabeth, who was related to the House of Holstein-Gottorp, was an extravagant woman and seems to have been the very opposite of her husband in every respect. Always dreaming and scheming to find a place in highest society, she had little time for her children, and especially Sophie seems to have been neglected by her. For Johanna Elizabeth music and dancing were the most important aspects of education, and since Sophie had no ear for music she must have appeared as a lost case to that lady. Catherine [Sophie] would later remark that she had only been "tolerated" by her mother. Besides her unsuccessful music and dancing masters, Sophie had several moderately successful teachers. Pastor Wagner gave her instruction in religion, geography, and history, and Babet Cardel taught her French. In her Memoirs Catherine pays tribute to Babet, her favorite teacher and trusted friend. The pedantic Wagner forced her to memorize passages, which Sophie hated, while Babet only guided her in readings from Racine, Corneille, Moliere, and other French authors. It is very doubtful whether Babet had any formal education. Catherine said of her,

that "she had learned nothing and knew everything", but Babet Cardel must be given credit for developing in her pupil a taste for reading.

It must be concluded that Catherine's education was not exceptional for a princess and that it definitely could not have prepared her for the role that she was to play in history. When Sophie of Anhalt-Zerbst came to Russia, she was mature for a fourteen year old, but she was a long way from the Catherine that took possession of the Russian throne eighteen years later. It is difficult to say just how much her German upbringing influenced her life's course. Perhaps she inherited her mother's ambition and her father's constancy, but beyond some traits of character only nostalgia for the more refined western society was kept alive. The real Catherine--the enlightened autocrat--was formed in eighteen years of royal slavery in Russia.

Peter, the Crown Prince of Russia, to whom Catherine was married in 1745, was the grandson of Peter the Great and nephew of the ruling Russian Empress Elizabeth. He had the strongest claim on the Russian throne, but he actually would have preferred to rule his father's little duchy of Holstein-Gottorp. He admired Frederick the Great

of Prussia, resented Russian victories over him, and when Elizabeth died, late in 1761, he immediately made peace with his hero. Catherine claimed in her Memoirs that he was retarded, and his biographer, Nesbit Bain, said that he was "mentally little more than a child". Bűsching, who knew Peter personally quite well, and who would seem to be a fair judge, comments:

When I saw him walking in a Prussian uniform, he appeared to me so narrow-minded [kleingeistisch] that I would have despaired, had I not known in the history of rulers more little minds than great ones, and if I had not [already] concluded that the world has never been ruled by man's reason.¹

This does not say that his reign was without consequences. As a matter of fact, Russia may have to thank or curse him for the thirty-four years of Catherine's reign, which by any standards must be seen as a crucial period in Russian history. It was Peter III who humiliated the intelligent young Catherine by simply refusing for years to make his marriage a fact beyond the church ceremony. It must have been even more humiliating for her when she realized that

¹Anton Friedrich Bűsching, Eigene Lebensgeschichte, (Halle, 1789), p. 8.

he preferred the rather unimpressive Elizabeth Vorontsov. And it was Peter, no less than the Empress Elizabeth, who forced Catherine for many years into the role of a beautiful bird in a cage. She had nothing to do, nobody to talk to, and thus, books were not even her deliberate choice of entertainment--they were the only consolation she could find. Those eighteen years of isolation shaped Catherine's destiny. Her dull husband was a blessing to her in his way. He drove her into the arms of the philosophes who saved her from boredom. There may have been more intelligent women than Catherine, but there were probably few women in her century who had read as extensively. In eighteen years Catherine had acquired an outstanding liberal education. Whatever the circumstances, Russia prepared her own enlightened absolutist, although the tutors were West European.²

Catherine was probably familiar with most philosophical writings of her time, and if we can believe her, she had read everything written by Voltaire. However, while Voltaire probably was most influential in shaping

²A portrait of Catherine without her lovers would not be complete, but since those favorites have hardly influenced the course of the Russian Enlightenment they may be conveniently ignored. Gregory Orlov and Potemkin played significant political roles, but they did not belong to the distinguished group of enlighteners.

her general philosophy of life, in practical application the ideas of Montesquieu and Beccaria, Locke and Rousseau, surfaced in her legislative and educational reforms. Above all, it was Montesquieu's, The Spirit of the Laws, that appealed to the ambitious princess, and the reason seems to be obvious. Catherine had political ambitions but no political education or training. Montesquieu satisfied this need. He acquainted her with the principles of various systems of government and with the rights of rulers, and he held opinions about the different systems that were quite compatible with her own thinking. When Montesquieu says, "ambition is pernicious in a republic, but in a monarchy it has some good effects; it gives life to the government",³ it was exactly what Catherine needed to justify Russia's system as well as her own ambition. And when Montesquieu expresses his sentiments about despotic government, saying that "as virtue is necessary in a republic, and in a monarchy, so fear is necessary in a despotic government",⁴ he has again struck a chord that was in harmony with her ambition. Catherine wanted to be loved, not feared. These

³Charles-Louis Secondat de Montesquieu, The Spirit of the Laws, (trans. Th. Nugent, Hafner Publishing Co., 1949). p. 25.

⁴Ibid., p. 26.

are the sentiments expressed by the Empress in a letter to Zimmermann:

If my century has fear of me, it is wrong. Never did I intend to scare anybody. I would like to be loved and respected, as far as I deserve it, and no more.⁵

Montesquieu did not only give her a set of values for her legislative endeavors, he was also quite instrumental in shaping Catherine's educational philosophy. In Book IV of The Spirit of the Laws, Montesquieu says:

In monarchies the principal branch of education is not taught in colleges or academies. It commences, in some measure, at our setting in the world; for this is the school of what we call honor, that universal preceptor which ought everywhere to be our guide. Here it is that we constantly hear three rules or maxims, viz., that we should have a certain nobleness in our virtues, a kind of frankness in our morals, and a particular politeness in our behaviour.⁶

The stress is on the ethical rather than on the material aspect of education. This philosophy is reflected in Catherine's educational reforms.

⁵Catherine to Zimmermann, January 29, 1789, Der Briefwechsel zwischen der Kaiserin Katharina II von Russland und J. G. Zimmermann, (Bremen, 1803, Hannover, 1906), p. XX.

⁶Montesquieu, The Spirit of the Laws, p. 29.

Her favorite teacher also gave Catherine some good advice on ruler-subject relationships:

There is nothing so strongly inculcated in monarchies, by the laws, by religion and honor, as submission to the prince's will; but this very honor tells us that the prince never ought to command a dishonorable action, because this would render us incapable of serving him.⁷

Montesquieu had the aristocracy in mind, and Catherine welcomed the demand for submission of the aristocracy to the ruler, but she also heeded the warning that the prince should not abuse his power in respect to that class.

Another aspect of Catherine's education is frequently overlooked. While her husband refused to speak the country's language, Catherine immediately upon her arrival set out to learn Russian. She realized how important the knowledge of Russian was to a Russian ruler, especially if that ruler was of German background. She studied diligently with a tutor, but Elizabeth ordered her to stop that activity, "since she was clever enough". However, Catherine did not give up, and although she

⁷Montesquieu, The Spirit of the Laws, p. 31.

complained later about the fact that her Russian orthography was less than perfect, her secretary, Gribovsky, commented after her death:

The Empress spoke Russian quite well [dovolno chisto] and loved to use simple and indigenous words, of which she had a great store.⁸

This could have been expected of an intelligent woman, who had come to Russia when she was still young enough to learn a language, and Kizevetter's comment, that "Catherine II reigned over Russia for thirty-four years without once omitting, to the day of her death to mutilate the language",⁹ must not be taken too seriously, although she probably retained the peculiar German accent. Catherine knew that she could not afford the luxury of the Russian noblemen, who often neglected their native language.

Catherine had also grasped the significance of another factor of Russian life, which her husband at

⁸A. M. Gribovsky, Zapiski o imperatritse Ekaterine Velikoi, (St. Petersburg, 1864), p. 26.

⁹A. Kizevetter, "Catherine II", The Successors of Peter the Great from Catherine I to the Reign of Nicholas I, by P. Miliukov, (New York, 1968), vol. II, p. 73.

great risk for himself ignored--the Orthodox Church.¹⁰

The Russian Greek Orthodox Church, from the Russian point of view, was not merely one of the Christian Churches--it was the only true Church of Christ. Catherine accepted the Orthodox faith, in 1745, before she was married to the heir of the Russian throne. She was renamed, as Orthodox tradition requires for new converts to the faith. Sophie of Anhalt-Zerbst became Ekaterina Alexeevna, Grand Duchess of Russia. Whether Catherine fully understood the significance of her step, when she became Orthodox, is not really important, but by this move she made it possible for Russians not only to adopt her as Princess, but also to embrace her as "Great Mother" [Matushka]. She paid every attention to her new Church and carefully observed all customs from the very first day. It is quite likely that Catherine paid so much attention to the Church out of

¹⁰Until 1917, the Russian Orthodox Church played a significant role in Russian life. In western Europe there is a tendency to ignore or minimize this fact. Demkov urges western historians to pay more attention to the role of the Russian Church. "In Russia," he said, "Orthodoxy [Pravoslavie], consistent with its level of culture, took on the character of a political institution of the state, under the patronage of which national consciousness developed. Russian history cannot be understood if this fact is ignored." [M. I. Demkov, Istoria Russkoi pedagogiki, (St. Petersburg, 1910), p. 18].

political considerations. However, an early genuine interest in the impressive Orthodox Church ceremonies, in beautiful churches, with very genuine popular participation cannot be entirely dismissed. After all, other western intellectuals have been impressed by the warmth of Russian Church services, and Rainer Maria Rilke concluded, that only in Russia had he experienced God.

Knowingly or unknowingly, Catherine had set the stage for her triumph and Peter's downfall, and Peter seemed to do everything to assure his own doom. He showed no respect for the Orthodox Church, he despised his Russian troops, and he treated his one asset--an intelligent and attractive wife--with contempt and even frequent threats of divorce.

When Elizabeth died, on December 25, 1761, and Peter III became autocrat of Russia, Catherine's position became even more precarious. She was now Czarina, but her fate was on the balance every day. The constant stress affected her health, and Peter III rejoiced that she would soon die. But Catherine won more friends every day, while Peter was losing them at the same rate. Razumovsky and Panin opted for Catherine, because they knew that Peter was not only incapable of responsible government; they

feared the power in the hands of an irrational despot. At the same time, Catherine was not just one alternative, she seemed to be the only alternative. Her son Paul had a good claim to the Russian throne, but since Paul was too young, all opposition to Peter's reign turned into united support for Catherine. Petersburg was on Catherine's side long before the actual revolt on June 28, 1762.

The leadership provided by the Orlovs in the crucial hours of the revolt was decisive, because the Orlovs were willing to take risks when most officers of the guards held back. On the other hand, the guard regiments in Petersburg were ready to act on behalf of Catherine even without their officers. The cavalry guards beat up their commander, George of Holstein, Peter's uncle, and joined Catherine's supporters. Furthermore, it is significant that the Senate and the Synod immediately sided with Catherine. In retrospect the whole revolt looks relatively innocent and Frederick II may have been close to the truth when he commented to the French ambassador:

In truth neither honor nor blame should be ascribed to Catherine for this revolution: she was young, weak, lonely, a foreigner, on the eve of divorce and imprisonment. The Orlovs did everything; Princess Dashkova was

only a bragging fly on the cart. Catherine could not yet have offered leadership; she threw herself into the arms of those who wanted to save her. Their conspiracy was rash and poorly organized. The lack of manliness in Peter III, in spite of the advice of the brave Münnich ruined him. He permitted his overthrow, like a child who is sent to bed.¹¹

Several days after his forced abdication Peter was killed. There is evidence that Catherine was genuinely shocked, but certainly also relieved when this news reached her. The Orlovs, understanding Catherine's scruples in respect to acts of violence, and fearing the consequences if Peter should ever be restored, had acted on their own. Although Catherine was innocent, she never used Alexei Orlov's letter to clear herself. Violent palace revolts were nothing new in Russia, and since Catherine was as popular as Peter was hated, no serious obstacles were in her way. She had many friends and quickly won those who had supported Peter. Betskoy and Münnich both had been in Peter's camp, but Catherine did not send these men to Siberia, she raised them to positions of trust and won their loyal support.

¹¹S. M. Soloviev, Istoriia Rossii s drevnikh vremen, (St. Petersburg, 1879; Moscow, 1964), vol. XXV, p. 100.

The respect that she had shown to the Orthodox Church now paid off--on June 28, 1768, in the church of Our Lady of Kazan, a leading figure in the Russian Orthodox Church, the Archbishop Dmitri of Rostov, proclaimed her as Empress of Russia. This was a very significant development for Catherine. The Orthodox Church had proclaimed her as autocrat, in spite of the fact that Catherine's nine year old son was the rightful heir to the throne.¹² The Archbishop most likely preferred that solution to the risks of a weak regency. Whatever his motives, Dmitri had invested Catherine with "legitimacy", without which her position would have been untenable. With luck and determination Catherine had overcome the first obstacles. Now she was in a position to rule the Russian Empire, and she was ready for the task. Most unusual for an eighteenth century ruler--this woman stepped onto the stage of history with a ready program for a long reign.

¹²For 34 years Paul was not allowed to play any role in the affairs of the state. It is possible that Catherine saw in him a rival, but she could never have successfully isolated a man endowed with intelligence and leadership qualities. Most likely she realized early that her son was simply not fit to rule. During his brief reign, after Catherine's death, Paul certainly proved beyond doubt that Catherine had been right in her judgment.

For eighteen years her open eyes and an inquisitive mind had observed the dismal condition of Russian administration. She had not been able to weigh the immensity of the major problems, but she had at least recognized their existence, and she was determined to change Russia. However, she had been at the helm only for a few months, when she realized that her task would be much more difficult than she had anticipated. In shock and desperation about the number of corrupt officials, including senators, she wrote to Nepliuev for advice, "since in truth there is nobody left with whom I could consult."¹³ The gentry schemed to regain more power. The administration was in a state of confusion, and government officials were openly using their positions to enrich themselves, and the Senate refused to deal with corruption. Catherine also faced grave social problems. Millions of Russian peasants lived in a state of depravity and poverty beyond description. This was a dangerous situation, as a never ceasing succession of unrest and open revolts proved, and yet, the nobility on whom she depended opposed any change. She also soon realized that in an illiterate society the chances for

¹³Catherine to Nepliuev, May, 1763, Russkii Arkhiv 1884, vol. I, p. 260. [Ivan Ivanovich Nepliuev was Catherine's procurator during her early reign.]

change are very slim. Russia needed sweeping reforms, but where would she start, when even the nobility [dvorianstvo] was illiterate. When Catherine began to reign, hundreds of nobles were tried for bribery, robbery and stealing, and the Empress was convinced that ignorance was the root of this evil.¹⁴

The most difficult problems she faced, were serfdom and education. In respect to serfdom very little was done during her long reign, yet it can be assumed that Catherine genuinely abhorred serfdom. Bilbasov has claimed that Catherine had known Montesquieu's writings since 1744.¹⁵ The Spirit of the Laws eventually became her bible, as she herself said, and there is ample proof to substantiate this claim. We may therefore assume that Catherine knew Montesquieu's work, and that his chapter on civil slavery did not escape her. With clarity and irony Montesquieu exposes the evils and dangers of slavery:

The state of slavery is in its own nature bad. It is neither useful to the master nor to the slave... . In despotic

¹⁴V. S. Ikonnikov, Znachenie tsarstvovaniia Ekateriny II, (St. Petersburg, 1897), p. 41.

¹⁵V. Bilbasov, Katharina II, 1898, p. 371.

countries...the condition of a slave is hardly more burdensome than that of a subject. But in monarchical government, where it is of the utmost importance that human nature should not be debased or dispirited, there ought to be no slavery.¹⁶

Then, using the example of American slavery, he mocks European monarchs:

It is impossible for us to suppose these creatures to be men, because, allowing them to be men [slaves], a suspicion would follow that we ourselves are not Christians.

Weak minds exaggerate too much the wrongs done to Africans. For were the case as they state it, would the European powers, who make so many needless conventions among themselves, have failed to enter into a general one, in behalf of humanity and compassion.¹⁷

Catherine must have been even more sensitive to a passage in which Montesquieu touches on Russian serfdom:

In all despotic governments people make no difficulty in selling themselves; the political slavery in some measure annihilates the civil liberty. According to Mr. Perry, the Muscovites sell themselves very readily: their

¹⁶Montesquieu, The Spirit of the Laws, Book IV, paragraph 1, p. 235.

¹⁷Ibid., Book XV, p. 239.

reason for it is evident--their liberty is not worth keeping.¹⁸

Kizevetter, who in general is very critical of Catherine, maintains that Catherine struggled with the problem of serfdom even before she became Tsarina, and she raised the question of the serfs again at the beginning of her reign. She suggested to the Free Economic Society a prize contest on the subject of serfdom: "Is it more advantageous to society that a serf own land or merely moveable goods, and what can be the extent of his rights over either?" Among the fifteen accepted essays there was only one by a Russian author, Polenov, and he did not even consider emancipation.¹⁹

It is obvious that the Russian nobility was not even weighing the question. The memorandum written by Sumarokov for Catherine's consideration presents an interesting case. When Catherine prepared the famous Nakaz [Instruction] for the Legislative Commission she invited a number of Russian dignitaries to comment on the Nakaz

¹⁸Montesquieu, The Spirit of the Laws, Book XV, p. 239.

¹⁹A. Kizevetter, "Catherine II", in History of Russia, by P. Miliukov, (New York, 1968), vol. II, p. 84. [Alexander Alexandrovich Kizevetter(1866-1933) is a well known Russian historian.]

and to offer advice for corrections and improvements. Count Orlov had no comments, but N. Panin warned the Empress that her "axioms could bring down the walls". However, most revealing is Sumarokov's response. His memorandum has been preserved, with Catherine's marginal remarks:

Sumarokov: The lord must be the judge, this is simply the truth. It is of course one thing to be a lord and another to be a tyrant; but good lords are judges of their servants, and it is better to depend on the conscience of the lords than on the conscience of the servants.

(Catherine: My goodness, as if one can distinguish character by title.)

The Russian serfs cannot be freed: poor people [obviously the lower gentry] will not have either cook or coachman, or a valet, and they will spoil their servants, overlook idleness, just not to be without servants and peasants. There will be a terrible discord between the landowners and their peasants which will be controlled only by many regiments. There will be endless civil war, where the landowners today live in peace on their estates.

(Catherine: And occasionally get their throats cut.)

Their estates will turn into dangerous places.
(Catherine: Not without reason.)

In other states and in the Ukraine it is a different story, but in our country this cannot be done without taking the landowners' peace... . All noblemen, and maybe the

peasants themselves will not be happy with such liberty, because it would diminish the diligence of all. And let me point out, that the landowners and the peasants love each other very much, but our low people do not yet have any noble feelings.

(Catherine: And cannot have them under present conditions.)²⁰

From Catherine's remarks it is obvious that she read Sumarokov's memorandum very carefully. Her final remarks at the end of that document, reveal a surprising awareness of the problem, and her sincerity is beyond doubt. After all, these documents were not written for some French philosopher who could pass them on to the press. Under the memorandum, which was discovered years after her death, Catherine wrote:

Mr. Sumarokov is a good poet, but he thinks too hastily. There is too little logic in his thinking to make him a good lawmaker. He criticizes but he touches only the surface of the rings in a chain, and thus finds error in the polish here and there, but the vices he would leave alone, if he understood the implications. Two possibilities are open in this matter: trusting the judgement of the legislator, or trusting the judgement of the subjects, or

²⁰Sumarokov's Memorandum on Serfdom, Sbornik russkogo istoricheskogo obshchestva, (St. Petersburg, 1875-1885), vol. X, pp. 85-87.

better to say of those for whom the laws are being made. Very often the direct truth in the evaluation of these possibilities must be used in such a way that it will not harm itself, resulting in further deviation from the good, rather than in leading to the good.²¹

Catherine had quickly won the respect and admiration of many progressive Russians, but when she suggested the emancipation of the serfs there were very few willing to go along, and only Sievers, the governor of Novgorod, gave her unreserved support for a program of total emancipation. Sievers, who came from the more advanced Baltic provinces, urged Catherine to carry on the reform, warning her that slavery some day would be the ruin of Russia, and that the origin of the unrest of the peasant population on the Volga, and around Orenburg and Kazan must be seen in the yoke of slavery.²²

Viazemsky, the chief procurator, warned that the issue was very risky. The one man who eventually might have tipped the scale, Potemkin, would not even consider

²¹Sumarokov's Memorandum on Serfdom, Sbornik russkogo istoricheskogo obshchestva, (St. Petersburg, 1875-1885), vol. X, p. 87.

²²A.Brückner, Katharina die Zweite, (Berlin, 1883), p. 526.

it. He was as brilliant intellectually as Sievers, but by habit he was an oriental hospodar. It is also interesting to note that the Archbishop of Rostov, Arsenii Matseevich, opposed the liberation of the serfs with as much vigour as other reform attempts of Catherine, and only when Damaskin took his place, the serfs found a champion of their cause in the Church.²³ Meanwhile, in the process of streamlining Russian administration, serfdom was expanding territorially into the newly acquired provinces, especially into the Ukraine, and very little was done to improve the lot of the serfs. However, a few measures deserve to be mentioned:

All children brought up in orphanages were declared free, and their marriage partners and children were also to be free.

No freed person was allowed to enter bondage again.

Clergymen, even if unemployed, could no longer be enslaved.

Prisoners of war, including Moslems who accepted Christian baptism, could not be enslaved.

No child born out of wedlock could be made a serf by his foster parent.

²³Ikonnikov, Znachenie, pp. 100-101.

A law was passed against the cruel treatment of serfs by their owners.²⁴

Although the enforcement of the last proved to be next to impossible, several instances have been recorded where the state intervened on behalf of the serfs. The measure concerning the orphans affected only a relatively small number of people, but it was a very progressive step from the practice of simply giving orphans to a master who raised the child as his property which he could keep or sell. The most far-reaching improvement was experienced by the state peasants. When the monasteries lost their estates, in 1764, the peasants immediately benefitted from a better and more humane administration of the estates, and in 1775 they were given an improved organization and their own court.²⁵ These improvements affected millions of state peasants and the achievement could be given considerable credit, if these peasants would have been spared the constant threat of return to the old status, as rewards to favorites or successful generals.

²⁴Ikonnikov, Znachenie, pp. 41-42.

²⁵Ibid., p. 44.

Meanwhile, Russian nobles defended serfdom as an ancient and necessary institution, or they presented it to western philosophes as a temporary and benevolent arrangement. Catherine was not impressed by those arguments, but she could not afford to challenge the serf owners on whose support her government depended. In fairness to the enlighteners and their opponents it must also be added that the opposition of the landlords was not the only problem. The peasants presented as great a problem. Both sides were not ready for any drastic changes in the social structure. Without an educated and liberal aristocracy the serfs' freedom would have meant very little. A century later the landlords were not much wiser and many serfs objected to the liberation, which they feared as an unknown future. An illiterate society is condemned to backwardness and despotism. This seems to have been the reasonable conclusion of Catherine, and she became more reluctant to deal with serfdom. The Pugachev rebellion did not change Catherine's mind, it only brought home the final lesson. There can be really little substance in the claim that Catherine did not realize on what dangerous ground her empire was resting. In an undated letter, obviously in full recognition of the dangerous situation, Catherine wrote to

Viazemsky:

One can predict that if for the life of one landowner whole villages would be wiped out [as the senate in all seriousness suggested] the revolt of all serf villages will follow. The conditions of the landowners' peasants are so critical that only patience and humane legislation can prevent a general rebellion. No general liberation from the unbearable and cruel yoke is taking place; the peasants have no protection in the laws nor anywhere else; therefore the slightest thing might lead them into desperate action. For this reason severe measures would be very dangerous. I beg you to observe greatest caution, so that you don't precipitate the threatening disaster which can only be averted by radical measures and new laws. If we cannot agree to eliminate the cruelty and the inhuman treatment, the peasants, sooner or later, will take their freedom on their own.²⁶

And she added two very significant statements: "You can make use of my expressed concern if it is to the advantage of the country. It would be better if not only I felt this way, but if others who are bound by their prejudices would wake up."²⁷ This is a coolly calculating pragmatist speaking, but at the same time a sympathetic, genuinely humane interest in the peasants' lot can be discerned.

²⁶Brückner, Katharina, p. 526, quoting from Achtzehntes Jahrhundert [a historical journal], III, pp. 390-391.

²⁷Ibid., p. 526.

Catherine got the facts and she did not hide them, but her attempt to shake up the landowning class was futile, and in December 1774 she ruefully commented to Dahl: "Yes, it is not an easy matter, and it troubles me much, but it remains unchanged. However you approach it, it does not move."²⁸ The enlightened absolutist realized more and more that there was no easy road to utopia, and she began to think in terms of slow progress through education.

A country's internal problems cannot be completely separated from its external problems. Catherine had to devote ever more time to external affairs, and this naturally affected internal reforms. She has been portrayed as the ruthless expansionist and it would be absurd to exonerate Catherine in this respect. However, not every involvement was of her own making. It is difficult to say how far her early ambitions went, but one may assume that before the first Turkish War the realist, Catherine, could hardly have dreamed of immediately challenging Turkey. She knew that neither her navy nor her army were ready for a policy of expansion, and

²⁸Ikonnikov, Znachenie, p. 42.

that she had to concentrate on internal stabilization. She was quite realistic about her own precarious position, but she inherited problems on the international scene that could not be wished away. Under Elizabeth, Russia had once more joined the European Power game. Russia had first helped to destroy Prussia, and then, under Peter III, saved Frederick's state from total annihilation. The rivalries between England and France, Austria and Prussia, Austria, Turkey and Russia, and the quarrel with Sweden, were not of Catherine's making. Yet, she had to face the possibility of alliances against Russia, and any combination was possible. Furthermore, Catherine was concerned about political developments in Poland.

The most menacing foe of Russia was Turkey. Peter I had started a struggle for the control of the Black Sea region and Catherine II was faced with the choice of holding on to the conquered territory or to give in to Turkish demands. The problem on her southern borders was furthermore complicated by another uncertain factor--the Cossacks. Their loyalty was always conditional and never predictable. The reaction of some of the atamans to the Nakaz disturbed Rumiantsev, Catherine's governor

in the Ukraine. Catherine advised Rumiantsev not to take any action, but the situation in the Ukraine was tense. In 1767 a sergeant-major of the Zaporozhian Cossacks Pavel Savitsky, warned Catherine that the Ataman of the Sech, Kalnishevsky, after returning from a meeting with Rumiantsev, had told his secretary behind locked doors:

We have nothing to hope from them, we will have to write to the Turkish Emperor, and send twenty selected men to him with a petition to accept us under his protection. To the troops we will write that they should be alert and prepared to take the field... that not a single man [Russian] be permitted to cross our borders and if they should try to enter by force into Zaporozhian territory they should be dealt with as with enemies. Whether a letter to the Turks was written I don't know, but to the troops definitely, by my hand, first in August 1766 to Colonel Anton Krasovsky and then to the Essaul in October. All troops were alerted to be ready to take to the field against Russia.²⁹

Catherine again refrained from any counteraction, but the challenge was there and it is unthinkable that the Turks were not aware of these tensions, even if the Cossacks had second thoughts about inviting Turkish

²⁹Soloviev, Istoriia Rossii, vol. XXVII, pp. 47-48.

"protection". With this information it is reasonable to assume that at least the first Turkish War was not of Catherine's making. She could not have been certain about the outcome under the known circumstances. However, the situation changed radically after that first successful war. Russian troops had performed surprisingly well, and even the navy had been quite successful in the Mediterranean. This made Catherine more confident, her generals more bellicose, and the European powers very nervous. At the same time the high priest of the Enlightenment had given Catherine unqualified support in her war with Turkey. Voltaire, that "preacher of tolerance and peace", wrote to her on November 15, 1768:

It is clear that people who do not care about the sciences and who lock up women in seraglios deserve to be destroyed...Mustafa cannot stand against Catherine, because I have been informed that he is so clever that he never saw a comedy, that he does not like poetry and that he does not understand French. Therefore I predict with certainty that he will be defeated.³⁰

³⁰Filosoficheskaia i politicheskaia perepiska imperatritsy Ekateriny Vtoroi s g.Volterom, 1763-1778 g., (Moscow, 1802), p. 39.

During 1770 the old man of Ferney repeatedly urged Catherine to destroy Turkey, and on July 20, 1770 he trembled that the Empress might make peace: "Why make peace, when one could expand by means of war much farther."³¹ Not only did he urge Catherine to occupy Constantinople, he also justified the partition of Poland, as "a most sensible solution" to the Polish problem. It is very doubtful whether Catherine would have been less aggressive without such encouragements, but the point is that there was no opposition from any quarter. Enlightened Europe favored heroes just as much as any other age. During the Age of Enlightenment every major state of Europe had an aggressive policy. The power game was played in the chancelleries of Paris, London, Berlin, Vienna, Constantinople and Stockholm, and on the battlefields of Europe and America. The international policies of St. Petersburg were not unique. Aggression and enlightened absolutism were quite compatible.

Several of Catherine's biographers have observed

³¹Filosoficheskaia i politicheskaia perepiska...
p. 127.

a strange combination of opposite qualities in her character. A gentle soul and a firm hand, love for pleasure and long working hours are indeed unusual combinations, but most amazing is her ability to blend the idealism of the enlightener with the pragmatism of the Realpolitiker. During her early years she may have tried to build the utopia of the enlighteners, but the Legislative Commission was an invaluable lesson for her and it ended that early stage of "instant enlightenment".

Her simple and humane approach always impressed her contemporaries. When Sievers asked her to make a decision in the case of two brothers who in a quarrel accidentally had killed a third man, but now both wanted to accept sole responsibility, Catherine pardoned both. By their attitude these men had convinced her that they were not common murderers and thus, they should not be separated from their families.³² When the Swedes in 1788 attempted to create confusion in the Russian economy by flooding the country with counterfeit coins, Catherine merely ordered that the coins be analyzed.

³²Mary Lavater-Slonam, Katharina und die russische Seele, (Zuerich, 1958), p. 271.

Since the counterfeit coins were not of less content value than the Russian coins, she decided that there was nothing to worry about.³³ This common-sense-approach is characteristic of Catherine II. When Bombelles urged her in 1791, to help the French monarchists, she refused to be involved. "You are too divided", she said, "stop quarreling...begin to act... . To rely on foreign power would be the greatest disaster."³⁴ She realized that it was very risky to fight ideas with foreign armies, and she also knew the limits of her power.

While Catherine sometimes paid lip service to republicanism, she made it very clear that she intended to rule as an absolute monarch. "The Sovereign is absolute", she said in Article 9 of the Nakaz, "for there is no other authority but that which centers in this single person that can act with a vigor proportionate to the extent of such a vast domain."³⁵ Needless to say that she

³³A. V. Khrapovitsky, Dnevnik A. V. Khrapovitskogo, 1782-1793, (St. Petersburg, 1874), p. 127.

³⁴Catherine to Zubov, August 13, 1791, Sbornik, vol. XLII, pp. 194-195.

³⁵Catherine II, Nakaz, Chapter II, Article 9.

expressed a view sanctified by Montesquieu and commonly held during the Age of Enlightenment. However, this was also a realistic appraisal of the situation. The multinational Russian Empire would not have survived under any less centralized system of government. At the same time Catherine was also convinced that an absolute monarch should not be a despot or a tyrant. During the thirty-four years of her reign the death sentence was seldom applied. She argued consistently that rulers are to be blamed for their subjects' discontent. But she also believed to have the remedy against all abuses--enlightenment would change rulers and ruled. Some time after the Pugachev rebellion she reflected in her journal:

It is not surprising that among Russian rulers were so many tyrants. The people are restless by nature, they are ungrateful and there are many informers and others who under the pretense of zeal look for an opportunity to exploit every situation to their own advantage. One has to be brought up well, and one must be very enlightened, in order to be able to distinguish honest zeal from pretence, intention from words, words from facts. In the present situation, somebody without education will be either weak or a tyrant, depending on his mind. Only a person who is well-bred and who is a good judge of character can decide on appropriate measures.³⁶

³⁶Catherine's personal observations on tyrants, Sbornik, vol. XLII, p. 456.

Certainly, Catherine was convinced that she was this kind of enlightened ruler, but history has not yet made a final judgement. The tendency to judge the actor in history by his apparent success on an international scale can be very misleading. By these standards she was very successful in her external policy. The gain was visible and compared well with other rulers of her time, but it was much easier to redraw the map of Europe than to change an illiterate society. Yet, if Catherine wanted to be known as an enlightened monarch, then her claim to that title had to rest on her domestic policy, and achievements on that level are much more difficult to measure. The philosophes hailed her intentions as achievements, while later critics, for lack of spectacular records measurable on an international scale, refused even to believe in her intentions.

The reports of foreign diplomats, with few exceptions, are rather contradictory. It is difficult to derive from them a true picture of the Empress. Sir James Harris, e.g., reports on January 16, 1778:

The Empress herself unites in the most wonderful manner the talents of putting those she honours with her conversation at their ease, and of keeping up her dignity. Her character extends throughout her whole administration; and although she is rigidly obeyed, yet she

has introduced a lenity in the mode of government to which, till her reign, this country was a stranger.³⁷

But only a month later, when it became clear to him that he had failed to win a Russian alliance for Britain, his reports change radically and predict the doom for Catherine's Russia. These reports can add some missing color, but a more reliable portrait of the Empress can only be provided by those who worked with her every day. Khrapovitsky and Gribovsky, her secretaries, both describe an intelligent, kind and sincere, hardworking and loyal ruler. This description of the Empress coincides with the Catherine that we discover in her letters to Friedrich Melchior Grimm.³⁸ She is a shrewd woman and a clever diplomat, but in her relations with her subordinates she appears to be a

³⁷Sir James Harris, "Extracts", in Seven Britons in Imperial Russia, ed. Putnam (Princeton University Press, 1952), p. 198.

³⁸Friedrich Melchior Grimm was a member of the famous circle of Encyclopedists. Catherine's letters to Grimm present an interesting case. They were definitely not written for the public. Catherine urged Grimm repeatedly to burn them. When Grimm finally fled from revolutionary France, he did not dare to take those letters along. However, Catherine was so worried that those letters could fall into the hands of some publisher that Grimm risked another trip to Paris. He saved the letters, and again refused to burn them. When Grimm died, his heirs delivered the letters to Alexander I, with Grimm's instruction not to make them public for ten years after his death.

genuine friend or "mother", depending on the subordinate's position.

Immediately after her accession, any kind of corporal punishment was abolished at the court. This could be construed as a mere show of enlightened principles, if her behavior had not been consistent. She was on good terms with her whole staff. To Segur she remarked: "I like to praise and reward in public, and to rebuke in private."³⁹ She encouraged those she trusted to speak out frankly. Khrapovitsky on one occasion even dared to threaten with his resignation, when Catherine refused to approve his proposed theatre budget for which he was responsible. Several days later she signed the budget and reconciled her secretary. Revealing is also a letter to Sievers concerning some quarrel of that governor:

Mr. Sievers, your conscientiousness, sense of justice and fairness in all public duties have earned my complete confidence. You know my repugnance against any coercion better than anyone else. In all situations I gave preference to peaceful and moderate solutions, you are my witness... . I think I know your heart well: you cannot wish that I betray my principles for anybody, even less for you. And if for a moment

³⁹Count Louis Philippe de Segur, Memoirs and Recollections, (Arno Press, New York, 1970), vol. III, p. 191.

you wished I did, then it could have been only in the heat of anger when you were not yourself. I let that moment pass and my confidence in you continues as if that moment never existed. I only remind you-- be what you really are. Your actions reflect on your position. Stop as soon as possible and with as little fuss as possible these destructive quarrels in which usually both sides are guilty... . Give me back soon my governor as I have known him for fifteen years.⁴⁰

This is not the voice of a despot, in the proper and negative sense of that word. She was obviously very much concerned about the possible effect of the quarrel, but she did not use her power to stop it, she only counseled like a friend.⁴¹ Never before had Russia known anything like it. The ruthless power of the despot had been accepted

⁴⁰Catherine to Sievers, October 17, 1776, Sbornik, vol. XXVII, pp. 120-121.

⁴¹It is difficult to say who the other party in this quarrel was. Sievers had differences with Viazemsky and Rumiantsev, and Pekarsky also mentions some family problems. However, from the letter it is fairly obvious that Sievers' opponent in this quarrel was somebody close to Catherine. She avoids taking sides, obviously trying to reconcile the two, without losing either one as a friend. For this reason Potemkin's involvement could be suspected, especially since we know that these two very capable men were extreme opposites in their philosophy. Sievers demanded far-reaching reforms, e.g., the emancipation of the serfs, and he felt that Potemkin's influence on Catherine was the main reason for her procrastination. Both men had demanded the removal of the other, and Catherine sometimes despaired over their antagonism.

as standard. Now that had changed dramatically, and the monarchs of Europe could well have learned from the ruler of Russia.

Catherine was not only a good judge of character, she also knew how to make best use of every man. Walliszewsky accuses her of poorly selecting her advisers. The fact is that she simply had very few men to choose from, and she needed every man. Her effort to recruit educated foreigners was not merely staged to impress Europe with her enlightened liberalism. Publicity was an important motive, but Catherine desperately needed brainpower for her reform program. When D'Alembert remarked that the king of France did not know every writer in France, she retorted: "In the North [Russia] rulers cannot afford not to know about excellent minds."⁴² This was a statement of fact. In the early years she probably felt that every philosophe was endowed with a practical mind, and therefore she tried to engage all of them. In retrospect one suspects that she cannot have been serious. Yet, her diplomatic correspondence with Russian agents abroad does

⁴²Catherine to D'Alembert, September, 1765, Sbornik, vol. X, pp. 42-45.

not support this suspicion. In August 1767, she instructed N. N. Panin to invite Mercier de la Rivière to St. Petersburg. In closing she said: "He will be more useful to us than to them, since they do not know how to make use of him."⁴³ This observation was not to be passed on to the press. Most likely she believed seriously what she said, but she learned quickly.⁴⁴ Rivière, Diderot, D'Alembert and Voltaire knew how to build utopia, but Catherine had to deal with Russian reality. When Diderot, during his stay in St. Petersburg, once more had given her the prescription for instant enlightenment, she replied:

You forget in all your plans for reformation the difference between our two positions: you work only upon paper which submits to everything; it is altogether obedient and supple, and opposes no obstacles, either to your imagination or to your pen; Whereas I, a poor Empress, I work upon human nature, which, on the contrary, is irritable and easily offended.⁴⁵

⁴³Catherine to Panin, August, 1767, Sbornik, p. 240.

⁴⁴Riviera really upset his Russian hosts. He immediately began to remodel the house which Catherine had held ready for him. On the doors he had the name plates of the various ministries of "his" government of Russia fastened. Catherine took this with good humour, but Riviera was soon returned to France.

⁴⁵Count L. P. Segur. Memoirs and Recollections, (New York, 1970), vol. III, p. 35.

The somewhat ironical reply indicates that Catherine grasped the complexity of the Russian situation. She began to look for men with practical ideas. Among the philosophes only Grimm continued to be a serious partner. The French enlighteners still stimulated her thinking, but she no longer seriously expected help from that quarter. She needed men like Sievers, the Turgot⁴⁶ of Russia, who streamlined the administration of his province, built roads and cities, invented work programs with pay for starving peasants, introduced potato growing in Russia, in 1765, as a first step of combating famine, and who could be entrusted with any task.

Catherine's reaction against Novikov and Radishchev was not only a reflection of her suspicion against all "revolutionaries" after the French Revolution, it was also an expression of her frustration with all idealists. Radishchev, in 1790, said little about the Russian situation that Catherine II had not said long before him, but he reminded her that she had failed. "Freedom is the soul of everything", she wrote into her journal early in 1762, yet she had not been able to give that freedom to the Russian peasant. This reminder was the great sin of Radishchev.

⁴⁶Turgot was a French reformer and one of the most progressive statesmen of the eighteenth century.

When Novikov in 1772 attacked serfdom⁴⁷ with almost the same story as Radishchev in Journey from Petersburg to Moscow, there was not even a hint of displeasure on Catherine's part, but at that time she still hoped to emancipate the serfs.⁴⁸ Twenty years later Novikov, too, had to feel the change.

She had applauded that busy publisher who printed more books between 1781 and 1784 than had been printed in the preceding twenty-five years. She had also approved of Novikov's appointment as editor of the Moscow University Gazette, whose readers increased from 600 to 4000. She had even participated in the discussion of current problems in the press. But the French Revolution had convinced her that the idealists were dangerous. Needless to say that Catherine's reaction was a general European phenomenon after the excesses of that revolution. Radishchev was sent to Irkutsk, while Novikov was guarded at Schlüsselburg--the mother of the Russian Enlightenment could no longer tolerate every enlightener. This was a tragic

⁴⁷N. I. Novikov, "Otryvok puteshestviia v..I.T.", Russkaia Literatura XVIII. veka, ed. G. P. Makahonenko, (Moscow, 1970).

⁴⁸See letter to Viazemsky in this thesis, p. 26.



development.⁴⁹ But in justice to enlightened absolutism it must be added that no death sentence was passed on the "enemies of the state", and only Novikov received a fifteen year sentence. Against the rest of the Lodge members only precautionary measures were taken. This compares well with our "more enlightened" age.

Toward the end of her reign, Catherine was haunted

⁴⁹Radishchev's death sentence was commuted by Catherine and she also ordered the chains taken off him for the transport. In Irkutsk he suffered only from boredom, as the local magistrate informed Count Vorontsov, one of Catherine's circle and Radishchev's friend. Novikov's fate in Schlüsselburg was far less enviable. He had not been sentenced for his enlightened ideas but rather for his involvement in the Masonic Lodge. From the documents in the Collection of the Russian Historical Society [Sbornik] it would appear that there are some obvious reasons for his unusually harsh treatment, by Catherine's standards. Prince Prozorovsky, governor of Moscow, and Sheshkovsky, Novikov's investigators, were extremely hostile to Novikov. In letters to Sheshkovsky, Prozorovsky refers to Novikov as a "swindler" who is "cunning, dishonest, bold and insolent" [Sbornik, vol. II, pp. 97-105]. To this Sheshkovsky added his own prejudiced opinion on the Masons. With the information from these men Catherine formed a very negative opinion of Novikov. The secret lodges were suspect of being revolutionary circles. The questions pressed by Catherine were: a. To whom and under what law do Novikov and Lopukhin make people take an oath of allegiance? b. Who takes the oath...? It was the secrecy that troubled her more than anything else. At the same time the Church warned against the possibility of a new Raskol, especially after Novikov's Masons experienced a Christian reorientation. Lastly, Sheshkovsky very cunningly used a document connecting Paul to the Novikov circle. This could well have been a main cause for Novikov's ill fortune.

by the French Revolution and yet she never used her power to influence the course of French history. She offered advice to the French princes as to what steps should be taken for the restoration of the monarchy, but she refused to be involved directly. This hands-off policy of Catherine has puzzled historians. Some have attributed it to La Harpe's influence. However, that would seem to be too simple an explanation. It is much more likely that her French policy was based on clear and cool deliberations of her own. Catherine wanted a strong France, because her foreign policy clashed with Austrian and Prussian interests. The partition of Poland was not proof of a spirit of collaboration among the enlightened monarchs, but rather an indication of the tensions between the three powers. Catherine never quite trusted either Prussia or Austria. At the same time she was challenged by Turkey (1787-1792) and Sweden, while England was taking a threatening attitude. In that situation the pragmatic Empress would not risk an active part in the salvation of the French Monarchy. When Paul insisted that Catherine make peace with Turkey to fight the French Revolution, the Empress replied:

French affairs are none of our business...
Even if we were at peace, no soldier of mine

would have been sent to France. I do not propose to meddle in what is not our business. It is futile to use guns against ideas.⁵⁰

There is good reason to believe that she was serious. The fact that she later urged Prussia and Austria to intervene in France only proves her political shrewdness. Prussian and Austrian involvement would keep those rivals busy and at the same time that involvement would have a negative effect on future relations of those countries with France, while Russia's financial assistance involved no risk and yet it would have to be remembered by France. Her attitude toward the Revolution is quite obviously hostile, but her actions must be interpreted in the context of the very complex and enormous international tensions of the time.

The first Turkish War, 1768-1774, had reopened the power struggle in Eastern Europe. At that time the Pugachev rebellion saved the Turks from total disaster and gave them another chance. In the second Turkish War, 1787-1792, Turkey and Sweden made a last effort to stem the Russian flood, but they had to face reality--it was too late. In 1795, Poland suffered the third partition by

⁵⁰L. M. Almedingen, Catherine, Empress of Russia, (New York, 1961), p. 276.

Prussia, Austria and Russia, and the once mighty neighbor of Russia ceased to exist. Russia had expanded far beyond her national borders. Under Catherine II the Grand-Duchy of Lithuania, the larger part of Poland, the Crimea, the Black Sea littoral, and the Ukraine⁵¹ were incorporated, and the penetration of Siberia and Kazakhstan were completed. Needless to say that this effort taxed Russian material and human resources, and thus affected internal development.

The question has been raised as to what was really more important to Catherine, the enlightenment of Russia or the glory of international success. The point is that the two cannot be separated. "Russia is a European state", she proclaimed in her Nakaz, and one may suspect that this was even more for European than for Russian consumption. Her greatest ambition was to make Russia accepted by Europe, and the Russians equals of Europeans. The victories of her armies contributed in this respect at least as much as the progress of her internal reforms. Furthermore, the success of her foreign policy secured her position on the throne of Russia, which was a prerequisite

⁵¹The Ukraine had been a vassal of Russia since 1654.

for any reform program at home. Nothing could have been more convincing in this respect than her experience with the Legislative Commission of 1768.

Catherine II was genuinely interested in reforming Russia and she began to implement her program immediately after ascending the throne. Her review of the achievements of her administration between 1762 and 1779 is an interesting document. It is not quite clear for what purpose it was prepared, but since it was written in Russian, criticizing the Senate severely, one could assume that it was addressed to that institution. The review first draws attention to the fact that when Catherine took over the reins of government, the Russian army in Prussia had not been paid for some time, and the treasury had a deficit of seventeen million rubles. She goes on to remind her readers that Holland had just refused Russia a two million ruble loan, "therefore credit and confidence were nonexistent". When she inquired about the yearly state revenue, the Senate sent her an income report which showed a total of sixteen million. Yet, when Viazemsky and Melgunov at the Empress' request made a revision, they found that the Senate should have collected twenty-eight million. She also reminds the Senate that while it was

the responsibility of that body to appoint the chief administrators of the principal towns of each district, the Senate had not been able to furnish her with the names and the number of the towns in question. "I sent five rubles to the Academy to buy a Kirilov atlas", she recalls, "and immediately presented it to the ruling Senate".⁵² The Russian administrative system was indeed in a dismal state of confusion, run by incompetent and dishonest administrators. Catherine never succeeded in altering this situation radically, but the system was gradually improved. In 1763 the Senate was divided into six departments. Each department could make final decisions, if consensus could be reached in the department. This accelerated operations considerably. In 1764, Catherine secularized the Church estates, weakening the position of the Church, but the situation of the peasants belonging to the estates was considerably improved. In April 1764, the "Ordinances to the Governors" of gubernijas were issued, which stressed the principle of decentralization of the administration, and the governors' direct

⁵²Memorandum of Catherine on institutions introduced during her reign, 1779, Sbornik, vol. XXVII, p. 171.

accountability to the Monarch and the Senate. Another very significant measure of Catherine's early reign was the "General Land Survey Edict" of September 1765. Elizabeth's government had attempted this survey, but it never made any progress. Under Panin's supervision, and with Catherine's active support, the survey made progress. By 1796 it had been completed in eighteen guberniias and under Nicholas I it was completed in the whole empire. In 1765, Catherine established the Free Economic Society, with far-reaching aims in respect to the improvement of the peasant's lot. At the same time she began to work on her Nakaz for the Legislative Commission. When Panin saw the first draft of the document he commented: "These axioms could tumble the walls."⁵³ The fact that Catherine published the Nakaz in spite of all opposition would suggest that she seriously desired to make far-reaching changes in Russian society.

On December 14, 1766, the convocation of the Legislative Commission was made public,⁵⁴ and in July 1767, the

⁵³Catherine II, "Memorandum on administrative reforms", Sbornik, vol. XXVII, p. 175.

⁵⁴Polnoe sobranie zakonov Rossiiskoi Imperii s 1649 g., (St. Petersburg, 1830-1843), vol. XVII, N. 12801.

Commission assembled in Moscow. All representatives had the same privileges, although they were not paid equal maintenance money. The composition of the Commission was surprisingly democratic for that age. Out of a total of 564 delegates there were only 162 representatives of the gentry, while the towns people were represented by 206 delegates, and the peasants and the Cossacks together by 112 representatives. The minority groups [inorodtsy] were given 56 seats in the Commission and only the serfs had no representation.⁵⁵ Catherine had gone farther than any ruler of her time, and the upper class was not only forced to sit down with peasants to discuss the Law of Russia, it was in the minority and thus could not impose its will. To Sumarokov's objection to majority rule in the assembly, because "the majority does not know the truth", Catherine replied: "The majority does not affirm truth, it only expresses its will."⁵⁶

Unfortunately, the democratic composition of the

⁵⁵R. V. Allen, The Great Legislative Commission (Harvard thesis, 1967), p. 67.

⁵⁶Soloviev, Istoriia Rossii, vol. XXVII, p. 33.

Assembly proved to be the main cause of its failure. There was endless quarreling about the rights of the various classes and it soon became clear to Catherine that this body was incapable of solving any of Russia's major social and political problems. However, the experience was not entirely in vain. The Empress had learned much about Russia--she had been in touch with reality. No less important was the fact that Russians got to know their Empress. Peasant Ivan had personally been in touch with "Matushka" Catherine, he had kissed her hand, and he had sat right next to boyars and princes. For the first time in history, peasants had been addressed as "citizens" and not as "subjects", and they had been elated when the articles of the Nakaz were read to them. On their way home the peasants spread the fame of Matushka Catherine, and perhaps they also added that the nobility opposed the proposed improvement of the people's lot. In Paris, Berlin, Vienna, and London, the Nakaz was good publicity, but in Russia it created an unprecedented enthusiasm for the Empress which was much more important for Catherine than the applause of Europe. The bitterness of the old nobility, as expressed by Shcherbatov, at this point presented no danger for Catherine.

Enlightened absolutism had taken a risk--it had alienated the nobles. While it is impossible to say whether Catherine at this stage hoped to reform Russia without the support of the landowners, there is sufficient evidence to suggest that she was trying to broaden her power base at the expense of the conservative old nobility. The choice of Bibikov, who supported Catherine's emancipation program, as marshal of the Legislative Commission, was taken as a slap in the face by the conservatives who had advocated Shcherbatov's candidacy.^{57,58}

In spite of the fact that the Legislative Commission did not achieve any immediate results, the attempt in

⁵⁷Paul Dukes, Catherine the Great and the Russian Nobility, (London, 1967), p. 79.

⁵⁸Henry Shirley, the secretary of the British Legation in St. Petersburg, informed London that Catherine II had taken care to have in the Commission only those who will follow her dictates. [Shirley's reports, Sbornik, vol. XII, pp. 304-307] This claim is obviously erroneous. Catherine could not have controlled the election of 564 delegates in 20 gubernias. Only in Estonia did the Senate intervene against the irregular election of the representative of the nobility. (Duke, Catherine the Great, p.68) Ironically, the only manipulated election was Bibikov's election as marshal of the Assembly, because Catherine feared that Shcherbatov would not let the Commission function in Catherine's "democratic" fashion.

itself was an important historical event, and Catherine's Nakaz for the Commission must be seen as the most significant document of the Russian Enlightenment. The fact that the French government prohibited its import would suggest that Europeans took this work very seriously. In her letter of acceptance of a Prussian Academy membership, March 4, 1768, Catherine said:

Gentlemen, my whole knowledge consists in the recognition that all men are brothers and throughout my whole life I will endeavor to master the art of acting accordingly. If I succeeded in anything, to this point, attribute it to this truth.⁵⁹

This was obviously meant for European consumption, but it was more than mere propaganda. At that point there had not been a Turkish War or a Pugachev Rebellion, and Catherine could still afford to live in the enlighteners' dream world. But even after the Pugachev Rebellion, Catherine did not discard her humane concern for all men. She was forced to face reality, but that did not change her character. Around 1786, Catherine's mind still pondered the problems of her poorer subjects. An entry in her journal of that time reads:

⁵⁹Catherine's letter to the Prussian Academy, March 4, 1768, Sbornik, vol. X, pp. 281-282.

How to help the poor people:

- open granaries and public purse
- decrease customs duties and taxes
- cut obligations for public works
- lift the prohibition on fishing, hunting, and lumber cutting
- facilitate the sale of bread...urging the rich to open their granaries
- free the people from the custom of making "presents" to their lords...
- prohibit the extravagance of funerals
- introduce more lenient laws and distinguish between offenses which may be due to poverty and those which are real vices⁶⁰

She no longer proposes radical changes, but it is evident that she had not forgotten about the majority of her subjects.

Catherine's broad interests and her practical mind made her a real stewardess [khoziaika] of her domain. She took interest in Sievers' potato fields⁶¹ and in the development of agriculture in the province of Irkutsk; she colonized the newly conquered regions of the Ukraine and introduced Western European methods of agriculture; she encouraged writers and painters and was one of the greatest art collectors of all times; she encouraged industrial development and was a most active city builder. While

⁶⁰Catherine's personal notes on poverty and on more lenient sentences against poor people, Sbornik, vol. XLII, pp. 456-457.

⁶¹Sievers introduced potato growing in Russia in 1765, as an effective measure against the almost regular recurrence of famines in northern Russia.

Russia's population almost doubled between 1762 and 1796, the state revenue rose from sixteen to sixty-four million rubles.

From the very beginning of this active reign one issue was always on Catherine's mind--education. In that field Russian backwardness was most conspicuous. For centuries her neighbors had treated Russia as a dangerous, but "fortunately" ignorant giant and Poland and Sweden had remonstrated repeatedly against British desires to establish trade relations with Russia, because the "barbarians" might learn and become unmanageable. In 1569, King Sigismund of Poland wrote to Queen Elizabeth on the subject of the Russian danger:

As we have written afore, so now we write again to your Majesty, that we know and feele of a surety the Muscowite, enemy to all liberty under the heavens, dayly to grow mightie by the increase of such things as be brought to the Narve, while not onely warres but also weapons artificers and arts be brought unto him; by means whereof he maketh himself strong to vanquish all others. Which things, as long as this voyage to Narve is used can not be stopped. And we perfectly know your Majesty can not be ignorant how great the cruelty is of the said enemy of what force he is, what tyranny he useth on his subjects and in what servile sort they be under him. We seemed hitherto to vanquish him only in this, that he was rude of arts and ignorant of policies. If so be that

this navigation of the Narve continu, what shall be unknown to him? ...⁶²

However, the fears that Russia would learn too quickly were not really justified, because Russian reluctance to learn from the West was far greater than western reluctance to pass on information. The slightest innovation was resisted by the ruling class and especially by the ignorant clergy which was in the majority in the Church.⁶³ The moderate reforms of Patriarch Nikon, accepted by the Ecclesiastic Council of 1666-1667, created

⁶²Vladimir Grigorievich Simkovich, "The History of the School in Russia", quoting Hakluyt Society Publications, vol. XX, (London, 1856), pp. 16-17, The Educational Review, (N. Y.), May 1907, p. 491.

⁶³Russian Archbishops complain again and again about the ignorance of their priests. The Church Council of 1551 [The Stoglav] recorded, that "unless the illiterates are ordained the churches will remain without chant and the Christians will die unrepentant." [P. Miliukov, Outlines of Russian Culture, vol. I, p. 10]. This situation was practically beyond the control of the bishops, because priests were elected by the people of the parish and then presented to the bishop for ordination. In the seventeenth century the election of priests was gradually abandoned for appointment by the diocese. However, due to the reluctance of the dioceses to accept responsibility, and also due to the lack of an effective church administration, in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries emerged the hereditary priesthood in Russia. This new system was even worse than the old one, since it made absolutely no demands on the candidate. As a result, to ignorance was added the lowest moral standard of many candidates for the priesthood.

religious strife and a lasting split in the Russian Church. The same council urged priests of the Orthodox Church "to teach their children to read [italics by G. E.], so that they might be worthy to succeed their fathers in their clerical position, because at present the country clergy is so ignorant that it is not fit to take care even of herds of cattle, to say nothing about men's souls."⁶⁴ Yet, even this minimal goal was not achieved. One hundred years later there were still many totally illiterate priests. However, change was in the wind even before Peter the Great. The success of the Jesuits in Poland indirectly prepared the road toward reform in Russia. Threatened by the Jesuit influence, Orthodox clergy and laymen in the western Ukrainian borderlands realized that only education could save Orthodoxy, and the new Bratstvo [brotherhood] schools and Peter Mohyla's Kievan Academy (1633) very soon competed successfully with the Jesuit schools. These Ukrainian schools, fortunately, were not under Moscow's control, which could have prevented the quick pace of change in those regions. When the Ukraine accepted the overlordship of Moscow, in 1654, those

⁶⁴Simkovich, "The History of the School in Russia", p. 492.

schools were already firmly established, and Czars and Patriarchs began to recruit administrators, bishops, and teachers from that center of learning. However, very little changed in Great Russia until the eighteenth century.

For centuries the Russian government had left education in the hands of a Church that became more and more entrenched in its "old ways". Peter the Great changed this drastically, because his first concern was the army, and his reforms were aimed at military efficiency. Peter's new schools, such as the School of Mathematics and Engineering (1701), and Glueck's gymnasium (1705), established Russia's westernization trend. However, these reforms were detrimental to the existing parochial schools, through which the Church provided at least some elementary education, although illiteracy had remained widespread. Pososhkov, a contemporary of Peter the Great, urged the Czar to introduce compulsory public education, "since there are many villages without a single literate person."⁶⁵ The "cypher schools", which Peter

⁶⁵Vladimirsky-Budanov, Gosudarstvo i narodnoe obrazovanie, p. 10.

attempted to make compulsory for the nobility, were aiming in that direction. However, not even Peter I could break the resistance of "old Russia", and those schools eventually failed.⁶⁶ Thus, only Peter's military schools were successful, while elementary education remained in a pitiful state. The Church still maintained its parochial schools, but their further decline was inevitable. The elite-oriented professional schools attracted the more gifted teachers and students, and as a result the parochial schools lost what little prestige they had and their standards continued to decline. This situation remained basically unchanged until 1762, when Catherine II became autocrat of Russia.

⁶⁶Statistics show that in 1727 only 2.5% of the cypher school students were of upper class background. [Simkovich, "History of the School in Russia", p. 492].

CHAPTER II

THE IDEALISTIC PHASE
OF CATHERINE'S EDUCATIONAL EFFORT
1762-1768

The rules of education are the fundamental
institutes which train us to be citizens.

Catherine II

When Catherine arrived in St. Petersburg, she was shocked by the coarseness of manners and by the brutal treatment of servants at Elizabeth's court. She noticed that European diplomats showed little respect for her adopted country, and that they considered it to be backward and "uncivilized". Her ambition to be a ruler of a great nation could only be realized if Russia was changed. It is therefore not surprising that Montesquieu became dear to her, because he assured her that nations could be changed--through education. It was not an entirely new idea, but Montesquieu appealed to the young princess just at the right time and in relatively simple language. "The laws of education...prepare us for civil life," Montesquieu said, and, "if the people in general [the

nation] have a principle, their constituent parts [individual citizens]...will have one also."¹ By introducing education and setting an example of "general principle", the state would elevate the whole nation to a higher level of culture. This was on Catherine's mind throughout the eighteen years of her isolation.

Catherine was not the first reformer of Russia. The important role of education had been recognized by other rulers and Peter I had opened the eighteenth century with a dramatic effort to catch up with western Europe. His professional military schools were relatively successful, and throughout the first half of the eighteenth century young Russians were sent to western European institutions to be educated. However, these efforts were too shallow and too limited to make an impact on the whole nation. It was left to Catherine to study the problems of education in depth, and to attack them systematically.²

¹Montesquieu, The Spirit of the Laws, Book IV, p. 29.

²Elizabeth's reign had its bright stars in Lomonosov and I.I.Shuvalov. Unfortunately these capable men found little support. However, I.I.Shuvalov made his mark in history with the establishment of the University of Moscow, in 1755. In 1760, Shuvalov presented to Elizabeth a "Plan for Gymnasiums and Schools" for the nobility. While the "Plan" was not implemented, it is an interesting document. Shuvalov's ideas touch the new era of Catherine II.

Before Peter I, Russian education was in the hands of the Church. It was very elementary, but fairly widespread and open to all. With Peter's accession the situation was reversed. The state's demand for specialists shifted the emphasis to professional training and higher education, while elementary education suffered a decline. Peter's attempt to correct this situation with his cypher schools failed, and the establishment of the Academy of Sciences, in 1725, only enhanced the prevailing trend. The desire of the state to compete with western Europe made the elite-oriented school a necessity.

Catherine II needed the elite as much as Peter I, and therefore she never dreamed of eliminating the professional schools, but she intended to shift the priorities in the state's educational effort. She had accepted the faith of the European enlighteners, that the world could be made a happy place by educating whole nations, not only the elite, and her optimism was boundless:

All present vices do not mean anything; they are similar to receding high waters. When the water returns to its previous boundaries and banks it resumes a flow more natural than before: [for society] the river banks are provided by education.³

³Catherine II, Empress of Russia, Sochinenija vol. III, p. 12.

Although Catherine never acknowledged any indebtedness to Rousseau, it is fairly obvious that his influence on the idealistic phase of Catherine's reform efforts is second only to Locke's. The "Tutor" of Emile, and the "Lawmaker" of the Social Contract, both surface in Catherine's philosophy. This was the general trend in Europe, and Catherine was only following the main stream of Enlightenment thinking.

There may have been several reasons why Catherine refused to pay tribute to the author of Emile. Rousseau was invited by Gregory Orlov to settle in Russia. Obviously, the invitation was extended by the Empress, but Rousseau did not accept the generous offer. Then, in 1771, he published an essay, "Reflections on the State of Poland", suggesting a perfect constitution for the Republic of Poland. This was certainly not appreciated by Catherine who at that time worked on a Russo-Prussian solution to the Polish problem. Finally, Rousseau offended every Russian by some remarks in his Social Contract. "Peter the Great", Rousseau said, "had the talent of a copyist; he had no true genius, which is creative... . Some of the things he did were sound; most were misguided

[italics by G. E.]."4 She could not possibly claim as teacher, the detractor of Peter the Great, but in general the Social Contract was not as obnoxious to her as generally believed. After all, not the French Revolutionary Assembly was first to use the term "citizen" in Rousseau's sense--it was first adopted by Catherine II in the Instructions [Nakaz] for the Legislative Commission of 1768. And while Rousseau's chapter on monarchies appears to be very critical of princes, he also said, that the "monarchy is suited for large states" and that "the power which rests on the love of the people is undoubtedly the greatest... . We cannot imagine any constitution [other than monarchical] where more action would be produced by less effort."5 Catherine could easily accept these axioms. Even more obvious is Rousseau's influence on Catherine's educational philosophy. Locke is easily recognizable as one of her spiritual fathers, because she adapted part of Locke's, Thoughts Concerning Education, in her "Instructions for

⁴Jean-Jacques Rousseau, The Social Contract, trans. Maurice Cranston, (Penguin Classics, 2nd ed., 1970), Book II, ch. 2, p. 90.

⁵Ibid., Book III, ch. 6, pp. 116-117.

the Education of the Grand Dukes". However, the author of Emile very likely deserves more credit than usually accorded to him. Locke's major concern was the family, while Rousseau stressed the role of the individual in society, thus touching on Catherine's interest. She appreciated Locke's concern for "a sound mind in a sound body",⁶ and advised Russians "to follow his sound teaching", but she wanted more than happy individuals. "The rules of education", Catherine said, "are the fundamental institutes which train us to be citizens."⁷ This article is an adaptation of Montesquieu, but in the context of Catherine's Instructions [Nakaz] for the Legislative Commission it sounds much more like an echo of Rousseau's philosophy:

We must choose whether we will make a man or a citizen; we cannot do both... . Civilized man is only a relative unit, the numerator of a fraction, that depends on its denominator, and whose value consists in its relation to the integral body of society.⁸

⁶John Locke, Thoughts Concerning Education, (London, 1880), p. 59.

⁷Catherine II, Nakaz (Instructions), in Sochineniia, vol. I, ch. 14, article 348.

⁸J. J. Rousseau, His Educational Theories Selected from Emile, Julie and other Writings, ed. R. L. Archer, (Barron's Educational Series, Woodbury, New York, 1964), p. 55.

Locke advised parents how to bring up healthy children, with a sound moral attitude, while Rousseau proposed a theory for moral education of society. The enlightened absolutists were naturally more interested in "society", although Catherine's respect for the "individual" cannot be denied.

Catherine II faced a dilemma with these ideals. How could she educate "citizens" without a general public education system? Yet, the problems of shifting from the traditional professional class oriented to a classless universal educational system were immense, and Peter III had aggravated the problem by abolishing the service obligation of the nobility in 1762. She could not afford to alienate the nobility by revoking Peter's decree, and therefore, the trend toward a more rigid class structure was not broken, it was actually enhanced during her reign. Furthermore, as the nobles left the state service, she was forced to create a new elite which eventually would swell the ranks of the privileged class and add to the burden of the nation. But Catherine had to face reality, and she learned very quickly to opt for practical rather than for ideal solutions.

The man on whom Catherine relied for developing and

implementing most of her early educational projects was Ivan Ivanovich Betskoy, the illegitimate son of the Russian ambassador to Sweden, Prince Trubetskoy, and a Swedish noble lady. Betskoy had received a good liberal education, had traveled widely, knew Europe well, and he was well acquainted with the writings of the philosophes. Through his European experience he was better informed than Catherine, but he shared her educational ideals. On June 28, 1762, Betskoy had been in Peter's camp, but on September 22, 1762, we find him in Catherine's coronation party in Moscow. Not much later, he became Catherine's building director in St. Petersburg. His brilliant intellect and his resourcefulness fascinated Catherine, and therefore she was willing to close her eyes to his weaknesses.⁹ By 1763 Betskoy had become the unofficial minister of education, and during the first decade of Catherine's reign his ideas and projects dominated Catherine's

⁹Betskoy's vanity and his imperious inclination were well known to Catherine and yet she seemed to tolerate his arbitrary and occasionally even unauthorized actions. As a result the rumor spread that Betskoy was Catherine's father. While Betskoy had of course traveled in Europe, he most likely never heard of Catherine's mother. The only plausible explanation for Catherine's tolerant attitude toward Betskoy can be found in her ability to ignore the weaknesses of able men, while appreciating their best qualities. This is characteristic of Catherine throughout her long reign.

educational policy.

Catherine's first major reform affected the Artillery and Engineering Corps, which had been established by Peter I. On August 8, 1762, Catherine had requested a report on the conditions of the Corps. She must have been aware of certain shortcomings in the training of cadets in that institution. The Senate reported that the Corps could not train officers properly, because of a lack of teachers and resources.

On October 25, 1762, the Senate passed a resolution which reorganized the Artillery and Engineering Corps, creating in reality two new military schools. The Artillery and Engineering Corps was renamed to The Noble Artillery and Engineering Corps, thus becoming a school for the nobility. To this institution was attached a School of Arts [Shkola Khudozhestv] for children of common soldiers. The name is misleading, but the Senate's resolution clarifies its meaning:

They [students] will be assigned to the higher arts, e.g.: mechanics, architecture, masonry, iron casting, artillery and gunpowder mastery. And since these sciences demand great knowledge,

teach them arithmetic and geometry, and some of them algebra...¹⁰

Class oriented education thus was continued by the Empress' first educational decree, and the reasons for this decision are not difficult to see. Four months after Catherine's accession her position was still precarious and she could not afford drastic changes. Furthermore, now that the nobility no longer was obliged to serve the state, service had to be made attractive in order to find volunteers. At the same time, Catherine encouraged more commoners to prepare for state service. The school for the gentry had 146 openings for students, while the school for children of commoners at the Noble Artillery and Engineering Corps was open to 150 students. Paragraph 8 of the statute of the "School of Arts" said that after completing their studies, "depending on their knowledge and ability, students shall be promoted to non-commissioned officer ranks,;...but shall not be limited to those ranks. Those who are outstanding in service and competence shall be promoted to commissioned officer ranks in the Corps."¹¹ Therefore it might be more

¹⁰Senate report on the establishment of a school for the nobility at the Artillery and Engineering Corps, October 25, 1762, Polnoe Sobranie Zakonov, No. 11696.

¹¹Ibid.

appropriate to speak of an elitist orientation rather than a class orientation in this first reform. It would appear that in the given situation this was a sensible approach.

Early in 1763, immediately after her return from Moscow, where she had stayed after the coronation, Catherine concentrated on educational projects. In her search for exemplary educational institutions she discovered the school of the Lutheran St. Peter's Church in St. Petersburg. That school had been in existence for many years but only with the arrival of Anton Friedrich B^üsching it began to attract the attention of leading educators. B^üsching, pastor of St. Peter's, had transformed that school into a modern European gymnasium. The newly reformed school had met with much opposition from within B^üsching's Church, but in October 1762, it opened its door to fifty students. B^üsching's new teaching methods quickly won over students and parents and by April, 1763, the school had three hundred students of both sexes. This school was an outstanding example of the German Enlightenment. B^üsching's school was open to all nationalities, and in the second year of its existence, among the three hundred students there were German, Russian, Armenian, Kalmuck, Italian,

French, English, Swiss, Swedish, Finnish, Estonian, and Latvian boys and girls.¹² Because of the growing number of Russian students, Bűsching asked the Archbishop of St. Petersburg to send him a priest of the Orthodox Church as instructor of religion for those students.¹³

It is not surprising that the Empress eventually tried to engage that successful reformer. When she approached him in 1763, through Betskoy, Bűsching stressed, that a state could not be reformed without education. Therefore, he said, "I have established the school at St. Peter's Church, where a main motive is the education of good citizens and good parents."¹⁴ Such schools, he urged Betskoy, should be established in all cities of the Russian Empire. Several days later

¹²Bűsching, A. F., Eigene Lebensgeschichte, (Halle, 1789), p. 401.

¹³It is rather interesting that a number of Orthodox clerics declared that they had nothing against the participation of Russian children in Protestant religious instruction. However, Bűsching wisely insisted on having an Orthodox priest on the faculty. Thus, the Synod would always be informed on the school and it helped to establish a good relationship between the Russian and the foreign communities of Petersburg. Bűsching was not satisfied with the qualifications of the first candidate of the Archbishop, but the appointment of Hieromonach Arsenius was a very satisfactory decision. According to Bűsching, Arsenius was a well educated cleric and an enlightened and inspiring teacher. [Bűsching, p. 403].

¹⁴Ibid., p. 470.

Büsching was informed that the Empress approved of his plan and that Betskoy was working on a project for schools for all provinces. When Betskoy suggested that foreign teachers could be hired for those schools, Büsching vigorously objected. He maintained that foreigners would not be willing to teach in the provinces and that they would be totally unsuitable because they did not know language and customs of the country. "A nation must have its own teachers and educators," he concluded.¹⁵

Catherine was impressed by Büsching's frankness and above all by his achievements, and on January 31, 1764, she granted Büsching's school a charter.¹⁶ The Empress cannot be credited with establishing this school,

¹⁵Büsching, Eigene Lebensgeschichte, p. 472.

¹⁶Charter of St. Peter's Lutheran Church, January 22, 1764, Polnoe Sobranie Zakonov, No. 12021. Büsching relates in this connection an interesting anecdote. Count Münnich was the president of St. Peter's church council. He was delighted with the charter, but discovering two orthographical errors in the charter he cut out the Empress' signature, returned it personally to Catherine, and asked her for a new copy of the charter. Büsching was embarrassed by the general's behavior, but to his surprise Catherine had the charter rewritten and sent back to him with 4000 rubles from her personal account for the school fund. The story is even more revealing if one considers the fact that Münnich was the man who had stood by Peter III to the last minute.

but she may be credited with saving that excellent institution. When B^üsching returned to Germany, in 1765, the charter and the prestige that Catherine had given to the school certainly saved it from B^üsching's powerful opponents who might have attempted to destroy his work.

It is difficult to say, whether B^üsching's influence on Catherine's early plans was as great as he claims, but soon after his conversations with Betskoy a number of reforms were initiated in quick succession.

On September 1, 1763, Catherine accepted the first part of Betskoy's general plan for an Imperial Educational Institution and Hospital for orphans in Moscow.¹⁷ This plan revealed the Empress' general educational philosophy which dominated the reforms of the first decade of her reign, and it is a remarkable document. Russia had known some orphanages before Catherine's time, but they provided little more than a roof for orphans. Generally orphans were given to anybody who was willing to raise a child as his "property", hence orphans were condemned to serf status,

¹⁷Manifesto of September 1, 1763, and Betskoy's project for orphanages, Polnoe Sobranie Zakonov, No. 11908.

without any rights or protection.¹⁸ This dismal situation was now changed with legislation that provided not only protection but also education, professional training, and health care for homeless children. The plan provided for sufficient staffing of the institution, to assure proper care at any time. In addition to male and female nurses the institution was provided with a chief guardian, a medical doctor and one assistant, a midwife, two priests, several deacons, and the required number of teachers to teach reading, writing, arithmetic and various trades. The regulations of acceptance were designed to encourage desperate mothers to come to the institution's hospital for delivery. A woman could even cover her face in order to avoid recognition, and no questions were to be asked.¹⁹ If a child was brought to the institution, attendants were instructed to ask only whether it was known if the child

¹⁸In justice to Betskoy's predecessor, Ivan Shuvalov, it must be said that he had repeatedly tried to found orphanages. His last attempt in this direction was in 1760, when he told Elizabeth that "she had heard him so many times on the foundation of orphanages, but nothing had been done to that day." [Maikov, Betskoy, p. 111] Did Elizabeth not take note of his frustration and quite obvious reproach? We don't know, but no action followed.

¹⁹The delivery station opened on April 21, 1764 [Maikov, p. 156]. In 1764, fourteen children were born in the hospital, in 1765, 75 women gave birth in the hospital, and in 1795, 303 babies were delivered in the hospital. [Maikov, p. 204].

was baptized. The doors of the institution were to be open day and night and anybody finding a child and taking it to the orphanage was awarded two rubles. There was to be one nurse for two infants, up to the age of two, when the children joined a larger group. Between the ages of seven and eleven all children were to be instructed in reading and in useful trades. The ages twelve to fourteen were to receive religious instruction in addition to the elementary program. After this stage every child could choose the trade of his liking and receive instruction in that trade for another four to five years. If young people at that time were willing to marry within the institution they were given the privilege of living in the institution for another three to four years, while working and saving for their household. The whole program of Betskoy's orphanage stressed preparation for life. Rousseau's educational theory, as presented in Emile, very likely served as a model for Betskoy and Catherine, but they had to deal with reality, and even at this early stage they were much closer to it than the philosopher. Moral education was stressed, but not to the detriment of practical training. Corporal punishment was not permitted under any circumstances. It was banned from the

institution so that children would not be exposed to any kind of cruelty. For good behavior an award of twenty-five rubles was to be given to departing students. Furthermore, the children of the Moscow orphanage received significant privileges. Gifted students were sent for further education to the University of Moscow or to the Academy of Arts, depending on their inclinations. The most significant of the privileges said:

All those who have been brought up in this institution, and their descendants, shall be free for all times and nobody, and under no circumstances, can enslave them.²⁰

The second and third parts of Betskoy's general plan for the orphanage in Moscow were not ready before August 13, 1767. However, the first part sheds considerable light on the prevailing Enlightenment philosophy on "educating useful members of society", and it became an example of lower education for the working class in general. The founding of the Moscow Imperial Educational Institute and Hospital for orphans, in April 1764, initiated the era of the Russian Enlightenment.

²⁰Polnoe Sobranie Zakonov, No. 11908.

Critics will be quick to point out that Betskoy's general plan for orphanages was very idealistic, but that it did not commit the state to support these institutions. Therefore, Catherine could sign a decree and initiate a project that cost her nothing. Could this project succeed under these circumstances? Would the public be willing to pay the bill that was too high for Catherine's government? The fact is that the response of the Russian public to Catherine's appeal for support of these homes for "innocent children" was impressive. The Church appealed to all "who love God and their fellow men" to support "this very useful and God pleasing work", and it advised its bishops and priests to preach sermons on Christian compassion and charity.²¹ This support by the Church was invaluable and although orphanages were not built in every town, a number of educational institutions on Betskoy's model were established all over Russia.²²

²¹Maikov, P. M., Betskoy, opyt biografii, (St. Petersburg, 1904), p. 122.

²²The following orphanages were established during this period: Moscow (April, 1764), Novgorod (1766), St. Petersburg (1770), Olonets (1771), Eniseisk (1771), Ostashkov (1773), Yuriev (1773), Tikhvin (1773), Kargopol (1774), Belozersk (1775), Kiev (1775), on the estate of Timkovsky (1775), Vologda (1786), Kazan (?), Pensa (?). [Maikov, p. 149].

The results of this first attempt must have been gratifying for Catherine, especially because of the overwhelming response from the "third class", since the majority of the founders were merchants and free peasants. The enlighteners seemed to be right, the middle class was necessary for progress.

The privileges of the new orphanages, e.g. the right to have a loan bank, the right to build factories, the right to buy and sell property, including villages, soon put them on a strong economic foundation. It would appear that Betskoy and Catherine could have been quite pleased with their success, but their contemporary critic, Shcherbatov, points to a very disturbing record of their orphanages.²³ Since it was very easy to dump a child, all the orphanages were soon overcrowded. Parents hoped to give their children a better chance in life through that new institution. The Moscow orphanage received 523 infants during the first year, and the ideal situation of Betskoy's plan turned into a nightmare for the staff. There were not nearly enough feeding nurses available, all rooms were overcrowded, eighteenth century sanitary

²³Shcherbatov, M. M. Prince, On the Corruption of Morals in Russia, (Cambridge, 1969), p. 253.

standards were inadequate, and under these conditions they broke down completely. The death rate of the first five years was so shocking that one wonders about the usefulness of the institution. In 1764, 424 of 523 infants died, and in the worst year, 1767, of 1089 infants only 16 survived. Fortunately the death rate dropped to 61.67% in 1768, to 39.2% in 1769, and by 1770 to 24.65%. The explanation for this marked improvement can probably be found in more nurses and larger facilities. However, by 1780, in Moscow the situation was again out of control, as statistics make evident.

Death rate of orphans²⁴

	<u>Moscow</u>	<u>St. Petersburg</u>
1781	87.9%	20.8%
1782	89.3%	21.9%
1783	89.3%	28.3%
1789	86.9%	11.0%
1790		10.1%

Why was Moscow's record worse than St. Petersburg's? The major cause could have been overcrowding. In 1781, 13,196 infants were left at the doors of the Moscow orphanage and

²⁴Brockhaus-Efron, "Vospitatel'nye doma", in Entsiklopedicheskii slovar, (St. Petersburg, 1892), vol. XIII, p. 276.

in 1789, this flood had risen to 16,636. In the same year in St. Petersburg only 9,250 children were received by the institution. The St. Petersburg orphanage benefited also from the proximity of Catherine's court which was eager to exhibit success to its western visitors. Betskoy was in charge of both institutions, but the St. Petersburg orphanage developed under his eyes. The lowering of the infant death rate in St. Petersburg to 10.1% was an unusual achievement and quite possibly an international record. However, measured by the overall mortality of infants, results were shocking.

The question is, can the enlighteners be blamed for those early failures? Their idea was sound and the statute of the institution was one of the most progressive pieces of legislation of the eighteenth century. However, there was no trained or experienced staff, and in Moscow they could simply not handle the unforeseen numbers that flooded the orphanage. The disaster of the early experience only proved how badly the institutions were needed.²⁵

²⁵The high death rate of infants in orphanages remained a problem until the second half of the nineteenth century. It was believed at the time that breast-feeding was the only way to raise a child. Because of the shortage of feeding nurses (mothers who actually sold their milk), a nurse would breast-feed several, and not always

Beginning with 1764, the whole educational policy of Russia came under critical evaluation along the lines of new European ideas. During the first half of the eighteenth century all efforts had focused on higher education. The military schools, the Academy, and the University were established to serve immediate government needs. If the state established some gymnasiums and elementary schools, it was for the sole purpose of supplying students to the higher institutions of learning. After the establishment of the University of Moscow, Shuvalov realized that a broader base of secondary schools was needed, and in 1760 he proposed to establish gymnasiums in all major cities, and lower schools in smaller towns.²⁶ This project would have broadened the educational system but it did not dream of education for all. The class-professional orientation still dominated, and

the same children. Thus, any disease was quickly spread by the feeding method. When the cause was recognized, Russian authorities encouraged mothers to keep their children at least for the first year. They were even paid by the orphanage for raising their child. After this policy was instituted in 1859, the death rate of infants at the orphanages dropped sharply. [Brockhaus-Efron, Entsiclopedicheskii slovar, vol. XIII, p. 276].

²⁶Polnoe Sobranie Zakonov, No. 11144.

academics like Fischer, Miller, and Aepinus, of the Petersburg Academy, supported this position.²⁷ However, Elizabeth did not give any consideration to Shuvalov's project and after Catherine's accession the plan was discarded, because the new ruler had much more far-reaching reforms in mind. The statute of the new Moscow orphanage (1763) pointed in the general direction of the new trend, and early in 1764, Betskoy formulated Catherine's educational philosophy in a report "On the Education of Young People of Both Sexes".²⁸ Betskoy started his report with a very realistic appraisal of the situation, cautioning the Empress that results would be very slow in coming. "To conquer the superstitions of ages, to give the nation a new education, and so to say a new birth, is incredibly difficult,"²⁹ and for that reason "few rulers are willing

²⁷It must be remembered that developments in Russia were not really that far behind western Europe. Frederick II of Prussia introduced universal, compulsory education on October 2, 1763, while Austria, France and England were behind Prussia.

²⁸Betskoy's report, "On the Education of Young People", March 22, 1764, Polnoe Sobranie Zakonov, No. 12103.

²⁹Ibid.

to touch these problems". He reminds Catherine that she has chosen this road consciously and that success will entirely depend on her "steadfastness and generosity". He reiterates the aim of the Moscow orphanage, "to save poor innocent children" from death, and their mothers from the sin of killing them, and--not less important to the enlighteners-- to transform such people into "useful members of society". This is basically the new goal of education. The state no longer insisted on being the sole beneficiary of education, although it is obvious that the enlightened rulers were aware of the fact that indirectly the state would benefit more from the new system. However, the individual citizen's place and role in society was recognized, and that was a great leap forward.

The report then analyzes the results of Russian educational policy from Peter I to Catherine II and concludes that during that period Russia made a great effort, but benefitted very little because the approach was wrong.

A mind enlightened with knowledge does not yet make a good and upright citizen; and often it is even to the detriment of a person, if from his earliest years...virtues

have not been planted into his heart through [proper] education.³⁰

In other words, "education is the root of good and evil".

The recommendation then offered by Betskoy follows very closely Rousseau's ideas, as propagated in Emile. Children are corrupted by their parents who have been corrupted by their parents, therefore, to break this vicious circle, a "new race" of teachers or "new fathers and mothers" are necessary. For this reason children have to be taken away from their parents at an early age, to be educated in ideal surroundings where they will not see the bad example of parents and other adults. At the age of eighteen or twenty, it is hoped, they will have developed all the virtues that will make it possible for them to resist the temptations of a corrupt society. Eventually the nation would be "reborn". To the enlighteners this appeared to be a most logical conclusion. But Betskoy warned that "on the first institutions depends all education of the new race. Therefore, caution and wisdom are necessary in the choice of educators". Furthermore, he advised the Empress to "do it well and complete it, or

³⁰Polnoe Sobranie Zakonov, No. 12103.

leave it as it is and don't start at all".³¹ Catherine most likely remembered this advice in later years when her first educational offensive had ground to a halt.

In the introduction to the report Betskoy had stated that he merely wrote down every point that the Empress had made in a preceding conversation, but one would be inclined not to trust such confession of complete subservience. There is evidence that Betskoy was a man who had a will of his own. However, he was not the sole author of the document either, since the last two paragraphs of the "General Guidelines" cannot have been his work. They deal with specific instructions for Betskoy. He is charged with establishing a boarding school at the Academy of Arts in St. Petersburg and a school for 200 noble girls in the same city. Furthermore, he was given the task of establishing schools in all gubernias of Russia. There seems to have been perfect accord between Catherine and Betskoy at that stage, although the General could not get along with anybody else at the court. Their philosophies of education were almost identical, their

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"Ili dielat' i dielat' tseloe i sovershennoe, ili tak ostavit' i ne nachinat'." [Betskoy, "On the Education of Youths", Polnoe sobranie zakonov, No. 12103].

judgements coincided, as Catherine informed Mme. Geoffrin,³² and Catherine admired Betskoy's European experience which she lacked.

Now that an educational philosophy had been developed, Catherine could experiment with actual reforms, and she began from the most neglected corner--the education of women. On March 2, 1764, Betskoy presented to the Empress the "Statute on the Education of Noble Girls". It is obvious that the idea of a school for noble girls was not developed over night. Saint-Cyr, in France, which actually served as a model for Catherine's first girls' school, was well known in Europe long before Catherine became Empress. Toward the end of Elizabeth's reign, Catherine prepared a long list of problems that demanded immediate attention. Number one on that list was a school for girls on the model of St. Cyr.³³ After her accession she instructed Prince D. M. Golitsyn, Russia's able ambassador in Vienna, to obtain information on all best schools for girls in Austria.³⁴ It would be reasonable to speculate

³²Catherine to Mme. Geoffrin, Sbornik, vol. I, p. 287.

³³Personal notes of Catherine, Sbornik, vol. VII, p. 82.

³⁴Maikov, P. M., I.I.Betskoy, 1904, pp. 253-256.

that such instructions went out to other ambassadors, and that by 1764, Catherine had a good number of statutes for comparison. If St. Cyr still remained the number one model, this may be due to Betskoy's long acquaintance with Parisian society.³⁵ It has been suggested that Betskoy visited St. Cyr, but no evidence appears to be available. It is quite possible that the first Headmistress of Smolny [School for Noble Girls in St. Petersburg],³⁶ Mme. De la Fonds, was a one time student or teacher at St. Cyr. However, there is no proof for this assumption. Maikov's comparison of the statutes of St. Cyr and of Smolny clearly demonstrates that Betskoy by no means copied St. Cyr; he merely used the guiding principles of that institution. In an introduction to the "Statute of the Smolny School for Noble Girls", Catherine said:

For the benefit of the country various educational institutions have been established for noble boys on government grants. We also

³⁵Letter of Mme. Geoffrin to Catherine, Sbornik, vol. I, p. 263.

³⁶The Voskresenski Monastery, where the first school for noble girls was established, was located near the village Smolnaia, from which the institution most likely derived its name, Smolny Institute, or simply Smolny.

care for the noble girls and would like to make education available to them.³⁷

The Statute was published on May 5, 1764, and on June 28, of the same year, the school opened its doors. However, the institution had a difficult time to find students and only by July 9, 1765, the first enrollment of fifty girls was completed. The idea of education for girls was too revolutionary and few parents were prepared to part with their children at the age of five or six. The registration of the second enrollment dragged on for two years, until 1767, and most of the girls of this group came from St. Petersburg middle class parents.³⁸ But eventually prejudice against education for girls was overcome and by the end of Catherine's reign the institution had gained prestige. In 1795, three hundred and sixty-eight noble girls studied at the Smolny, which originally had been planned for two hundred girls.³⁹ In this institution

³⁷Statute on the education of noble girls, Polnoe Sobranie Zakonov, No. 12154.

³⁸Maikov, Betskoy, p. 268.

³⁹Ibid., p. 269.

Betskoy's "General Guidelines for Education" were applied for the first time. Parents had to agree that they would not take their children out of the school before they completed the whole twelve year course. They were enrolled at the age of five or six and graduated at eighteen or twenty. Students never left the institution during this period, and parents could visit their children only in the presence of a teacher. From the day of their enrollment the state accepted full responsibility for their education and for all expenses. Students were divided into four age groups. The group from six to nine years of age received instruction in: principles of Christianity, manners, foreign languages, arithmetic, painting, dancing, music, sewing and knitting. For the age group of nine to twelve year olds, to this curriculum were added: geography, history and home economics. The third group, from twelve to fifteen years of age, took three more subjects: literature, elementary architecture, and economics. The fourth age group, fifteen to eighteen year olds, studied all subjects in depth, with the stress on ethics and manners.⁴⁰ At the time of its establishment, Betskoy's

⁴⁰Polnoe Sobranie Zakonov, No. 12154.

institution for noble girls, in St. Petersburg, must have had one of the most progressive programs in Europe. However, the staffing of the school created a serious problem. In western Europe nuns functioned as teachers in girls schools, but in Russia nuns were totally unprepared for the role of educators.⁴¹ The teachers stayed with their pupils from morning to bedtime, shared all meals with the students, and acted as their constant "good example". There was no corporal punishment, and teachers were to use only love, the art of reasoning, and kind exhortations to induce their students to become diligent and courteous. Obviously, Rousseau's ideal teacher of Emil was the hero of Betskoy's educational establishment, but his teachers had neither the qualifications of Rousseau's educator, nor his ideal teaching situation. Locke and Rousseau both thought in terms of individual instruction while Betskoy's school had to practice group instruction. Since Rousseau's whole

⁴¹An attempt to use Russian nuns as supervisors and nurses for the girls proved to be a total failure. Eastern monasticism is based on the ideal of "withdrawal from the world", but at Smolny the nuns were required to prepare girls "for the world". The two ideals could never be reconciled, and the nuns were soon relieved of their duties at the school.

St. Petersburg goes back to 1758, when it was established as a branch of the University of Moscow. It was Shuvalov's brain child. Elizabeth granted the new Academy a meagre 6000 rubles yearly, but procrastinated with legislation for the institution, and when she died the Academy still had no charter and no funds. In March 1763, I. Shuvalov was relieved as president of the Academy and Betskoy became its chief administrator. The "General Guidelines", of March 22, 1764, charged Betskoy with the establishment of a boarding school at the Academy of Arts, and the charter of November 1764,⁴³ really gave life to that institution. In order to encourage the arts: painting, sculpture, and architecture, the Empress took the academy under her personal protection. It now became an independent academy and its budget was raised from 6000 rubles to 60,000 rubles a year. Catherine also introduced a table of ranks for the whole staff of the Academy of Arts, and even graduates of the Academy received rank 14.⁴⁴

⁴³Statute of the Imperial Academy of Arts, Polnoe Sobranie Zakonov, No. 12275.

⁴⁴Obviously, Catherine attempted to attract Russian and foreign talent to the Academy. Peter's table of 14 ranks was extremely important to the Russian middle class, since it was the road to a noble title. Lomonosov made bitter complaints that university professors received only the rank of a captain [Rozhdestvensky, Ocherki, p. 519],

Furthermore, all students of the Academy were declared "free for all times" with all their descendents. If a former student of the Academy married a serf, his wife became free. The Academy even had its own court to settle minor disputes, and graduates were free from government service. The same privileges applied to students of the Boarding School of the Academy of Arts. Since students of this school came exclusively from the middle and lower classes, the charter must be seen as a significant liberal document.

The first enrollment of sixty students was quickly filled with children from St. Petersburg middle class parents. The regulations followed very closely the trend established by the "General Guidelines". Children were enrolled at the age of five or six, if parents were willing to surrender them to the school for the whole program. The state paid all expenses and poor students and orphans were given preference. Instruction was offered on three

but Shuvalov, and also Grimm, opposed the idea of titles rewarded for teaching. Grimm argued that "professors should not be respected for their medals and titles", but rather for their ability to teach. [Sbornik, vol. XLIV, p. 101] However, western scholars living in Russia almost unanimously supported the introduction of the table of ranks for the teaching profession. They argued, that in order to establish the profession on a sound basis it had to be given status within Russian society.

levels. For the first three years, the age group of six to nine year olds, was instructed in: principles of religion, elementary reading and writing, Russian, foreign languages, drawing, and elementary arithmetic. At the next level, from nine to twelve years of age, geometry, geography, history, and elementary ethics were added to the curriculum. The senior group, twelve to fifteen year old students, continued to expand their knowledge in those subjects, and they were also introduced to mathematics, elementary physics, architecture, and drafting. The most advanced students of the third level attended lectures at the Academy. After the nine year course, an examination decided which students would enter the Academy and which would continue "according to their ability" at a lower level of training, but all students continued their studies for another six years. Examinations and rewards were used as incentives for good work. Gold and silver medal winners were eligible for scholarships, and every three years, twelve students were sent abroad to continue their studies at European institutions.

Of particular interest are the first two paragraphs of the entrance regulations of the Boarding School at the Academy. Paragraph one states that the school is open to

all "of whatever rank, excluding only serfs without a letter of release from their lords".⁴⁵ Here is the first attempt to make education accessible to all, regardless of class or status. This paragraph suggests that Catherine II had no bias against the serf. In fact, she opened the road to higher education for the serf, if only his lord was willing to give his consent. In this respect Catherine remained consistent throughout her reign, but the Empress of Russia was in no position to force the ruling class to give up its privileges and prejudices.

Paragraph two of the entrance regulations is equally significant. It says that the Boarding School should help poor children in the first place, and especially orphans.⁴⁶ The first enrollment was quickly filled by children of parents serving at and near the court, but later enrollments had children from every walk of life. With the establishment of such schools, Catherine hoped to create that strong middle class which she believed to be absolutely necessary for the expansion of the enlightenment

⁴⁵Polnoe Sobranie Zakonov, No. 12275, ch. I, par. 1.

⁴⁶Ibid., par. 2.

in any country.⁴⁷

It would appear that the Academy of Arts was only moderately successful. Shuvalov had recruited artists from France and Germany; and the famous Russian architect Kokorinov taught at the Academy from 1761 until his death in 1772. There was apparently no shortage of teachers in this case, but Efron, the editor of the Bolshaia Entsiklopediia [Russian Encyclopedia], is of the opinion that Betskoy's administration retarded progress at the Academy of Arts. Betskoy has incurred similar criticism from other Russian historians.⁴⁸ However, the institution had

⁴⁷In a letter to Mme. Geoffrin, of January 15, 1766, Catherine expressed her strong convictions in respect to the need of a middle class in Russia. "There will be a middle class", she said, "even if it had to assume your name, since you are convinced by experience that this class is the happiest of all. I will have to create it...since I consider this to be the indispensable duty of my position". [Sornik, vol. I, p. 286].

⁴⁸Maikov (1904) is much more positive in his evaluation of Betskoy's contribution. He feels that the Academy actually prospered under Betskoy's guidance. Maikov sees in Betskoy the father and trouble shooter of the institution. He points out that Betskoy personally supported 10 students out of his private purse, from 1770 to 1795. This, of course, does not prove that he was a good administrator. The Soviet Encyclopedia (1949) says, that the Academy of Arts began to decline in the second half of the nineteenth century. This could be read as a positive evaluation of the early period, and thus it would support Maikov's position.

been founded on a sound basis and certain guiding principles had been established. On these principles Betskoy opened a similar school at the Academy of Sciences in St. Petersburg, in 1765.

On January 31, 1765, Catherine celebrated another significant event, when she signed the statute of a special school for common girls.⁴⁹ The first paragraph of the Statute refers to the instructions in the "General Guidelines", stressing accomplishments to date. "The School for Noble Girls at the Voskresensky Convent and the Boarding School for common boys at the Academy of Arts," the Statute says, "have indeed opened their doors, but for the benefit of society it is no less important that women of all classes be educated in good manners, and in knowledge and skills, appropriate for their position in society." The school was to have a joint administrative staff with the Smolny Noble Girls School. The privileges of the students were to be the same as for the students at the Academy of Arts. The reason is obviously to be found in the class distinction made at

⁴⁹The establishment of a special school at the Voskresenskii Novodevichii Convent, Polnoe Sobranie Zakonov, No. 12323.

the Smolny Institute--the third class was important but not equal. For this reason the program at the two girls schools differed considerably, but moral education, or the development of character [dobrodietiel], gave the two wings of this institution the common denominator.

The girls of the commoners wing were also divided into four age groups, but the curriculum placed more emphasis on practical application than on theoretical knowledge. Girls from six to nine studied: principles of Christian religion, behavior and cleanliness, Russian, foreign languages, painting, arithmetic, dancing, needle-work, and music.

From nine to twelve they studied these subjects **more thoroughly**, and in addition they were instructed in elementary home economics [domostroy].

From twelve to fifteen the stress shifted to developing special gifts of individual students, and needle and household work were practiced daily.

At the fourth level, fifteen to eighteen year old students continued in those subjects in which they excelled, and their skills and manners were "perfected".

The state accepted all financial obligations for students from the first day of their training. Furthermore,

the government deposited fifty rubles on the account of each new student. On graduation day this amount, plus interest for twelve years, was paid out to the graduates as a dowry. In 1766, Catherine made a gift of 2.5 million rubles to the Smolny schools.⁵⁰ The interest of this capital financed all operations of the institution. This solid financial foundation was one of the reasons for the schools relative success.

At this stage Catherine and Betskoy were extremely optimistic about their projects. Within one year they had founded three new educational institutions, and this achievement explains the confidence reflected in the statute for the second girls school. Paragraph two advised the Headmistress of Smolny to guide the institution with a firm hand, "so that the young people will experience a rebirth, from which the true rules of education will continually be passed on to coming generations".⁵¹ This early optimism is not really surprising. The Aufklärer in Germany, who began to play an ever more important role in

⁵⁰Polnoe Sobranie Zakonov, No. 12652.

⁵¹Ibid., No. 12323.

the European Enlightenment, were convinced that the school was the key to a better life. They coined the phrase, die Schule ist der Schlüssel des Lebens. Basedow, Schlözer, Zimmermann, Francke, and others urged rulers to educate their nations. In education there was hope for the people and for the state. European travellers in Russia were frequently carried away by their optimistic appraisal of Catherine's achievements in such a short time. Even very serious scholars, like the German historian Schlözer and the British theologian William Cox, were no exceptions in this respect. They were impressed by the change of atmosphere in St. Petersburg, and thus they applauded every slightest evidence of progress in Russia; and there was some real progress in the field of education.

The Smolny girls schools were originally planned for 200 noble girls and 240 commoners. As we have seen earlier, the second enrollment of the noble girls wing was almost entirely filled by commoners, because the nobility was still opposing the boarding school idea, while the lower classes began to recognize in the school a means to advance in society. However, commoners soon lost this advantage at the school. As the prestige of the school rose, the enrollment of the noble girls went up, and by 1795, the wing

for the noble girls had 318 students of noble origin, and 50 noble girls were accommodated in the commoners wing, which at that time had 135 students of lower class background. Thus, the institution which originally had been planned for 440 students, accommodated 503 students by the end of Catherine's reign. This was more than its facilities allowed, and may be indicative of the prestige of the institution. The nobility was willing to have its children in the wing of the commoners, as long as they could get into Smolny, but the chances of the middle class were reduced by the same fact. Considering the early resistance to institutional education of girls, Catherine could claim a good measure of success. Unfortunately, there is very little evidence on the functioning of Catherine's first schools, but critics should at least take into consideration one significant document--the memoirs of Glafira Rzhevskaja. Rzhevskaja was one of the fifty girls in the first enrollment of the school for noble girls at Smolny, and she graduated in 1776, with the first group of graduates. In her reminiscences about the Smolny Noble Girls School she exclaims with exultation:

Wonderful memories! Happy times! Shelter
of innocence and peace! You were the source
of my purest pleasures. I revere you, most

august and generous Monarch, who laid the foundation of the institution that is worthy of You. Accept here the expression of gratitude which You deserve very much. Centuries will not fade the memory of you!... . A whole generation testifies about her good deeds, but only those can fully appreciate her who experienced her kindness, those whom she called her children, those for whom she made it possible to approach her. Orphans, poor or rich, had the same access to this wonderful education which was based on equality. This was a society of sisters, obeying the same rule.⁵²

Granted that Rzhevskaja came from a poor family and thus appreciated that haven of security more than the average student,⁵³ her testimony still will have to be taken seriously as the only one by a primary witness. Rzhevskaja wrote her memoirs in her mature years and she is by no means a blind admirer. She exposes the weaknesses of the first Director of Smolny, Princess Dolgorukova, declaring that the Princess was not fit for the position, but she

⁵²Glafira Rzhevskaja, Memoirs, in Russkii Arkhiv, (St. Petersburg, 1871), p. 4.

⁵³Rzhevskaja was the nineteenth child of a poor family. Her father died before she was born, and her desperate mother gave her last child to a nun. A year later she was returned to her mother. In 1765 she was one of the last girls registered in the first enrollment at Smolny. She had been at Smolny for seven years before her mother visited her. She became very attached to de la Font and to Betskoy, although the old man eventually did not live up to the image that she had developed of him.

praises Mme. de la Font as a gifted teacher and a beloved Headmistress who really carried the whole burden of administration. In respect to the ideal of Catherine and Betskoy, "to lead students to a rebirth", Rzhevskaja comments: "I do not think that education can lead us to a rebirth. Education only develops and directs our natural inclinations."⁵⁴ She expresses the opinion that under Mme. de la Font, the Smolny girls school was one of the best in Europe, "only the St. Cyr institution could be compared with it". Perhaps this is too much praise for the school. Was Rzhevskaja in a position to make a comparison of schools? However, in spite of such reservations, it has to be admitted that the only witness available was very favorably impressed by her experience at one of Catherine's early schools.

While Betskoy was still busy establishing the second school at Smolny and the boarding school at the Academy of Sciences, Catherine had another task ready for him. On March 7, 1765, she entrusted Betskoy with the supervision

⁵⁴Rzhevskaja, Memoirs, pp. 3-4.

of the Noble Cadet Corps.⁵⁵ This Corps had been founded by Empress Anne in 1731. Russian officers for the first time received more than mere technical training for a special task in the army. By the decree of August 29, 1762, Catherine had raised the number of students at that institution to 600, but the academic and administrative structure of the school had remained the same. Now Betskoy was asked to work out a new statute for the Noble Cadet Corps. When Catherine received the draft for the new statute, on August 17, 1766, she sent it to a committee of experts for approval. The committee was composed of Nikita Panin and his brother, two Princes Golitsyn, Count Chernishev, General Muraviev, and Olsufiev. "I expect your joint opinion", Catherine informed Panin.⁵⁶ In other words, she

⁵⁵Three military schools were established in the eighteenth century, and it appears that due to the similarity of names they are occasionally confused. The first of these schools, the School of Mathematics and Navigation, was founded by Peter I, in 1701, and by 1752 developed into the Noble Navy Cadet Corps [Morskoi Kadetsky Shliakhetsky Korpus]. The second school, the Artillery and Engineering School, established by Peter I, in 1712, was reorganized and renamed in October 1762, as the Noble Artillery and Engineering Corps [Artillereiski Inzhinerny Shliakhetsky Korpus]. The third of these military schools, the Noble Army Cadet Corps [Sukhoputny Shliakhetsky Kadetsky Korpus], was founded by Empress Anne, in 1731, and is usually referred to as the Noble Cadet Corps.

⁵⁶Catherine to Panin, August 1766, Sbornik, vol. X, pp. 100-101.

encouraged a thorough discussion of the proposed changes before approving them. Most likely she realized that Betskoy was only a general in name and that he had no idea about military affairs or the army's needs. However, on September 11, 1766, the statute was signed by the Empress.⁵⁷ The committee apparently did not propose any major changes in the draft and Betskoy could proceed with his reform. The full name of the corps was now changed to Imperial Noble Army Cadet Corps [Imperatorskii Sukhoputny Shliakhetskii Kadetskii Korpus]. The new statute of the corps was very similar to the statute of the Educational Institute for Noble Girls. There seems to be an ironic twist in this statement, but the enlighteners, including Catherine's commission of military experts, apparently had no such compunction. A director and a committee of four members were to supervise the cadet school, which was divided into five age groups. Boys entered the school at the age of five or six and graduated fifteen years later. When they reached the fourth level, at fifteen, students could opt for either a military or a civil service career, depending on their talents and health.

⁵⁷Catherine's order to the Senate, September 11, 1766, Polnoe Sobranie Zakonov, No. 12741.

However, the military cadets could take any subjects of the civil service branch, if their progress warranted the extra load. The basic principles of education were the same as at Smolny. The stress was on character forming, and corporal punishment and coarse language were banned from the corps. Logical persuasion was to be the teacher's only tool, and "arrogance or pessimism" were not to be tolerated in teachers. Besides courses relevant to the training of cadets, the curriculum offered German, French, jurisprudence, economics, astronomy, navigation, engraving, sculpture, and painting. Significantly, the language of instruction was now to be Russian. Catherine proceeded consistently to develop Russian national consciousness.

In every one of the early schools Betskoy and Catherine had seen to it that the doors would not be closed to commoners. However, the Cadet Corps had been established specifically for the nobility, and the class-oriented tradition was well established in that institution. Yet, Betskoy proposed that fourteen to sixteen students, of each enrollment of 67, should be commoners. The argument for this democratization he repeated several years later in a special report to Catherine, on October 27, 1772. "There

is no greater obstacle for success than the difficulty of finding people who are capable of teaching".⁵⁸ Then he repeats Büsching's warning that Russia cannot go on relying on foreign teachers, because it is dangerous to rely exclusively on foreign aid in education. Therefore, he suggests to enroll at the Cadet Corps, every three years, 14 to 16 children of commoners [meshchan], or more, "if the money can be found". Thus, Russia would prepare its own educators, and the young noblemen would learn "to accept those, who by the laws of society are stationed at a lower level. They will learn to judge people by merit."⁵⁹ With this addition to the statute of the Cadet Corps, all existing schools were opened to the third class and Russian education shifted slowly in the direction of a more democratic society.

D. A. Tolstoy is very critical of Betskoy's Cadet Corps reform,⁶⁰ but it would appear that his criticism has

⁵⁸Betskoy's report to Catherine, October 27, 1772, on the education of commoners at the Cadet Corps, Polnoe Sobranie Zakonov, No. 13895.

⁵⁹Maikov, Betskoy, p. 381.

⁶⁰D. A. Tolstoy, Ein Blick auf das Unterrichtswesen Russlands im XVIII Jahrhundert bis 1782, (St. Petersburg, 1884), pp. 34-40. [D.A.Tolstoy is the well known nineteenth century statesman, educator, and historian.]

been misconstrued by later historians. Tolstoy questions the usefulness of this school for the military establishment, but he does not deny its success as an educational institution. In fact, he says, that even the army benefitted from the reformed institution, but "its organization was at fault". For Tolstoy the school had too many goals, and in his opinion "even two goals are too many". From the eighteenth century enlighteners' point of view it was the ideal school, and they were quite happy with the results.⁶¹ Catherine proudly wrote to Falconet on March 10, 1767:

Try to explain to Mr. Cochin,...that my military school would most likely confuse him. My cadets are not trained for violence, they will choose their profession according to taste and ability.⁶²

Demkov, and Betsky's biographer, Maikov, claim that the

⁶¹The Noble Army Cadet Corps played a significant role in the development of Russian arts, and the Russian theatre traces its beginning to Sumarokov's time at the Corps. Students spent much time rehearsing, thus, from Tolstoy's point of view, wasting time, since they should have studied military science. But for Catherine and Betsky the school was the proof of the advancement of the Russian Enlightenment.

⁶²Catherine to Falconet, March 10, 1767, Sbornik, vol. XVII, p. 3.

reform was quite successful, and the Russian historian Viskovaty calls Betskoy's statute for the cadets "a truly great gift to the state".⁶³

On April 21, 1767, the Imperial Noble Army Cadet Corps opened its doors to the first enrollment of 67 cadets. By the end of Catherine's reign, 4000 students had studied at the school and 3000 had actually graduated.⁶⁴ However, not only school statistics support the claim of success. During the second Turkish War, 1787-1792, graduates of the Cadet Corps set those minds at ease who had feared that Betskoy's cadets were fit only for the ball room, when they shared in the brilliant victories of the Russian army. But, the enlighteners measured success by their own standards, and they could take pride in their achievement. They had changed the manners and values of the nobility beyond recognition. Peter I had forced an unwilling nobility to accept some westernization, now the nobility eagerly claimed to be European. For better or worse, St. Petersburg had become

⁶³Maikov, Betskoy, p. 370.

⁶⁴Demkov, M. I., Istoriia russkoi pedagogiki, (St. Petersburg, 1897; Moscow, 1913), vol. II, p. 297.

a European city, and Catherine's first schools contributed to this change in no small measure.

While Betskoy continued to play a significant role in the administration of the institutions that he established, from 1767 on his influence on Catherine's reforms began to decline. Catherine appreciated his intellect, but it had become too difficult to work together. "I wish passionately that he should finish the work that he has started", she wrote to Mme. Geoffrin on April 6, 1766,⁶⁵ obviously frustrated by the general's behavior. In the course of the same year he managed to alienate too many of Catherine's men, and he even made unauthorized changes at the boarding school of the Academy. As a result, in December 1766, he had to step down as director of the Cadet Corps. His arrogance and exaggerated feeling of indispensability finally had convinced Catherine that she could not continue to rely on one man.

It is not quite clear when Catherine entrusted a committee with the preparation of a project for schools in all gubernias, the task that originally had been placed

⁶⁵Catherine to Geoffrin, April 6, 1766, Sbornik, vol. I, p. 287 .

into Betskoy's hands.⁶⁶ In any case, the project was ready for the session of the Legislative Commission and had been prepared by Dilthey, Dumaresque, Klingstedt, Miller, and Teplov. At the request of the Empress, in 1766, Miller and Dumaresque had drafted individual proposals. Dumaresque apparently only reported on the state of education in England,⁶⁷ but Miller's report fascinated Teplov and was passed on to Betskoy, who flatly rejected any plan that had not been developed by his own genius. Teplov then took the report directly to Catherine.⁶⁸ It is very probable that this was the actual breaking point between Betskoy and Catherine, and that the first Commission for Educational Reforms was appointed by the Empress soon after Teplov's report, in 1766. This commission presented to Catherine the "General Plan of Educational Academies for Children" or "State Gymnasiums". The plan followed the principles established in Betskoy's "General Guidelines", but it worked out in detail every level of education. Children entered the gymnasium at six and

⁶⁶Polnoe Sobranie Zakonov, No. 12103.

⁶⁷Büsching, Eigene Lebensgeschichte, p. 471.

⁶⁸Rozhdestvensky, S. V., Ocherki, pp. 266-268.

graduated at eighteen, and the principle of separation of children from parents was also maintained. As in the boarding school of the Academy of Arts, the gymnasiums had three levels of instruction, with a four year program for each level. Furthermore, these institutions were to be divided into four categories, with special curricula for the learned class, the military class, the civil service class, and for the merchant class. The curriculum for the lower two levels, that is for the first eight years, was the same for all gymnasiums, and only starting with the third level, curricula were designed to serve the interest of each class. Obviously, the plan sacrificed the ideal of a classless school system.

Of particular interest is the appendix of this plan. Under the title, "How to establish schools for common people in all cities and towns, without government expenses and without burdening the people",⁶⁹ the Commission proposed a separate plan for the establishment of "schools for common people" [prostonarodnye shkoly]. The serfs

⁶⁹Kniazkov, S.A., Serbov, N.I., Ocherki istorii narodnogo obrazovaniia, Moscow, 1910, p. 90.

were excluded from the gymnasiums, but nobody was excluded from these "schools for common people". The Commission even proposed to make attendance in these schools obligatory. The responsibility for establishing and maintaining these schools was placed on the local magistrates, while parish priests were to act as teachers. However, even these elementary schools would have been inaccessible to the peasants, because schools were projected only for major towns, while the villages were not even considered by this plan.

Catherine at first seems to have favored the approach of Miller and Teplov, but when the Commission presented the ready plan, she did not give her final approval for the project.

Another interesting school project, that suffered a similar fate, had been presented to Catherine by Dilthey in November 1764 . Philipp Heinrich Dilthey was professor at the University of Moscow, and he was an enthusiastic enlightener. His "Plan for Various Schools for the Dissemination of Knowledge and Correction of Morals and Manners",⁷⁰ called for three levels of education. Primary schools (Trivial Schulen) were to offer elementary education to "all who are

⁷⁰Kniazkov, Ocherki, pp. 93-94.

not of low background", and they were to prepare students for the gymnasium. Gymnasiums were to offer a four year liberal arts program, with Latin, Greek, French, German, arithmetic, geometry, history, geography, ethics and drawing in the curriculum. Commoners, except serfs, were to be accepted, but they were to sit in the commoners section of the classroom, at "distinguishable desks".

Dilthey also proposed to establish two more universities, one at Dorpat, in the Baltic provinces, and one at Baturin, in the Ukraine. At all three universities Dilthey projected four faculties: 1) philosophy, 2) medicine, 3) jurisprudence and 4) theology. The four year course of the gymnasium was to be followed by a 2-3 year course at the universities. As a first measure of an educational reform, Dilthey proposed to establish 21 **primary** schools, 9 gymnasiums, and two more universities [for a total of three].

The most interesting and really original part of Dilthey's project was his special plan for teachers training--the "serfs school" [rabskie shkoly].⁷¹ He argued that

⁷¹Medynsky, E. N., Istoria russkoi pedagogiki, Moscow, 1938, pp. 84-85.

since the nobility used serfs as servants and guardians [diad'ki] of their younger children, it was necessary to educate serfs before they were charged with such responsibility. "They spoil the young children with their bad example...to the point where they cannot be changed", said Dilthey. He argued that it would be a good investment for the nobility, to educate those serfs, because they would be **inexpensive teachers**. Since private schools refused to teach serfs, it would be necessary to establish two such schools, one in Moscow and one in St. Petersburg, with 100 students in each school. The five year program would make these serf-teachers proficient in Russian, Latin, German, and French, and they would also have a fair knowledge of arithmetic, geography, and history. They would also learn how to dress children, and get instruction in Christian ethics and manners. Dilthey was prepared to run this school on his own. He bought a house for this purpose and attempted to recruit teachers, but the school never opened.⁷²

⁷²Since there is no further information on the fate of Dilthey's "serfs schools", we can only speculate on the reasons for the failure of that plan. From all we know about Catherine, she could not have rejected the plan, but the serf owners, most likely, would have hesitated to send their serfs to such schools, especially since the Empress had maintained throughout her reforms that no educated man could remain a slave. Furthermore, it is possible that

It is not known whether Dilthey's plan for "trivial schools", gymnasiums, and universities was seriously discussed. However, from the fact that Catherine appointed Dilthey to the School Commission of 1766, it would appear that she appreciated Dilthey's ideas and hoped the Committee would benefit from his participation. But her major effort at this time lay in another area. Throughout 1766, Catherine concentrated on the preparation of the Nakaz [Instructions] for the Legislative Commission. At that national assembly Catherine hoped to discover what Russia needed, therefore, it is not surprising that the project for "State Gymnasiums" as well as Dilthey's plans were shelved temporarily. The Empress wanted to await the outcome of the debate in the Legislative Commission, since she had not only a new law code in mind, but rather the "rebirth of society". A debate on the educational reforms was part of the grand design, and Catherine expected a general demand for schools.

Dilthey simply could not find teachers for such a "degrading" position--teaching serfs. He argued publicly that there was no more "noble cause" than to teach these serfs to be useful members of society. He impressed upon teachers the fact that "only by accident of birth were servants different from them", and that by educating these serfs they would be serving mankind. [Medynsky, Istoriia, p. 85] It would appear that the prejudices of the time were the greatest obstacle for Dilthey's plan.

When Catherine ascended the Russian throne in 1762, she knew the Russian court, but not Russia, and she was very much aware of this fact. She immediately set out to learn more about the country and the people. In 1762, she acquainted herself with Moscow through a long stay in Russia's old capital, in 1763, she visited Yaroslavl and Rostov, in 1764, she traveled through the Baltic provinces, and in 1767, she made a tour of the whole Volga region. She learned much and probably knew Russia better than any ruler since Peter I, but she hoped to get even closer to the pulse of the nation by calling a national assembly with representatives from all classes, except the serfs. This "democratic" body would also be charged with the creation of an entirely new law code. It was a very ambitious project, and as Catherine's letter of March 28, 1765, to Mme. Geoffrin shows,⁷³ Catherine worked on the Nakaz for the Legislative Commission for two years. In April 1765, she wrote to D'Alembert that she would send him a certain booklet, but she would need more time to make it more comprehensible. In this letter she also admitted

⁷³Catherine to Geoffrin, March 28, 1765, Sbornik, vol. I, p. 268.

that she had "robbed Montesquieu without mentioning his name", and that Montesquieu's work had become her "prayer book".⁷⁴ Catherine could hardly have mentioned Beccaria's contribution at that stage, because his essay on Crimes and Punishments had just been published in 1764, and she had only started to work on the Nakaz. However, when the Nakaz was ready, her indebtedness to Montesquieu and Beccaria was quite obvious. She did not attempt to disguise this fact, and many of Montesquieu's statements were only translated or rearranged to fit into the Nakaz.

What was the real purpose of the Legislative Commission? Was it a sounding board for Catherine, or a mere display put on for the philosophes? The British diplomat, Henry Shirley, reported from Moscow on August 13, 1767,⁷⁵ that it was a great show, but no serious legislation should be expected from the assembly. The events of 1768 seemed to vindicate Shirley, and yet his sceptical attitude toward the event was based on fairly obvious

⁷⁴Catherine to D'Alembert, April 1765, Sbornik, vol. X, p. 30.

⁷⁵Shirley's report to London, August 13, 1767, Sbornik, vol. XII, pp. 300-309.

prejudices which the British diplomat for some reason cultivated against Russia. For a mere show the Legislative Commission was simply too expensive and too time consuming, and the pragmatic ruler of Russia would never have wasted two years of her time just to prepare a stage script for the entertainment of European philosophes, nor would she have listened patiently for eighteen months to the deliberations, the bickering and quarreling of that body, if she had not seriously hoped to get something out of the experience. Much closer to the truth is the theory that Catherine used the national assembly as a sounding board. The usefulness of such a sounding board was recognized by the Empress, and the Manifesto of December 14, 1766, stated this quite bluntly, but Catherine wanted more than that. "We do not call these delegates for the sole purpose of sounding out the needs of each region [!]," she said. "They will also be in the Commission charged with the preparation of the new code."⁷⁶ While this may seem to be very unrealistic, we must bear in mind the optimism of the enlighteners. Why should a

⁷⁶Manifesto, December 14, 1766, Polnoe Sobranie Zakonov, No. 12801.

nation not be capable of creating a new law code? Why should peasants not be endowed with original wisdom? Rousseau's faith in natural goodness and wisdom of primitive man was widespread until 1789.

A glance at the composition of the assembly suggests yet another possibility. If Catherine did not believe that this body would produce the code, for what other purpose could she have used it? The composition of the assembly was surprisingly democratic:

Total number of delegates	564 ⁷⁷
gentry	162
towns people	206
peasants	58
Cossacks	54
national minorities	56
government representatives	28

Most striking is the predominance of the towns representatives and the relatively weak position of the nobility in this assembly. Since each delegate had one vote, the nobility could be outvoted on any issue, and only the

⁷⁷Allen, R. V., The Great Legislative Commission, Harvard Thesis, 1969, p. 67.

traditional subservience of the lower classes, and the better education of the nobility, could give that class a slight edge. There is some evidence to suggest that Catherine originally planned to have only two nobles from each gubernia.⁷⁸ That would have decreased their number to a total of 40, in an assembly of approximately 500 deputies. From these statistics it would appear that Catherine was indeed tempted to use the assembly for far-reaching changes in the structure of Russian society. However, she was realistic about her own situation, therefore she retreated under pressure to a more tenable position, changing the composition of the assembly in favor of the nobility. As a result of this retreat the Nakaz turned out to be far less radical than originally planned, although still too radical for most European princes.⁷⁹

⁷⁸Allen, R. V., The Great Legislative Commission, Harvard Thesis, 1969, p. 44.

⁷⁹Early in 1767, D'Alembert asked Catherine about the "booklet" that she had promised to him. Catherine replied on January 20, 1767, that the content "no longer resembled the original", and that she had "crossed out, torn to pieces and burned" half the manuscript. Then she adds in frustration: "God knows what will happen to the rest, however, I will have to decide before my deadline." [Sbornik, vol. X, pp. 166-167]. The deadline was July 30, 1767, when the Legislative Commission was to meet for the first time. Before the Nakaz was printed, Catherine called

A new code was long overdue in Russia. Under Elizabeth a commission had been established in 1754, to collect and revise Russian laws. This commission was still in existence when Catherine ascended the throne, but she opted for a new code, not for a mere overhaul of the old laws. Whether this was a realistic and wise choice is another question. Montesquieu's philosophy had not been tried in any part of the world, but that did not discourage Catherine. From her point of view there was a unique chance to change "medieval" Russia into a modern state with the most progressive liberal legislation. This was Catherine's dream, and there is no reason to believe that she was not serious when she told the delegates:

We must speak of things just as they ought to be. For God forbid! That after this legislation is finished any nation should be more just, and consequently should flourish more than Russia. Otherwise the intention of Our Laws would be totally useless.⁸⁰

in a number of distinguished delegates and asked them to censor the document. These censors again crossed out half of what was left. Only fragments of the original manuscript have been preserved. Soloviev concludes that only 25% of Catherine's original document were published. [Soloviev, Istoriia Rossii, vol. XXVII, p. 67].

⁸⁰Catherine II, Empress of Russia, "Nakaz", in Sochineniia ed. Smirdin, St. Petersburg, 1849-50, vol. I, art. 520.

In the context of Catherine's educational reforms the Nakaz for the Legislative Commission must be seen as Catherine's greatest educational effort of the first decade of her reign. On July 30, 1767, 526 articles of the Nakaz were made public. As the debate in the Assembly went on, Catherine added two supplements, bringing the total of articles to 655. This document did not only offer guidance to the legislators, it addressed itself to the nation. In no other document is the role of the enlightened monarch as "ruler and educator" of his people blended as perfectly as in Catherine's Nakaz. For the disciples of the Enlightenment the laws of a nation and the education of the citizen were simply inseparable.

In the first article of the Nakaz Catherine stresses that New Testament ethics should be the guiding principles of Russia's new Code,⁸¹ and she does not deviate from those principles throughout the Nakaz. It is obvious that these principles could not support serfdom. Article 35 says:

Equality requires institutions so well adapted as to prevent the rich from oppressing those who are not so wealthy.⁸²

⁸¹Catherine II, Nakaz, art. 1.

⁸²Ibid., art. 35.

Realizing that she could not eliminate serfdom with a stroke of the pen, she at least tried to improve the serfs' lot. Article 261 proposes "a law granting serfs the right to own property".⁸³ Even more interesting is article 279 in Catherine's original draft, which was deleted by unknown censors. It said: "Serfs should have the right to buy their freedom."⁸⁴ However, the most radical of Catherine's proposals passed the censors, probably because they did not grasp its full meaning. Article 346 stated:

Handouts to the poor on the street cannot be considered as fulfillment of the governments obligations. The government is obligated to assure to all citizens reliable maintainance [soderzhanie], food, clothing, and a decent way of life that is not harmful to health.⁸⁵

The fact that an eighteenth century monarch could formulate this twentieth century "socialist ideal" is simply beyond comprehension.

In chapter XIV of the Nakaz the Empress expounded her educational philosophy. "The rules of education", the

⁸³Catherine II, Nakaz, art. 261.

⁸⁴Unpublished draft of Catherine's Nakaz, Sbornik, vol. X, p. 156, paragraph 279.

⁸⁵Catherine II, Nakaz, art. 346.

Empress said, "are the basic principles which prepare us to be citizens", and "each individual family must be guided by the example of the large family [the nation]."⁸⁶ In other words, the state is interested in education, because education helps to train citizens. Thus, the rules of education and the laws of the state serve the same purpose--the purpose of enlightening the people. For the enlighteners that was synonymous with "leading to happiness"; and the happy citizen is always "a useful member of society."⁸⁷

In Russia, the Nakaz was received with joy and great expectations, but not by all. Shcherbatov was only the most outspoken opponent of liberalization. The Senate and the men around Catherine were mostly of the newer nobility, and they supported the document, but not without cutting the most radical proposals. When the Nakaz was read in the Legislative Commission, "there were tears of joy and pride." Article 520 moved especially the delegates from the lower classes. The new code would make

⁸⁶Catherine II, Nakaz, art. 348 and art. 349.

⁸⁷Ibid., art. 356.

Russia the most just and most prosperous nation in the world.⁸⁸ The Assembly voted to offer to Catherine II the title, "Great, Wise Mother of Russia", which she rejected, since "greatness must be determined by future generations", and, "only God is wise", but she accepted the title, "Mother of Russia".⁸⁹

Frederick the Great, the philosophes, Falconet and especially Voltaire were full of praise for the accomplishment, but the greatest "recognition" came from the French government--the Nakaz of Catherine II was put on the Index. What could not be read in France was now being discussed in a Russian national assembly with a surprisingly democratic composition.⁹⁰ All classes, except serfs, were represented in the Legislative Commission, and even non-Christian minority groups had 56 representatives in that assembly. Due to this composition the Commission was an

⁸⁸Catherine II, Nakaz, art. 520.

⁸⁹Soloviev, Istoriia Rossii, vol. XVII, p. 74.

⁹⁰In the French Estates General of 1789, the Third Estate represented all lower classes, but the villages and towns had elected trusted landlords or lawyers who as members of the bourgeoisie belonged to the Third Estate. This was the reason why the Third Estate became such an aggressive and effective instrument. The Russian Legislative Assembly was more democratic, but far less revolutionary.

excellent sounding board for the Empress, but as a legislative body it disappointed its founder. Catherine very soon discovered that her prime issue--education--was hardly an issue at all for the large majority of the delegates. Only in the Ukraine, in the Baltic provinces, and in the Moscow, St. Petersburg, Smolensk, and Novgorod gubernias was education seriously discussed. In the Cahiers of several gubernias education was not mentioned at all. Of 49 cahiers from the nobility of the Moscow gubernia, only 9 had brief references to schools,⁹¹ pleading for schools for the children of "poor gentry" parents, who could not afford to study in Moscow or St. Petersburg. The nobility generally took it for granted that schools were being founded for them, but some district delegates stressed that they wanted schools "for noble children only, not admitting others, so that they [the noble children] would not be contaminated with baseness during their school years."⁹² The more impressive demands for schools came from the Ukrainian nobility. Kiev, Pereiaslav, Glukhovsk, and Starodub pleaded for the establishment of universities,

⁹¹Allen, R. V., The Great Legislative Commission, Harvard Thesis, 1969, p. 74.

⁹²"Nakaz of the Believs nobility", Sbornik, vol. LXVIII, pp. 610-611.

and the nobility from Nizhinsk, Baturin, and Chernigov asked for corps schools, universities, and for educational institutions for girls.⁹³ The level of regional development is obviously reflected in all cahiers. The nobility of the Koporsk and Yamburg districts, St. Petersburg gubernia, asked the government to establish church schools for the peasants, but the nobility from Pskov urged the legislators "first to educate the clergy".⁹⁴ The strongest plea for schools for peasants came from the nobility of the Dmitrovsk district. These noblemen suggested that district judges should contact landlords and "convince each one of them that for every one hundred households, one or several landlords together should maintain a teacher for the instruction of peasant children in grammar and arithmetic." They went on arguing that it was wrong to assume that peasants do not need education. "Landlords," the cahier says, "must be convinced that they will benefit more from educated peasants."⁹⁵

There was no opposition to schools for towns people,

⁹³Cahiers of the Ukrainian representatives, Sbornik, vol. XLVIII, pp. 130, 137, 150-151, 176-177, 193, 236-237.

⁹⁴Rozhdestvensky, Ocherki, p. 286.

⁹⁵Cahier of the nobility of Dmitrovsk district, Sbornik, vol. VIII, pp. 500-507.

demanded by merchant delegates, since existing schools had been open to the middle class, but when a peasant delegate from Nizhegorodsk, Zherebtsov, pleaded for schools for peasant children, a heated debate developed. Significantly, the merchant class sided with the nobility against education of the peasants. Liubavtsev, a merchant from Pensa, and Glasov, representative of the nobility of the Oboiansk district, were only the most outspoken opponents of education for peasants. There was no support for the peasants from the towns people, who were usually represented by merchants, but two noblemen gave their eloquent support to the peasants. The delegate of the nobility of Klin, Orlov, supported Zherebtsov. He told the Commission of his positive experience with a school, established by him in one of his villages. Count Stroganov commended Orlov for his attitude and urged the Commission to support the education of peasants. "When the darkness of ignorance is overcome, the peasants will be able to take care of property and freedom", he said.⁹⁶ But this was precisely what most landowners feared, and therefore

⁹⁶Debate on education in the Legislative Commission, Sbornik, vol. XXXII, pp. 52, 55, 66, 71-74, 101, 113.

Catherine could not expect support from the majority of the landowners. It became clear to the Empress that it would be difficult to pursue her ideal course, because the nobility and the towns representatives made common cause against it.

With the outbreak of the first Turkish War the work of the Legislative Commission was disrupted, December 17, 1768, and the Commission did not convene again. Catherine's democratic experimentation thus found an early death, and the achievements of the experiment were not encouraging, although it would be wrong to see it as a complete failure. The idea of equality was certainly not appreciated by the Legislative Commission, but neither was it accepted anywhere else in Europe at that time. Soloviev's appraisal, that "we should have expected that in the Legislative Commission each class would attempt to get a more favorable position" relative to other classes,⁹⁷ is very realistic. This struggle for class privileges in the new code took up the better part of the 203 sessions, from August, 1767, to December, 1768, and not a single part of

⁹⁷Soloviev, Istoria Rossii, vol. XXVII, p. 75.

the code was completed. It is not surprising that the pragmatic Empress never again trusted large assemblies-- they were too slow and unproductive.

However, the Legislative Commission must be credited with some success. The experience in itself was invaluable to Catherine, and there were also some more tangible achievements. The Administrative Reform of 1775, the Charter of the Nobility and the Charter of Towns of 1785, were based on the discussions of the Legislative Commission. Thus, the Legislative Commission laid the groundwork for some significant legislation. Furthermore, it cannot be forgotten that although equality evaded Russian society, the nation had received the message. The concept of equality was no longer unknown in Russia. Catherine's Nakaz gave Russia a new set of ethics, and its impact on post-Catherinean generations should not be underestimated. Laharpe, who never flattered the Empress, commented: "The Instructions [Nakaz] will find a place of honor in the history of pedagogy."⁹⁸

⁹⁸Lavater-Slonam, Katharina, p. 388. Note the enlightener Laharpe's understanding of the role of legislation. From his point of view the Nakaz was a brilliant educational effort.

After a long and heated debate on education, which had been started on May 2, 1768, by Zherebtsov's demand for peasant schools, the Legislative Commission elected a special School and Welfare Commission [Kommissiia ob uchilishchakh i prizrenie trebuiushchikh], on May 27, 1768.⁹⁹ The elected members of the Commission were Zolotnitski, Professor Ursinus, Ugriumov, Ivashkin, and Baron Asch. For some unknown reason Ugriumov and Ivashkin soon left and Klingstedt joined the School and Welfare Commission. Klingstedt's competence in the field of education could have been a deciding factor in this change. In any case, Klingstedt soon became a driving force of the Commission, which began its work on May 29, 1768, with the request for all available information on educational projects. Two complete projects were submitted for consideration, the plan of Dilthey, Miller, Teplov, and Klingstedt, prepared for Catherine in 1766, and a plan submitted by the Academy of Sciences. After the approval of general guidelines, the School Commission, in January 1769, began to work on individual projects.

By October, 1771, the School Commission had submitted

⁹⁹Election of the School Commission, Sbornik, vol. XXXII, p. 98.

for approval four projects: 1) a plan for elementary village schools, 2) a plan for elementary city schools, 3) a plan for secondary schools, and 4) a plan for schools for minority groups [inovertsy].

The plan for village schools was submitted to the Steering Committee of the Legislative Commission in July, 1770.¹⁰⁰ This plan proposed to establish in rural areas one school for 100 to 250 families. For boys, from eight to twelve years of age, education was compulsory and for girls it was voluntary. There was to be no class distinction and education for girls was free of charge.¹⁰¹ The supervision was to be in the hands of the Church and the nobility, and deacons were to be preferred as teachers. Only religion and reading were compulsory subjects and writing was optional.

The plan for urban schools was very similar, but there was to be one school for every 100 families, and school attendance was obligatory for boys and girls from

¹⁰⁰When the work of the Legislative Commission was terminated, a Steering Committee was created to guide the work of the 15 sub-commissions..

¹⁰¹Medynsky, E. N., Istoria russkoi pedagogiki, Moscow, 1938, p. 91.

seven to twelve years of age and was compulsory for boys. Furthermore, the program was expanded to make attendance compulsory for all illiterate boys of 17 years and under, and for illiterate girls of 12 years of age. On a voluntary basis older children could also be accepted.¹⁰² All responsibility for urban schools was in the hands of the clergy; the Church supplied teachers and supervisors. The supreme authority over both elementary schools was to be shared by the governor of the gubernia and by the archbishop of the region.

The plan for a special school for minority groups [inovertsy] must be credited to Asch and Zolotnitski. Klingstedt argued that the Commission should concentrate on education for all Russians, the minority problems on the periphery could be solved at a later date, but Asch and Zolotnitski prevailed. They presented a joint paper, stressing the necessity to treat the minorities with deference, "to draw them closer to the other population."¹⁰³ In general the plan for minority schools was the same as for rural and urban schools, but teachers were to be

¹⁰²Medynsky, E. N., Istoriia russkoi pedagogiki, Moscow, 1938, p. 92.

¹⁰³Demkov, M. I., Istoriia russkoi pedagogiki, vol. II, p. 302.

chosen from the particular group and instruction was to be in the native language.

A fourth project of the School Commission dealt with the establishment of gymnasiums in all gubernias. A gymnasium would accommodate no more than 240 students, of whom 120 were to be government supported. The curriculum included classical and modern languages, mathematics, geography, architecture, music, drawing, dancing, and law. The Commission was consistent in respect to enrollment requirements--no class distinction was to be made.¹⁰⁴ However, there was at least one problem apparent from the start. Students had to know arithmetic before they could enroll in the gymnasium, but since village and city schools were not offering arithmetic, there was obviously a missing link in the whole system. Ursinus raised the question of continuity, on July 29, 1770,¹⁰⁵ and Klingstedt supported his position, but for some reason the Commission did not solve the problem. In October, 1771, the Commission terminated its work and the four projects were left in the hands of the Steering Committee.

¹⁰⁴Medynsky, Istoriia, p. 92.

¹⁰⁵Rozhdestvensky, Ocherki, p. 416.

Why was the School Commission dissolved? Its task was certainly not completed, the gap between elementary schools and gymnasiums had not been bridged, and the Commission had not dealt with university education at all. Certainly, the war effort had its impact on domestic affairs, since Catherine had to concentrate on the military struggle and on diplomacy, and yet, one would suspect that the Empress had other reasons for the dissolution of the School Commission. The theory that she lost interest in her educational projects must be rejected, since the often claimed break in Catherine's enlightenment drive, from 1768 to 1782, does not exist in reality. In fact, the dissolution of the School Commission coincided with Catherine's new interest in a project for educational reforms which had been prepared by the Church Property Commission.¹⁰⁶ It would appear, that Catherine either lost confidence in the Commission's work, or that she had come to the conclusion that conditions in the country were not ready for action. Her procrastination can perhaps be understood if one bears in mind general European developments. The first country to introduce compulsory

¹⁰⁶Medynsky, Istoriia, p. 92.

elementary education, Prussia, was only beginning to experiment with public schools in the 1760's. This was a transition period in Europe and successful systems became recognizable in Prussia and Austria only in the 1770's.

After the first Turkish War and the Pugachev Rebellion, Catherine started a lively correspondence with European educators, but the four projects of the School Commission were never mentioned by her. This is certainly puzzling, and D. A. Tolstoy concluded that Catherine had never seen those projects.¹⁰⁷ However, that conclusion raises serious questions. Would the Steering Committee have dared to withhold from the Empress such important documents? Could Catherine have forgotten about a project that was dear to her? Both possibilities seem to be rather remote. On the other hand, it is puzzling that the intelligent Empress should have dropped the entire plan which was not without merits.

¹⁰⁷ "There is no doubt, the Empress has not seen the work of the Commission, nor has she heard about it, because it would be very unlikely that such an intelligent and energetic ruler, who sincerely desired to enlighten Russia, and who sought advice from many people outside Russia, would not have used material that was at her disposal." [D. A. Tolstoy, Ein Blick auf das Unterrichtswesen Russlands, St. Petersburg, 1884, p. 92].

From 1767 to 1771, all initiative had been in the Legislative Commission and its sub-commissions. The School Commission's task had been far more complicated than Betskoy's work of the earlier period. Betskoy had developed an educational philosophy and he had established some model schools, but the Commission had been charged with developing a feasible educational system for the whole empire. In spite of the fact, that the proposed plan for elementary schools was never implemented, the Commission must be given credit for the first attempt to create such a nationwide system. Following the general trend of the era, the Commission stressed elementary education as the basis of any school system. The curriculum of the proposed four year elementary school program appears to be extremely narrow [religion, reading, and writing], but in view of the fact that the country had no trained teachers, goals had to be limited. The Commission was simply realistic in appraising Russia's possibilities. At the same time the Commission demonstrated that it had the courage to propose projects which were not necessarily popular with the majority in the Legislative Commission. Education for both sexes of all classes was an incredible proposal for most Russians. The

School Commission also realized that without compulsory school attendance, the dream of the enlighteners would never come true. It is also to the credit of the Commission, that it proposed an elementary school system without class distinction. Thus, three important principles had been incorporated in the projects for elementary education: 1) the principle of education for all citizens, 2) the principle of obligatory public education, and 3) the principle of education without class distinction. Up to this point the philosophes must have been delighted, but the proposal to leave the whole elementary school system in the hands of the Church was against their prejudice. Yet, in spite of the low educational standards of the Russian clergy, this was the only possible way to solve the teacher problem at the initial stage of the reform movement. It would appear, that this was one of the most sensible proposals of the School Commission.

However, the School Commission's projects had also several weaknesses. The lack of continuity, and the fact that the university was not even considered in the series of projects, left the whole system incomplete. Yet, these shortcomings could easily have been corrected, if the Commission had been given time. More serious criticism

could be raised against the distribution of the financial burden of the whole school system, and this applies to all educational projects of the first decade of Catherine's reign. The expenses for elementary education were to be carried by the local population. Although it would appear that expenses could not have been very high, for the poor peasant this extra burden was often more than he could afford. At the same time, secondary, military, and university education was government supported. Thus, those classes, who were relatively wealthy, paid nothing or little for the most expensive education, while the lowest class, the peasants, through taxes supported the expensive institutions for the well-to-do, and then they were asked to build and maintain their own elementary schools.

The most serious weakness of the proposed first elementary school system was the lack of a central administrative body. Rozhdestvensky argues convincingly, that this was one of the major reasons for the failure of many eighteenth century projects.¹⁰⁸ All attempts to make

¹⁰⁸Rozhdestvensky, S. V., "Universitetsky vopros v tsartvovanii Ekateriny II", Vestnik Evropy, July, 1907, p. 20.

regional administrative organs responsible for schools were doomed to fail, because these organs lacked the necessary competence. This was finally recognized in 1782, when the Public School Commission was established as the central administrative body for all schools in Russia.

Catherine's early reform period was characterized by the enlighteners' idealistic approach and by the lack of experience. Betskoy's educational philosophy, largely borrowed from Rousseau, dominated the period. Several educational institutions were reformed, a number of new schools were founded, and a general educational philosophy was developed. The period climaxed in the summoning of the Legislative Commission, but the ensuing debate in that national body led to disappointing results. Thus, the early reform period actually ended in an anticlimax.

CHAPTER III

A DECADE OF REORIENTATION

1770-1780

I am neither experienced nor knowledgeable and consequently I do not know what should be taught. I do not even know what can be taught...But I am very eager to learn about the university, the elementary school, and about their administration.¹

Catherine II

When Catherine became Empress of Russia, in 1762, she knew her course. Her program, with a long list of reforms, was ready, and from her point of view it waited only for implementation by an enlightened ruler. But, a decade of political experience opened her eyes and changed the eager enlightener-idealist into a cautious enlightened Realpolitiker. Her aspirations did not change, but her goals and expectations became more realistic.

At the end of 1768, the Sultan decided that it was an opportune time to regain control of the whole Black Sea region. Russia was totally unprepared, and Catherine

¹Catherine to Grimm, February 27, 1775, Sbornik, vol. XXIII, p. 19.

was busy with the Polish civil war. Furthermore, Catherine's throne was not yet secure, and the Sultan knew about Catherine's domestic problems.

The Legislative Commission gradually opened Catherine's eyes to the facts of Russian life, but the unwanted Turkish War catapulted her into the reality of the international power game. Late in 1761, Catherine noted in her journal:

This extensive Empire must have peace. We need more people and not devastation... . At home this cannot be achieved by forced Christianization of national minorities [inorodtsy]... . In international affairs peace will make us more respected than the chances of devastating wars.²

The events of the Turkish War apparently changed Catherine's mind. She did not escape the corrupting effect of success and power. The benevolent absolutist, who until 1768 had been interested only in domestic reforms, suddenly had become the strongest competitor in the European political arena. The impressive thunder of Russian guns, the successful conclusion of the Turkish War, and the following struggle with Pugachev overshadowed all other efforts. Yet,

²Catherine II, "Personal Notes of Grand Duchess Catherine" [in her handwriting], Sbornik, vol. VII, p. 85.

while the early phase of the Russian Enlightenment ended in an anticlimax, the reform movement never came to a total halt. What emerges after 1768 is not an era of total disenchantment, as often claimed, but rather an era of serious inquiring and searching. The dissolution of established commissions, the shelving of projects, and the abandonment of Betskoy as educational adviser must be seen in this context.

Everything that had been done in the field of education, up to 1768, had the stamp of Betskoy's educational philosophy. In 1762 this philosophy had been identical with Catherine's, but by 1770 their views no longer coincided. Betskoy had advocated liberal and moral education in boarding schools, but a boarding school system could at best provide education for the nobility and for the economically privileged middle class. When Catherine proposed a public school system for all Russian citizens, Betskoy was either not willing, or not capable of following the new bent, and she had to abandon her first unofficial minister of education. He was left in charge of his pet projects, the boarding schools, while new men were chosen to develop a public school system.

Betskoy's star had reached its zenith, but it continued to spread light throughout the 1770's. The

significance of his contribution can best be measured by the public response to the new orphanages. The orphanages apparently never lacked funds, in spite of the fact that they were maintained by private donations only, without cost to the state. The Empress contributed to these orphanages as a private citizen, from her private purse. This example, but probably even more the strong support of the Church, contributed to the establishment of numerous orphanages all over Russia. All of them were established on the basis of Betskoy's original "Rules of Educational Homes for Orphans".

The first institution to be established on Betskoy's Moscow example was the orphanage in Novgorod, founded in 1766 by Catherine's most progressive governor, Jacob Sievers. In 1770, on Catherine's order, and with 5000 rubles from her private purse, Betskoy established the St. Petersburg orphanage.³ In 1771, a hospital for unwed expectant mothers was added to the St. Petersburg orphanage.⁴ Catherine's belief, that the people always follow

³Catherine's resolution on the establishment of the St. Petersburg orphanage, March 15, 1770, Polnoe sobranie zakonov, No. 13429.

⁴Maikov, Betskoy, p. 204.

the example of the state, was indeed vindicated.⁵ Many people were involved in this work indirectly, by declaring their homes as receiving centers for abandoned children. While these institutions suffered from lack of personnel [not to mention trained nurses], and simply from lack of experience, they must be seen as a phenomenon within the Russian Enlightenment. The fact that the abandoned children no longer perished on the streets, that they could find a home and reasonable education, was significant enough, but far more important was the overwhelming public response to these new institutions.

In the early seventies Betskoy expanded and improved the regulations for the orphanages, and he was charged with

⁵In 1771, the merchant Yakov Vashkalov asked for permission to establish an orphanage in Olonets. In the same year the provincial government of Yenisseisk reported to the Senate that an orphanage had been founded by private citizens in Yenisseisk. The magistrate of Ostashkov founded an orphanage in 1773, and in Yuriev Povolsk a similar orphanage was established in the same year by a peasant Vassilii Petrov Priamilov. In Tikhvin an orphanage was founded by a priest of the Preobrazhenskaia church, in 1773, and in Kargopol citizens founded a similar institution in 1774. 1775 was a particularly active year. In that year orphanages were established in Belozersk, by a merchant Makarov, in Kiev by Fiodor Kandiba, and in Vologda by the merchant Burenin. The Archpriest Timkovsky established an orphanage in the same year on his property in Kiev, and the peasant Fiodor Belotielov founded one near Kazan. [Maikov, Betskoy, p. 149].

establishing a savings bank for widows and orphans.⁶ He continued to be a resource person in questions of education, although Panin, Golitsyn, Münnich, Chernyshev, and Teplov began to play a more significant role in Catherine's council.⁷ Betskoy believed that the orphanage should prepare its pupils for life, and therefore its educational program had to be practical. For this purpose he introduced shops in the orphanages in Moscow and St. Petersburg, where the youngsters learned a trade. Unfortunately, in 1784, Betskoy had to close his shops for lack of competent teachers.

In spite of a high infant mortality, and in spite of many failures, the achievement of the orphanages must be appreciated. On the twenty-fifth anniversary of Catherine's reign, in 1787, Betskoy reported that the Moscow and Petersburg orphanages had offered shelter to 37,907 children, and that 5,514 women had given birth in the orphanage hospitals. The orphanages operated on a sound

⁶Polnoe sobranie zakonov, Nos. 13909; 13930; 13985.

⁷The plan for Demidov's School of Commerce was still drafted by Betskoy, but the recommendation is signed by Catherine's council. See Polnoe sobranie zakonov, No. 13916, Dec. 6, 1772.

financial basis, with a capital of 8,589,974 rubles in the savings treasury.⁸ Public participation had been beyond all expectations. While Catherine's example must receive due credit, the influence of leading ecclesiastics, like Platon and Gavril, who supported the cause from the pulpits, was probably far greater than the Empress'.

An outstanding example of public participation is the case of Demidov. In 1771, Betskoy had been able to establish a hospital wing at the St. Petersburg orphanage, because a nobleman volunteered to pay the whole bill for its construction and operation. In 1772, the same man, Prokofii Demidov, approached Betskoy about the establishment of a school of commerce for 100 poor boys from the merchant class. Betskoy later claimed to be the originator of the idea, but he lacked the capital to start a school that could not be supported by the students' parents. Demidov provided the capital, insisting that only children of poor parents be admitted, and Betskoy applauded the idea, since "this eliminated the danger of capitalist interference in the school".⁹

⁸Maikov, Betskoy, p. 247.

⁹Ibid., p. 405.

On December 6, 1772, the plan was approved by Catherine's council (Panin, Münnich, Golitsyn, Chernyshev, and Teplov) and passed on to the Empress. It can be assumed that Catherine was familiar with the plan and that she asked the council to study it in detail, before making a recommendation. She signed the recommendation without delay.¹⁰ The plan followed closely the general educational guidelines of the 1760's. At the age of five, boys entered the institution, and at twenty-one they graduated. The curriculum was planned for five progressive levels of instruction, adding more subjects at each level:¹¹

I - ages 5 to 9	
reading	foreign languages
writing	dancing
Russian	religion
II - ages 9 to 12	
arithmetic	Slavonic
geometry	music
geography	etiquette
history	

¹⁰Plan for a school of commerce, December 6, 1772, Polnoe Sobranie Zakonov, No. 13916.

¹¹Ibid., pp. 677-678.

III	-	ages 12 to 15	
		mathematics	accounting
		mechanics	commerce
		navigation	economics
		history of science	rhetoric
		historical geography	
IV	-	ages 15 to 18	
		accounting (advanced)	economics (advanced)
		foreign languages	arts
		state law	
V	-	ages 18 to 21	
		experimental physics	theology
		experimental chemistry	commerce (advanced)

The school was planned for 100 boys of poor merchants. Demidov presented the institution with 205,000 rubles. The interest of this sum was enough to pay for all operational costs. Furthermore, Demidov accepted all responsibility for the construction of the necessary buildings. Well-to-do relatives and school supporters were encouraged to contribute to the capital fund by sponsoring students. The interest on the contributed sum would be used by the school, while the original amount was returned to the sponsor at the student's graduation. However, many sponsors donated the money to the school, and thus the financial aspect never created a problem.

Demidov and Betskoy had also planned strict examinations. Education, room and board were free for students,

but--they had to study. The best graduates were sent abroad, with an annual scholarship of 300 rubles, to gather experience and further training. Graduates of the school had all the privileges of graduates of the Academy of Arts. Thus, these boys of poor parents moved up into the privileged elite of the country, if they were willing to learn.¹² It is difficult to assess the results of Demidov's school, since the records of the school are not available. However, the fact that the nobility soon began to compete for a place in that school, would suggest a measure of success.

Demidov's interest in the Russian Enlightenment was not an isolated case. Public support for education was

¹²The major problem of Demidov's school came from the community for which it was planned. The merchants did not appreciate Demidov's effort, and they sent their children to school very unwillingly. Only with great difficulty was the first recruitment of 20 students accomplished. The second recruitment, in 1776, could not find more than two merchant families, willing to send their boys to a school that paid all expenses for the parents. The School Board then opened the doors to other children, but only six could be found in addition to the two merchant children. The attitude changed eventually, and the third recruitment of 20, in 1779, was completed without difficulty, although only 14 were of merchant background [Maikov, pp. 416-417]. The fourth registration, in 1782, records only 13 merchant children, but by that time the school had established a reputation and attracted more students from other segments of society than it could possibly accept. Merchant children got preferential treatment, but the school was open to all, including serfs, if they had their owner's release. [Polnoe sobranie zakonov, No. 13916].

growing and by the 1770's a considerable segment of Russian society began to appreciate the Enlightenment. It is futile to speculate as to the direction which the Enlightenment might have taken in Russia if the Turkish War had not occurred. The fact is that for six years the war consumed energy and resources, creating an extremely unfavorable climate for the Enlightenment. However, the movement survived and Catherine found time and money to support significant developments even during that period.

The dissolution of the Legislative Commission at the beginning of the war, which sometimes is seen as the end of Catherine's interest in reform and progress, coincides with her order to translate new European publications in the field of education.¹³ This would seem to be reasonable evidence of her continued interest in education.

During this period Catherine also supported major international scientific expeditions. Russia participated in the international observation of the planet Venus, in 1769. For this purpose three expeditions were sent to Lapland, one to Yakutsk, and one to the Ural Mountains. In

¹³Rozhdestvensky, Ocherki, p. 315.

the early 1770's, two expeditions explored the Orenburg region, and two were sent to map and describe the Astrakhan area. As a result of these expeditions, Georgi, a member of the St. Petersburg Academy, published the first book on the ethnic composition of the Russian Empire, A Description of the People of Russia, in 1776.¹⁴ The founding of three learned societies at the University of Moscow, in the 1770's, is also indicative of a prevailing interest in learning.¹⁵ It would appear that the small intellectual community did not feel the stress of the war effort, and that Catherine never lost interest in the work of that community. The fact that she dissolved the School Commission in 1771, does not prove Catherine's disenchantment with the Enlightenment; it may suggest that the Commission's work did not meet her expectations. The Commission had run out of ideas and Catherine, shedding her prejudice against the ecclesiastic establishment, dissolved the School Commission, in October 1771, and began to study the reform proposals of

¹⁴Ikonnikov, Znachenie, pp. 52-53.

¹⁵Uchenoe Druzheskoe obshchestvo [The Society of Learned Friends]; Obshchestvo Liubitielei Uchenosti [The Society of Friends of Learning]; Volnoe Russkoe Obshchestvo [The Free Russian Society].

the Ecclesiastic Commission.

When Catherine established the Ecclesiastic Commission for Church Estates, in 1762, she charged that body with the supervision of ecclesiastic education, but until 1766 no plans were developed. On February 20, 1766, Catherine complained that the Commission had not paid any attention to schools. The energetic Archbishop of Pskov, Innokentii, and his very capable colleagues, Gavril and Platon, then hammered out a reform plan for ecclesiastic schools. The detailed plan was presented to Catherine on July 24, 1766,¹⁶ but it suffered the same fate as several other reform plans which were shelved to await the decision of the Legislative Commission. However, the Ecclesiastic Commission now continued to play an active role in reform discussions, and simultaneously with the School Commission of the Legislative Commission it worked on a project for elementary public schools. Late in 1771, Archbishops Gavril and Innokentii, Procurator Chebyshov, and Teplov presented to Catherine a project for "lower schools in the capital cities of gubernias and districts, and in major towns".

¹⁶Rozhdestvensky, Ocherki, p. 307.

This plan placed elementary education "of all citizens of low birth" into the hands of the Church.¹⁷

While there are similarities with the School Commissions plan, this project proposed a more modest start. Villages were left without schools, and girls were not even mentioned in the report. Both projects relied on the lower clergy as teachers, and the Ecclesiastic Commission even stated that teacher training was not necessary.¹⁸ Eventually both plans were rejected by the Empress.

Medynski and others have suggested that the seventies were a period of reaction, following the Pugachev Rebellion, and thus all reform ideas were doomed. Yet, from Catherine's correspondence one would have to conclude that the rebellion did not dampen her reform zeal, it actually enhanced her conviction that only reform and education could save Russia. It is more likely that she continued to follow her old motto: "Do it well, or not at all". Although Betskoy no longer dominated, he was still influential and he did not fail to remind Catherine of that motto. It is also possible that Catherine was reluctant

¹⁷Medynsky, E. N., Istoriia russkoi pedagogiki, Moscow, 1938, p. 92.

¹⁸Rozhdestvensky, Ocherki, p. 511.

to accept these projects because of their total dependence on the Church. After all, her tutors saw in the Church the number one enemy of the Enlightenment. In western Europe the liberation of education from the control of the Church was one of the **crucial** issues. In Russia this issue was nonexistent, since the state controlled the Church. Why then was Catherine reluctant to use the ecclesiastic establishment? She was far less prejudiced against the Church than the philosophes. She gave shelter to the Jesuits, when they were being persecuted in western Europe, and she even had high praise for these Catholic monks. "To tell you the truth", she commented to Grimm, "these swindlers [the Jesuits] are excellent people. Nobody has been able to match their achievements in education."¹⁹ But, Catherine knew that the Russian clergy was not prepared to play the role of the Jesuits, and she was not willing to surrender the most important tool of the Enlightenment to an ignorant clergy. She realized that a reform program which relied entirely on the services of backward priests would be doomed from the

¹⁹Ikonnikov, Znachenie, p. 49.

start.²⁰ Catherine was aware of the Church's plight, and she showed good judgement in the choice of bishops for the highest positions in the Church. Archbishops Innokentii, Gavril, and Platon were progressive and very active men, who seriously endeavored to change the dismal situation of most dioceses, but change could only come through the slow process of education for the clergy.²¹ Catherine and her reform bishops understood this quite well, and for this reason the Russian Enlightenment did not follow the European Enlightenment in weakening, or secularizing Church schools. On the contrary, in Russia

²⁰During Catherine's reign more attention was paid to the education of priests, especially after the Pugachev Rebellion, when Panin presented to Catherine a shocking report on the ignorance and immorality of the clergy in the Volga and Ural regions. From the records of the diocese of Kazan one can derive how serious the problem was. In that diocese 381 priests were illiterate as late as 1786. [Vl. Gr. Simkovich, "The History of the School in Russia", Educational Review, New York, May, 1907, p.492].

²¹Quite erroneously, it has been held that the disappropriation of the church lands by Catherine, led to a decline of standards among lower clergy. There is much more evidence to suggest that Catherine had good reason to disappropriate the Church, whose estates were poorly run, whose serfs were worse off than the state serfs, and above all--whose property was not used to provide at least sufficient schools for the education of its clergy. The dismal situation, unfortunately, continued under Catherine, but it was not created by her.

Church schools experienced a modest revival. In 1765, when Catherine played with the idea of university and academy reforms, she also proposed to establish a Faculty of Theology at the University of Moscow.²² On May 6, 1765, the Empress instructed the Holy Synod to select 10 students for studies at Oxford and Cambridge. These students were to study Greek, Hebrew, and theology, among other subjects.²³ The Synod acted with amazing speed, and only three months after Catherine's initiative, not only 10, but 12 students begged permission to study abroad. Obviously, times had changed since Peter I--students now competed for the privilege to study in the west. Semionov, a teacher at the Krutitsk Seminary, applied three times, and only Catherine's direct intervention finally included him in the select group.²⁴ On November 11, 1765, Nikitin,

²²It is not clear when the idea originated and by whom it was conceived. Catherine apparently had the support of the bishops, but later they effectively opposed the project.

²³X., "Proiekt bogoslovskogo fakultieta", Vestnik Evropy, November, 1873, p. 301 [The author signed the article only with X.].

²⁴Dmitrii Semionov is an interesting case. He was probably rejected because he was past 20 [24?], while most of the students were 15-16 years of age. However, when Semionov returned he was an accomplished scholar, and eventually he became one of the outstanding leaders of the

Bukhovetski, Levshin, Bykov, Prokhor Suvorov, and Matveievskoy were sent to England, and on June 10, 1766, Isaiev, Semionov, Smirnov, Bagrianski, Rozanov, Antonski, Naumov, Klevetski, D. Novikov, and Andreievski left for Leyden and Göttingen.²⁵ The Göttingen students returned in April, 1773, and in 1774, Semionov and Rozanov were chosen as future teachers for the Faculty of Theology at the University of Moscow, while Andreievski was appointed as teacher to the Novgorod Seminary. Temporarily, Gavril appointed Semionov and Rozanov to the Moscow Academy [Moskovskaia Zaikonopasskaia Akademia]. It is not quite clear why Catherine's order of November 15, 1773,²⁶ to establish a Faculty of Theology at the Moscow University

Orthodox Church--Semionov-Rudniev, Bishop Damaskin of Novgorod. On the other hand, many of the young students were simply lost in the unfamiliar world. In September, 1780, that is 15 years after they left, the Synod inquired at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, about the Oxford and Cambridge students. ["Proiekt...", Vestnik Evropy, p. 315]. They had simply been forgotten. The Ministry had no information on them--Nikitin, Bukhovetsky, Levshin, Bykov, Suvorov, and Matveevskoy vanished from the records.

²⁵X., "Proiekt...", Vestnik Evropy, pp. 306-307.

²⁶Rozhdestvensky, Ocherki, p. 472.

was not carried out. It may be due to the general instability of the period, but it is not impossible that Gavril and Platon decided that in a separate ecclesiastic university [the Moscow Academy] they would have a better chance to guide students and save them for the Church. Catherine admired Platon's character and his sharp sermons, and he and Gavril had considerable influence at the court. In 1775, Catherine appointed Platon as Protector of the Moscow Academy, and according to Rozhdestvensky, he became the Peter Mohyla of that institution. His reform of the Academy ended with a new plan for ecclesiastic education.²⁷ The plan was signed by the Synod, and the Moscow Academy, in fact, became a theological or Church university, while the plan for a Faculty of Theology, at the University of Moscow, was shelved and forgotten.

It would appear, that in the whole reform process the University of Moscow remained unchanged, while the Moscow Academy benefitted greatly from the reforms. The Moscow Academy added mathematics, experimental physics, introduction to medical art, botany, and other secular subjects to its curriculum and thus eliminated the need

²⁷Rozhdestvensky, Ocherki, p. 472.

for theology students to take courses at the University of Moscow, since all courses were taught at the Academy. The reformed seminaries provided a steady supply of students for the ecclesiastic academy, while the University of Moscow continued to be without well prepared students.

During Catherine's reign, seven new church seminaries and 25 lower ecclesiastic schools were added to the existing 26 seminaries. One of the most successful new church schools was the Slovensk Seminary in Poltava, founded and directed by Archbishop Evgenii Bulgaris, in 1779.²⁸

However, while the Church made considerable progress in its effort to prepare a better educated clergy, it still faced the old problem--the Church prepared men and the state recruited them. After the Administrative Reform of 1775, the problem was enhanced by the state's attempt to improve the administration. In 1779, the Holy Synod calculated that 1565 men from the clerical class had been recruited by the state in a single year. The Church lost 495 seminarists in 1779, and in 1783, 845 seminarists

²⁸Ikonnikov, Znachenie, p. 50.

joined the civil service.²⁹ Catherine founded the seminaries for the Church, but the state benefitted more from them than the Church. The ignorance of the clergy in rural areas continued to be the most serious problem of the Orthodox Church, and Catherine must take the blame for the continuation of a situation which she detested.

The interests of the Church were again sacrificed to the growing Leviathan. However, it is quite clear that the Empress did not like such sacrifice and that she endeavored to remedy the situation. The main reason why she had to recruit her civil service from the ecclesiastic schools was the lack of teachers for state schools. To remedy this situation, at least to an extent, Betskoy proposed to introduce at the Cadet Corps a teacher training program for middle class students. In his report to the Empress, Betskoy reminded her again of her vow "to do it well and finish it, or to leave it and not touch it at all." Catherine endorsed the plan on October 27, 1772.³⁰

This project, in effect, expanded the gymnasium of

²⁹Becker, Christopher Bennet, The Church School in Tsarist Social and Educational Policy, from Peter to the Great Reforms, Harvard Thesis, 1965, p. 69.

³⁰Betskoy's Report, October 27, 1772, Polnoe Sobranie Zakonov, No. 13895.

the Land Cadet Corps, to accomodate middle class students, who were to be trained as teachers. The Empress immediately approved this plan and budgeted 100,000 rubles for the expansion. Attached to Catherine's resolution is a list of "reasons for the introduction of education for middle class children at the Land Cadet Corps", which recapitulates the problems of the period. "There is no greater obstacle...than the lack of capable teachers...", the document states. "The solution of this problem must be given top priority."³¹ The author of the document also complains that teachers are usually unknown, when they are being hired, and that frequent changes are undesirable but unavoidable. Since "almost all teachers are foreigners, they feel no moral obligation to serve the country, and they leave Russia as soon as they can afford it." Only by offering the Russian middle class the same opportunities at the Cadet Corps, the country would eventually solve the serious problem of teacher shortage. The decree proposed an enrollment of 14 to 16, or more, middle class children [meshchan] every third year, depending on the availability of funds. Defending the "mixing" of the middle class and

³¹Polnoe Sobranie Zakonov, No. 13895, p. 611.

noble children, the document said:

The advantage deriving from their [middle class] education is obvious, and their mixing with the noble cadets is simply a necessity, because through their contact the cadets will learn not to avoid those who by the laws of society have been assigned to a lower station. They will learn to judge people by their true merits and not by those circumstances over which they have no control.³²

This was the enlighteners' first attempt to prepare Russian teachers, but even more significant than the reform itself is the spirit of this decree. It testifies to Catherine's progressive outlook on society and reveals her growing interest in the middle class. Acceptance of students into the Corps, and all awards and privileges, were made dependent on qualities of character and on performance. Commoners were to receive the same education and share all advantages of the school with the children of the nobility.

During the first decade of Catherine's reign the Russian Enlightenment experienced a considerable expansion, and it is not surprising that in this expanded movement there would be less unanimity. Three major

³²Polnoe Sobranie Zakonov, No. 13895, p. 612.

trends became apparent by the early 1770's, although the division was more in method than in philosophy, especially in respect to education. Betskoy continued to favor boarding schools, believing in Rousseau's philosophy of isolating students from the "corrupt world". Catherine, on the other hand, began to realize that boarding schools could at best accomodate the upper class, but not the whole nation. Enlightenment without education for all was unthinkable, and universal education was impossible without an open public school system. In this respect Novikov and his circle agreed with Catherine. But, the Novikov circle did not have to face the dilemma of the Empress, who in spite of her idealism had to face reality. Thus, Novikov and his friends demanded more than possible under the circumstances, while the large majority of the landowners resisted the idea of a public school system.³³

The Legislative Commission had been a sobering experience. Catherine had hoped to impress the west with the most democratic reform-minded assembly, but the reality had been less than impressive. The Legislative Commission

³³Betskoy's position on this issue is not quite clear. His European experience went back to a time when public school systems were unknown. Prussia introduced public education in 1763 and Austria in 1774. This may explain his reluctance to advance Catherine's proposed general public schools.

had not been capable of any reform legislation. As a result, the Empress once more turned west in search for a solution. The preachers of the Enlightenment had disappointed her repeatedly, by refusing to accept her invitation to settle in Russia, but she still believed in their creed, and she had never broken off relations with her aging tutors.

In 1762, Catherine had invited the French philosophe D'Alembert to settle in Russia as tutor of Grand Duke Paul, but he had declined. In 1763, the Empress began her famous correspondence with Voltaire. As G. P. Gooch has pointed out, "she was the first Russian ruler to strive for a good press". For this reason, Catherine's letters to Voltaire are much more significant than Voltaire's letters to the Empress. His letters offer very little besides flattery, while Catherine's letters are full of information on real and imaginary Russian achievements. She must have realized early that Voltaire had no practical advice to offer, since the school question is never seriously discussed in their letters, although from time to time there is an indirect invitation to the philosophes to participate in the development of Russia's educational system. Thus, she

comments in 1769:

The unfavorable opinion, which you have on most European universities, confirms my thoughts about them... . Routine has become the rule. It would take an effort, worthy of a genius and philosophical mind, to work out a reform on which future schools could be based. I would be the first to follow a good example.³⁴

She informs Europe that Catherine has not forgotten the Enlightenment in spite of the war. At the same time she reminds the philosophes of their failure to develop a model project for schools. On June 25, 1772, she informs Voltaire about the success of her girls school at Smolny.³⁵ It is fairly obvious that these communications have a large audience in mind, and the sage of Ferney never disappointed her--he was quite willing to inform Europe about his "Star of the North".

However, the Russian Empress needed more than good public relations with Europe. A good press was important, but she also wanted concrete help in respect to her school efforts. Finally, realizing that this help would not come from Voltaire and his associates, Catherine began to look

³⁴Ikonnikov, Znachenie, p. 45.

³⁵Catherine to Voltaire, June 25, 1772, Sbornik, vol. XIII, p. 257.

for other wise men. The philosophes and the French Enlightenment gradually lost influence in Russia, while the German Enlightenment attracted more and more attention. The German enlighteners appeared to be more practical-- they established schools. In the 1770's the writings of Bielefeld, Graser, Franke and Basedow found more readers in Russia than the writings of the philosophes, and Basedow's and Franke's educational philosophies became very influential. Franke's Pietist philosophy found its disciples in Novikov's circle, while Catherine was attracted by Basedow's philanthropism and cosmopolitanism. The reason for Catherine's choice would appear to be obvious. While the two outstanding leaders of the German educators agreed that moral education was the most important goal of a school, their basic philosophies were far apart. Franke's Pietism was based strictly on the Christian experience, Basedow, on the other hand, left the door wide open to all religions and philosophies. "Jews, Moslems, and Christians (with their various Churches and Sects) are in total agreement with the actual Naturalist on several very important aspects of religion",

Basedow said,³⁶ and therefore, school texts had to be written with all creeds in mind. This was precisely what Catherine needed for her multi-national empire. It is not quite clear when Catherine's contact with Basedow began. However, her interest in Basedow's Methodenbuch, long before it was ready for the press, would suggest that she was in contact with him before 1770. It can be assumed that her interest in Basedow's work goes back to 1768, when his essay, "Vorstellung an Menschenfreunde", attracted the attention of Europe. In 1770, Orlov invited Basedow to become president of the Academy of Sciences. Basedow declined, but in spite of it, Catherine and Paul offered to subsidize the publication of his Methodenbuch. In 1771, Catherine sent 1000 rubles to Basedow, and Grand Duke Paul advanced 500 rubles to the author.³⁷ The book was finally published in 1773.

Basedow was influenced by Montaigne and Locke and above all by Rousseau. Yet, there was a significant difference in their approach. Ideal education for Rousseau,

³⁶Johannes Basedow, Methodenbuch, (Dessau, 1773; Paderborn, 1914), p. 13.

³⁷Ikonnikov, Znachenie, p. 46.

as demonstrated in Emile, was individualistic. Rousseau did not exclude public schools, but his public education was good enough only for the lower classes. Basedow accepted the separateness of classes, but this was only in recognition of society's structure. His schools for the upper classes were separate, but methods and goals were the same for all schools. Furthermore, Rousseau did not assign any role to the state, while Basedow urged rulers to accept responsibility and to play an active role in the education of their subjects. Basedow had a talent to organize and to win public support, and in 1774 he put his theory into practice when he established the Philanthropium in Dessau. This practical approach seemed to stand in sharp contrast to Rousseau's theories on paper, which inspired many, but failed to offer an example. However, while Catherine was still most impressed by Basedow's work, the end of his influence was already in the making.

For the direction of the Russian Enlightenment, the years 1773-1774 were very significant. International and domestic developments were extremely complicated during this period, but the Empress retained her interest in the Enlightenment. In 1773, while her hope for a model school

was still focused on Basedow's Philanthropium, she also continued to read all new publications in the field of education. One of the new projects, "An Exposition about the Establishment of Public Schools", was sent to her by Professor Sulzer of the University of Berlin. Sulzer's project was of no consequence, but her faith in Basedow's philosophy was eventually shaken by a man whom she met for the first time in September, 1773, Melchior Grimm. When Basedow's Philanthropium opened in 1774, Catherine still believed it to be the model for which she had been waiting, but realists, like the German historian August Ludwig Schlözer and the philosophe Melchior Grimm, severely criticized Basedow's utopianism. Grimm described Basedow's Philanthropium as "a pathetic appeal to good souls" for support of a project. "The plan is too vague and too vast a chimera", he said.³⁸ While not denying that the Philanthropium had some merits, he definitely advised Catherine not to use it as a model for her new schools.

During the critical winter of 1773-1774, Catherine enjoyed the company of two distinguished visitors--Diderot and Grimm. She was of course, flattered by the visit. At last she had an opportunity to discuss her problems with

³⁸Grimm to Catherine, undated, Sbornik, vol. XLIV, p. 103.

celebrated wise men. But while they discussed the liberalization of Russia, and Diderot argued against any form of despotism, the Pugachev Rebellion began to shake Catherine's confidence. Diderot was sixty, and he carried the conviction of the saints of the Enlightenment, that the rulers of the world had only to follow the philosophes' advice to achieve instant happiness for their nations. But Catherine had 12 years of experience, and the peasants' response to Pugachev was a grim reminder of Russia's reality. When after an entertaining winter Diderot left, in March 1774, Catherine probably felt relieved.³⁹

³⁹For Catherine as well as for Diderot the experience was unforgettable, and Catherine recalled those evenings with Diderot in later years with great relish. She agreed with Diderot that a succession of "two or three benevolent despots" would tend to make people less aware "of the value of opposition and free opinion". Yet, there was Pugachev and the immense empire. Catherine reports that Diderot could become quite agitated during those lectures in the Empress' drawing room. On one occasion, in a heated argument, he tore off his wig and threw it into a corner. The Empress picked up the "hairy object" and returned it to the excited tutor, who shouted "merci", and continued to lecture her. [M. Lavater-Slonam, Katharina und die russische Seele, Zürich, 1958, p. 328]. No other Russian ruler to the present day, except for her grandson, Alexander I, would have been as indulgent with philosophes.

The visit to St. Petersburg almost ended in disaster. On his way back, in an expensive private carriage and with many other gifts from Catherine, Diderot almost lost his life. When he crossed the Dvina river, the ice broke and carriage and horses were lost. The accompanying guards saved the philosophe, but he lost all belongings, except for an expensive furcoat in which he had been sleeping. [Lavater-Slonam, p. 329].

Voltaire's political advice she had never taken seriously, and Diderot had convinced her that the philosophes would definitely not be Russia's reformers.

Before he left, Diderot had promised to work out a plan for the introduction of education throughout Russia. His project, "Plan of a University for the Russian Government[, was forwarded to Catherine late in 1775. Catherine mentioned it first in a letter to Grimm, on November 29, 1775.⁴⁰ Diderot uses the term "university" for a complete educational system, including elementary schools, middle schools, and universities. It would appear, that his plan basically followed the Prussian school system. He proposed to introduce compulsory education in Russia, with stiff examinations which should not be in the hands of teachers. "If instructors are authorized to issue certificates", Diderot said, "they will not care about the quality of instruction."⁴¹

While Diderot's plan certainly deserved serious consideration, it also had some flaws which Catherine could not overlook, especially after the cautious Grimm had

⁴⁰Catherine to Grimm, November 29, 1775, Sbornik, vol. XXIII, p. 38.

⁴¹Tolstoy, Ein Blick, p. 102.

become her confidential adviser in matters of education. Diderot agreed with Catherine that her greatest obstacles were the lack of Russian text books and of teachers, but he argued that these problems could easily be overcome. Books could be written by European scholars and then be translated into Russian. The inadequacy of such texts was obvious to Catherine, but even less acceptable was his claim that teachers were unnecessary, as long as there were people "who could read and understand the text".⁴² However, the most important reason for the cool reception of Diderot's plan was the fact that the plan came too late. On November 7, 1775, Catherine introduced her "Administrative Reforms", and thus, she was preoccupied with the implementation of those reforms. The school issue was not forgotten, but it was secondary in the reforms of 1775. For major educational reforms Catherine now was content to wait "until the apple would be ripe".

Friedrich Melchior Grimm had been recommended to Catherine by Diderot. His first letter to Catherine, which accompanied a sample of his "Correspondance Litteraire",

⁴²D. A. Tolstoy finds Diderot's plan totally unacceptable, but Bilbasov and Rozhdestvensky argue that it was the best plan developed at that time, since it followed the tested German model.

is dated January 26, 1764.⁴³ Catherine responded with a subscription to this unique international information service. In 1773, Grimm accompanied the Countess of Hessen-Darmstadt to St. Petersburg. They arrived in September 1773, before Diderot, and Grimm could not hope to be introduced to Catherine until his friend arrived. However, to his surprise he was introduced to Catherine and to Paul on the first day of his arrival, and he immediately made an impression on the Empress. On the second day General Bayer informed Grimm that a high position in the Empress' service was offered to him. Grimm declined, but after Paul's wedding, when he prepared to leave Russia, Count Vladimir Orlov approached him again, demanding to know his conditions. In a private audience Grimm explained to Catherine that he was past fifty and that he did not know Russian. Therefore, he could not hope to serve Russia well. In spite of Catherine's effort to change his mind, he firmly declined.⁴⁴ As a compromise, Grimm agreed to stay in St. Petersburg until the spring of 1774. Obviously Catherine had not yet capitulated and still

⁴³Grimm to Catherine, January 26, 1764, Sbornik, vol. XXXIII, p. 1.

⁴⁴Grimm, "Memoirs", Sbornik, vol. II, pp. 325-329.

hoped to convince Grimm that his place was in St. Petersburg. Throughout that winter Diderot entertained Catherine with his lectures at the Hermitage, but she derived even more pleasure from her private conversations with Grimm, which developed into daily sessions that lasted for hours.

When Grimm left, in the spring of 1774, he promised to write to Catherine regularly. This was the beginning of a correspondence that was not interrupted until the Empress' death, and it is this correspondence that enables us to discover something of Catherine's true character.

Why was Grimm chosen to become such a trusted friend? There were several possible explanations. Both, Grimm and Catherine, were of German origin, and both had chosen to identify with another nation. They were both intellectuals with a liberal humanist Weltanschauung. They shared the enlighteners interest in education, and this was extremely important for Catherine, but there was more than that. Gooch said: "Grimm's blood was cool and no writer of his time was less of a crusader or an iconoclast." This is a very true sketch of the man. Grimm was a realist. His feet were always firmly on the ground--an unusual trait for a western enlightener. It

was precisely this cool and realistic Grimm that Catherine appreciated. In spite of the fact that he declined her repeated invitations to settle in Russia, she never questioned the purity of his motives and her confidence in him was never shaken.

Grimm followed educational developments in Germany and Austria, and from 1775 on, Catherine discussed every new project with him. From time to time she reminded him of the moral obligation of the enlighteners. "You would be very dear to me, you Philosophes, if you would take upon yourself to develop a project for young people, starting with the alphabet and including university instruction",⁴⁵ she challenged him in a letter early in 1775. And early in 1776, she complained to him, with a note of desperation:

Catherine II, in spite of her power and good will is not in a position to accomplish many useful changes for Russia, because she lacks assistants. By the way, she cannot open elementary, secondary, and higher schools. If you agree to stay with us, you and I will see

⁴⁵Catherine to Grimm, early 1775, Sbornik, vol. XXIII, p. 19.

that there is an opportunity for you to be of great use to the state. Only you can be of help in this matter, much more so than I, because you understand this task better than I do.⁴⁶

Meanwhile, Grimm had seen the Austrian attempts to introduce education on the Prussian model, but when he returned to St. Petersburg in September 1776, he still felt that the Prussian school system was the best model, since it had been tested. In principle, he supported Diderot's position on the school reform question, but Grimm argued for compulsory teacher training on the Prussian model.

By this time Grimm was the best informed man on European school systems and it is not surprising that Catherine once more tried to engage him for the Russian school reform effort. In February 1777, she instructed her physician Rogerson to negotiate with Grimm and do everything to obtain his commitment to serve the Russian government.⁴⁷ Rogerson informed Grimm that the Empress

⁴⁶Rozhdestvensky, S. V., Istoricheski obzor deiatelnosti ministerstva narodnogo obrazovaniya, (St. Petersburg, 1902), vol. I, p. 14.

⁴⁷While Catherine and Grimm debated for three to four hours daily, Rogerson's mission was never mentioned. Catherine may have felt that Grimm would be less inhibited in negotiations with Rogerson, but more likely she simply tried to avoid the awkward moment of a possible refusal by Grimm.

wanted him to be in charge of Russia's school reforms.⁴⁸ Grimm presented his refusal in writing, arguing that for the important task a man needed more qualifications than mere notions as to the solution of certain problems. The fact that he did not know Russian disqualified him "for all times", he said.⁴⁹ Catherine was disappointed, but her attachment to this honest man did not suffer in the least. She begged him to stay as long as possible, and the daily conversations continued until August 1777, when Grimm finally had to leave. On June 28, 1777, the anniversary of Catherine's reign, she made Grimm her official agent in Paris, with an annual salary of 2000 rubles.⁵⁰

Grimm's second visit, from September 1776, to August 1777, had considerable influence on the future of Catherine's school policy. He had consistently argued that Russia's school reformer had to know Russian and that west Europeans lacked that first prerequisite. It was

⁴⁸Grimm, *Memoirs*, Sbornik, vol. II, pp. 333-334.

⁴⁹Ibid., p. 334.

⁵⁰Ibid., p. 334.

Grimm, supported by Aepinus, who finally convinced Catherine that she had to find a Russian speaking reformer.

On his way to Paris, Grimm met the influential Catholic Aufklärer, Baron Dalberg, who agreed to work out a project for Catherine. However, when the Empress received his plan in 1778, she shelved it with the rest of her collection of reform proposals. Grimm was informed that she would use the plan, "if God grants me the years of Methusalem".⁵¹ But, Grimm was so impressed by Dalberg that he was convinced that this "man of rare character and merit" was better qualified than any other man to be Catherine's adviser on school questions. Since Catherine did not accept Dalberg's project, Grimm finally presented his own reform plan, but now it was too late. Catherine had committed herself to the Austrian system. In a letter of September 6, 1780, he laments the fact that his project has come too late. "The fact is", Grimm said wistfully, "that except for the extraordinary position of that person whom I have in mind, no other objection will ever be found

⁵¹Catherine to Grimm, December 7, 1778, Sbornik, vol. XXIII, p. 115.

to my project."⁵² It is obvious that Grimm is referring to Dalberg, whose Catholic background was seen as that "one obstacle". But, Catherine proved to be a better judge of her case than Grimm who in this instance ignored Catherine's political considerations. A Catholic would never have been accepted by the Russian Church.⁵³

The 1770's were a period of inquiry and reorientation. In 1780 that stage came to an end. However, such generalization must not be seen as absolute periodization. In fact, the Russian Enlightenment continued to spread from its center in St. Petersburg to the provinces, throughout the seventies.

Early in 1773, Catherine considered the establishment of a school in Astrakhan. The project had been proposed by the governor of the Astrakhan gubernia, Nikita Beketov. Beketov's plan foresaw a school for 324 children of soldiers and 200 orphans of middle class background. He also proposed that the school should be open to the non-Orthodox

⁵²Grimm to Catherine, September 6, 1780, Sbornik, vol. XXXIII, p. 68.

⁵³From Grimm's last letter on Dalberg it is clear that the issue was discussed repeatedly between 1778 and September, 1780. Grimm understood that Dalberg, "the first founder of the German normal schools" [Letter, Sept. 6, 1780], could not be put in charge of Catherine's school reforms, since he did not speak Russian, but he wanted him to be an associate of the reformer.

population of his province. The plan stressed language instruction, with German, Armenian, Persian, Turkic, and Kalmuck to be taught by the governor's interpreters. Obviously, Beketov recognized the need for better communication with the people on Russia's periphery. Catherine supported this plan in principle, but on the margin of the document she commented: "Wait for the general instructions for schools in all gubernias."⁵⁴ This marginal remark suggests that Catherine was reluctant to continue experimentation with single schools, especially if qualified people were not available to run such projects. Beketov had proposed a school, but the only teachers available to him were some noncommissioned officers from the regiments and his interpreters. These could hardly have been qualified educators. Furthermore, Beketov himself was soon relieved of his duties. The lack of qualified teachers and administrators presented almost insurmountable obstacles.

While the Astrakhan school was not established at that time, the project still demonstrates the gradual spreading of the spirit of the Enlightenment in Russia. Catherine's interest was not limited to the two capitals

⁵⁴Nikita Beketov, "Predstavlenie astrakhanskogo gubernatora Nikity Beketova", Sbornik, vol. XIII, p. 294-297.

of Russia, she tried to expand the circle of the Enlightenment to the far corners of her empire. She also realized that enlightenment was not only a matter of literacy and philosophy. Enlightenment without a sound economic foundation was as unthinkable for Catherine as for the French physiocrat Turgot. Her correspondence is full of references to specific problems of the Russian economy,⁵⁵ and after a decade in power she was as well informed as could be expected under eighteenth century conditions. The war with Turkey had again exposed the lack of specialists in every field. Russia's expanding industry needed more engineers, and the traditional solution--hiring Europeans or sending Russian students abroad--could no longer supply

⁵⁵On September 2, 1773, Catherine responded to a Senate report on the expansion of agriculture in the Irkutsk gubernia. The response, in Catherine's own handwriting, is an interesting sample of her keen involvement in every field:

- 1) The development of agriculture in the Irkutsk region I consider to be useful.
- 2) The plan, as proposed by the Governor and the Senate, is not satisfactory.
- 3) There must be a rule for the distribution of unclaimed land. How many desiatins should be given to a family...? The same rule must apply in the whole empire.
- 4) Concerning those regions where native peoples roam from place to place, the Governor must take care that by untimely distribution or plowing those people would not be disturbed. [Catherine, "On the expansion of agriculture", Sbornik, vol. XIII, p. 356].

Russia with a sufficient number of specialists.⁵⁶ Under Anna Ivanovna, W. N. Tatishchev had established a school in Ekaterinburg, in the Ural Mountain region,⁵⁷ but the school experienced difficulties throughout its existence, since it was impossible to find qualified instructors. The school offered some practical training, but it could not prepare engineers and administrators. As a result, graduates from the Artillery and Engineering School in St. Petersburg had to fill positions of mining officers without any preparation for their responsibilities. Catherine's government realized that industrial expansion was impossible without the "know-how" and at the same time, pressure was mounting from the industrial enterprises. In 1771, a group of mining industrialists submitted a petition concerning the establishment of a mining school, "on lines, similar to the Cadet Corps and the Academy". The industrialists pledged to support this school with a fixed rate per weight of mined ore. The Senate then instructed

⁵⁶In the 1770's the number of Russia's privately owned metal mining enterprises jumped to 169, in addition to 26 state owned industries. [D. A. Tolstoy, Ein Blick, p. 69].

⁵⁷Senate report on mining schools, December 8, 1772, Polnoe Sobranie Zakonov, No. 13917.

Soimonov, the chief procurator of the Department of Mines, to work out a detailed plan for a modern mining school.

Soimonov's plan was accepted by the Senate and approved by Catherine without any changes on October 21, 1773.⁵⁸

The Senate's arguments for the establishment of the school, reveal the new mood of Russia:

Industrial administration today is very different from the past. It was established to multiply the number of factories, but today it must be concerned with the [entire] national economy. It must see to it that factories are being built well; it must be concerned with the improvement of mining; it must be able to determine the value and properties of various metals... . Without educated men and experienced factory administrators this is impossible. From the existing school in Ekaterinburg these qualified men cannot be expected.⁵⁹

The new school was open to all promising applicants, except serfs. For this reason its originally proposed name, Mining Cadet Corps, was changed to Mining School. The curriculum included all subjects of a proper mining school: arithmetic, algebra, mineralogy, metallurgy, chemistry, physics, mechanical engineering, hydraulics, and drafting.

⁵⁸Senate report on the new mining school, October 21, 1773, Polnoe sobranie zakonov, No. 14048.

⁵⁹Ibid.

Latin, French, and German were required foreign languages for applicants. Consequently, the school had to recruit its students from the University of Moscow.

The Mining School was officially opened on June 28, 1774, with 23 students registered for the first year, although the plan called for the enrollment of 24 government supported and 30 self-supporting students. The faculty was dominated by west European, mainly German professors. Some courses had to be instructed in German, because the new faculty members did not know Russian. Krafft and Renovantz were two of the first outstanding mining engineers and teachers.⁶⁰ Soon after the establishment of

⁶⁰The predominance of German faculty members at the Mining School is explained by the fact that mining schools were new in Europe. The first school of this type was established at Freiberg, Saxony, in 1766. Two more mining schools were established in Germany in the 1770's. Thus, only German mining schools could serve as models and provide teachers for similar schools. Renovantz came from the Mining Academy of Freiberg. He was the author of the first laboratory instructions and of the general plan for the Russian Mining School. He became famous for his model ore mine which was built on the premises of the St. Petersburg Mining School. The model mountain was 664 meters long and 60 meters wide, and the mine was 202 meters long and 6 meters deep. It served as an excellent demonstration for students and impressed distinguished foreign visitors. [Tolstoy, Ein Blick, p. 71] The Mining School was renamed several times. In 1804 it became known as the Mining Cadet Corps [Gorny Kadetski Korpus], and in 1833 it became the Mining Institute [Gorny Institute].

the school, Catherine appointed an "Educational Commission" for the institution, to supervise the development of "sound teaching methods" and of a scientific approach to mining. The Commission was also charged with the publication of the first Mining Encyclopedia. For this reason the school was provided with a printing shop. In four years the Commission published seven volumes of the Mining Encyclopedia, supervised teaching at the school, recruited scholars for the institution's research work, and founded a mining museum.⁶¹ In 1776, the Commission introduced gymnasium classes, to prepare students for the Mining School. As a result the school no longer depended on the University of Moscow for its student supply, and by 1784 the enrollment was raised to seventy government supported and fifty independent students.⁶² Tolstoy's appraisal, that "the Mining School was epoch-making" for the Russian mining industry, will hardly be challenged. The Mining School [Gornoe Uchilishche] very quickly gained a high reputation, establishing a tradition of admiration for the engineer that reaches into the present.

The founding of the Mining School overshadows another

⁶¹Tolstoy, Ein Blick, p. 72.

⁶²Ibid.

significant development in the field of Russian education. In 1773, the gymnasium of the Moscow University eliminated the special privilege of the nobility to select courses.⁶³ This practice had actually resulted in the development of two curricula at the gymnasium. Commoners had no choice, they enrolled in the gymnasium to prepare for the university, but the nobility had no incentive for intensive studies.⁶⁴

⁶³Sychev-Mykhailov, M. V., Iz istorii russkoi shkoly i pedagogiki XVIII veka, Moscow, 1960, p. 73.

⁶⁴For the commoners the university could be a stepping stone towards a higher position in the bureaucracy, but the noble youth had no similar aspirations. Furthermore, the reputation of the University of Moscow was so low that the nobility scorned that institution. At the end of 1759, Count S. R. Vorontsov begged his father to transfer the Vorontsovs from the University of Moscow to a boarding school, because there was no chance of learning anything at the university where "the teachers are drunkards and students have the meanest behavior". "A man with the best upbringing can be spoiled here, but he cannot learn anything", Vorontsov complains. [Tolstoy, Ein Blick, p. 48]. Catherine tried to change the situation. In 1765, she instructed the faculty of the University of Moscow to present to her reform proposals. The response must have been disappointing, from her point of view. Catherine was concerned about the quality of teaching, while the faculty of the University merely suggested economic reforms and salary increases. However, there was one proposal that made good sense. "Students should not be eligible for state service before they passed the final examination, after the completion of the university program." Furthermore, the professors suggested that the state should not support students without their commitment to finish the whole university program. [Chteniia, 1875, vol. II, pp. 199-212]. Catherine apparently was not willing to accept these temporary recruitment restrictions. In any case, the reform proposal was shelved and forgotten.

From 1773 on there was only one curriculum at the gymnasium of the University of Moscow. The reformers hoped to prepare more students for the University, but their success was very limited in that respect. The gymnasium reform failed to solve the University's problem, but it led to a democratization of the gymnasium and set off a reaction which the reformers had not anticipated. The nobility felt uncomfortable in the mixed gymnasium where they no longer had any special privileges, and in 1779, the government established the Noble Boarding School [Blagorodny Pansion] at the University of Moscow⁶⁵ to satisfy the nobility's demands for privileged treatment. In 1786, the Noble Boarding School became an independent institution, financed by private funds. It developed very quickly into a high prestige gymnasium for the nobility.⁶⁶ By the 1790's the Noble Boarding School enrolled up to 400 students.⁶⁷

⁶⁵Sychev-Mykhailov, Iz istorii, p. 84.

⁶⁶N. M. Karamzin and V. L. Pushkin took great interest in the Noble Boarding School, and among the outstanding graduates of the school are I. P. Pnin, A. S. Griboedov, V. A. Zhukovsky, M. Y. Lermontov, and M. E. Saltykov-Shchedrin. No wonder that Karamzin was pleased with the progress of his age.

⁶⁷Sychev-Mykhailov, Iz istorii, p. 86.

An equally impressive development took place at the university gymnasium. Due to the nobility's withdrawal from the gymnasium that institution was in a position to accomodate more commoners. When the Noble Boarding School became an independent private institution, the government channeled more funds into the university gymnasium, and in 1787 the enrollment of the gymnasium had risen from 100, at the beginning of Catherine's reign, to 1010 students.⁶⁸

The rich nobility preferred the private boarding schools, since it had better control over them, while the lower nobility, realizing that in education there was hope for its children, clamored for more government supported education. As a result, Catherine signed a decree, in February, 1774, opening the doors of garrison schools to 1000 children of the poor gentry.⁶⁹ The decree lists the distribution of these students to specific regional schools, setting quotas, from 10 to 200 students, which individual schools had to enroll. Obviously such measures were taken under the pressure of circumstances. Therefore, it is not surprising that Catherine's search for a public school

⁶⁸ Sychev-Mykhailov, Iz istorii, p. 74.

⁶⁹ Catherine's resolution on the Senate report of February 24, 1774, Polnoe sobranie zakonov, No. 14130.

system was intensified at this time. The explanation that Alexander's birth was the stimulus for Catherine's action is less convincing than the fact that the war was over, and that the gentry demanded some reward for its services. However, it would be misleading to interpret Catherine's decisions only in terms of pressure exerted by social groups. She had a very independent mind, and pressure groups were not really known at that time. In 1775, the Empress established an excellent gymnasium for co-religionists from foreign countries, mainly from Greece. The motivation was certainly not pressure, but rather an interesting experiment in international politics, setting an example that would be followed in Russian politics to the present day.

The Russian navy had defeated the Turks in the Mediterranean, but the expected Greek enthusiasm for a Russian liberation did not materialize. The Greeks were friendly toward the Russians, because they hated the Turks, but there was no invitation to stay. If Catherine wanted a foothold in the Mediterranean, she had to win the good will of the population. The original Mediterranean scheme came from Alexei Orlov, who also recruited the first students for Catherine's new gymnasium for co-religionists,

which became known as the Greek Gymnasium. On November 19, 1774, Catherine informed General Mordvinov that Count Alexei Orlov had recruited 200 boys from the Greek islands, who were to be educated in Russia. Catherine instructed Mordvinov to begin preparations for their arrival immediately.⁷⁰ She had a separate school in mind, and Oranienburg was chosen as its location, but for practical considerations the new institution was incorporated into the Artillery and Engineering Cadet Corps. On April 17, 1775, General Mordvinov, the director of the new school, reported to Catherine that "with the 20,000 rubles from her private purse" the construction work would be completed in time for the opening. At the same time Mordvinov presented a complete program for the Greek Gymnasium.⁷¹ His plan followed the curriculum of European gymnasiums, with one striking difference. The curriculum of the Greek gymnasium listed six compulsory languages: Russian, German, French, Italian, Turkic, and Greek. The political implications of the Greek project are quite obvious from Mordvinov's statement of

⁷⁰Catherine to Mordvinov, November 19, 1774, Sbornik, vol. XXVII, p. 5.

⁷¹Mordvinov's report to Catherine, April 17, 1775, Polnoe sobranie zakonov, No. 14299.

aims for the school:

Since this school...is being established with such Highest [Royal] purpose, that not only those should benefit from it, who demonstrated their good will during the past Turkish War, but rather that all our co-religionists could always rely on Russia's patronage...the school appropriately shall be called Gymnasium for Co-Religionists from other countries.⁷²

Most of the first 200 Greek students became Russian army officers. It is not surprising that Catherine was proclaimed as "Protector of the Greeks", by Georgi Baldani, a former student of the Greek Gymnasium.⁷³ In 1783, the Greek Gymnasium was transferred to Kherson, on the Black Sea, and Potemkin became its protector.⁷⁴ Again, the political motivation for this transfer would appear to be obvious, but the move was also practical because of Kherson's proximity to the potential recruitment area.

The Greek Gymnasium developed into one of Russia's best schools. Its reputation soon attracted the sons of

⁷²Mordvinov's report to Catherine, April 17, 1775, Polnoe sobranie zakonov, No. 14229.

⁷³Tolstoy, Ein Blick, p. 75.

⁷⁴Catherine to Potemkin, January 31, 1783, Sbornik, vol. XXVII, pp. 230-231.

the Russian nobility. The patronage of the Empress and Potemkin, and the able leadership provided by Mordvinov, and after his death in 1779, by Mussin-Pushkin, who was active as director of the school until 1796,⁷⁵ contributed to the continued success of the Greek Gymnasium.

The most significant school legislation of the 1770"s, was incorporated into the Administrative Reform of 1775, known as "Institutions for the Administration of Gubernias".⁷⁶

The Pugachev Rebellion of 1773-1774, was a major stimulant for the Empress' energetic action in 1775, but it was not the only cause of Catherine's administrative reforms. It must be kept in mind, that the Legislative Commission of 1767 had been called to deal with the problem of administration. The Turkish War ended that first attempt to transform Russia. Whether the Empress used the war as a convenient excuse for the dissolution of the Commission is really not crucial. The point is, that it was Catherine's ambition to reform Russia, and therefore she could delay, or choose to approach the problem from a

⁷⁵Tolstoy, Ein Blick, p. 75.

⁷⁶Manifesto, November 7, 1775, Polnoe sobranie zakonov, No. 14392.

different angle, but she would always come back to the question that political consideration temporarily forced into the background. Only on the question of serfdom did the Empress accept defeat, because she was a pragmatist with no desire to become the martyr of a cause. With volumes of useful information from the Legislative Commission, Catherine presented her own administrative reform in 1775.⁷⁷

The "Institutions for the Administration of Gubernias" divided Russia into gubernias with a population of three to four hundred thousand. The nobility was granted considerably more room for participation in local politics, while the central control of the autocrat was enhanced.

The "Institutions" ordered the establishment of a Department of Public Welfare [Prikaz Obshestvennogo Prizrenia] in every gubernia. Chapter XXV of the document

⁷⁷The Pugachev Rebellion probably accelerated the reform process, but there are positive indications that the administrative reforms were in an advanced planning stage in 1773. At that time Catherine instructed the Governor of Astrakhan to await changes in the Astrakhan garrison school, "until the general instructions would be ready". [Sbornik, vol. XIII, pp. 294-297].

deals with the duties of the Public Welfare Department.⁷⁸ The department was charged with supervising the establishment of public schools and orphanages on "a sound foundation". Public schools were to be established first in all towns and then in other major population centres. The curriculum included reading, writing, drawing, arithmetic, and religion. For those who could not afford to pay, twenty hours of instruction per week were to be offered tuition free, and attendance was voluntary. The importance of the educational issue is stressed by the fact that the governor of each guberniia was made chairman of his Department of Public Welfare. Thus, he was personally responsible to the Empress for any lack of initiative in the field of education.⁷⁹

While the Administrative Reforms of 1775 certainly improved the administration of the Russian Empire, they failed to provide Russia with schools. There were several flaws inherent in that attempt to legislate schools into being. Russia had just ended a protracted war, and the

⁷⁸Polnoe Sobranie Zakonov, No. 14392, ch. 25.

⁷⁹Ibid.

Pugachev Rebellion had added to the government's financial burden, as a result the governors received a petty 15,000 ruble grant each, to create a new school system in their gubernias. This was not enough for any serious effort. However, most serious of all was again the lack of teachers. Ironically, the statute stated, "bad teachers must be relieved and replaced by good ones", when it was impossible to find any teachers at all. It is surprising, and it certainly speaks for the resourcefulness of some governors, that a number of schools were opened, although in some gubernias the school effort never got off the ground until 1786. The absence of a teaching profession continued to be the greatest obstacle for the Russian Enlightenment.

An attempt to solve this problem was undertaken by the University of Moscow. Rozhdestvensky attributes this project to Schaden, a popular professor at that university, who consistently had advocated the necessity of teacher training against the opposition of the Ecclesiastic Commission, whose members held that any literate person was qualified to teach. Schaden must have had the support of the University faculty. More significantly, he convinced the Empress, without whose approval no change at the

University was conceivable. Catherine's support, in this case, is of particular interest, since the Ecclesiastic Commission was very influential at the court, and Catherine had not yet been impressed by the University's performance. According to Sychev-Mykhailov, teacher training began at the University of Moscow in 1776.⁸⁰ Nothing is known about the progress of this project, and one would be inclined to be sceptical if there were not two factors speaking for the training program. When in the 1780's the first schools of the new public school system were established, some of the teachers came from the University of Moscow--they could have been graduates of the teachers seminary. A second factor in support of the theory that the teacher training at the University could not have been a complete failure, is the presence of two great educators at the University. Johann Matthias Schaden had been called from the University of Tübingen, in 1756, to be in charge of the two wings of the new gymnasium at the University of Moscow. He was also professor of philosophy at the University and thus in a position of considerable influence.

⁸⁰Sychev-Mykhailov, Iz istorii, p. 74.

He had advocated the idea of a teachers seminary at the gymnasium, but influential people, including Diderot, had argued against the idea. In 1776, Schaden gave up the rectorship of the two gymnasiums in favor of the newly arrived Johann Georg Schwartz.⁸¹ Schaden was convinced that teacher training was absolutely necessary, and in Schwartz, he and his university colleagues could not fail to recognize the pedagogue, with an excellent preparation for the task, an organizing talent, and the zeal of the Aufklärer. Schwartz dedicated himself to the education of Russians who could spread the Enlightenment in their own country. According to Demkov, he became rector of the first teachers seminary in Moscow, in 1779.⁸²

⁸¹Demkov, Istoriia, vol. II, p. 427.

⁸²The influence of Schaden and Schwartz must have been considerable. Schwartz became a close friend of Novikov, whose ideals he shared. Students flocked to his lectures, we are informed. He told his students that foreigners "cheat many noble parents who desire to educate their children", therefore, Russian students should prepare to become the educators of their people.

Schaden, who had a 20 year experience in Russia, before Schwartz arrived, was one of the most popular professors of the Moscow University. Karamzin joined the "Society of Learned Friends", founded by Schwartz, and Schaden he praised as one of his great teachers. The poet, M. N. Muraviev, said about Schaden, "he taught the truth without cover". ["Epistle to Turgeniev", in M. N. Muraviev, Stikhotvorenia, Leningrad, 1967, pp. 114-116]. Fonvizin also paid tribute to his teacher, Schaden. He said:

In 1778, Catherine's lover, Zorich, established a school on his estate at Shklov.⁸³ The school enrolled 300 students, and under Paul it was changed into a cadet corps which functioned as an educational institution throughout the nineteenth century.

The establishment of Russia's two most successful theological seminaries also goes back to that period. A statute of August 17, 1778, established the Seminary of Sevsk,⁸⁴ and in 1779, Archbishop Evgenii Bulgaris founded the Slovensk Seminary in Poltava,⁸⁵ which rose to fame under the guidance of two Greek scholars, Bulgaris and Feotoki.

Rozhdestvensky also mentions the establishment of a

"This learned man had an outstanding gift to lecture and explain with such clarity that our progress was apparent." ["A confession", D. I. Fonvizin, Sobranie Sochinenii, Moscow, 1959, vol. II, p. 93]. The fact that Schwartz was associated with Novikov may have been a reason why the teachers seminary did not find an appropriate place in the historical records of the time.

⁸³Ikonnikov, Znachenie, p. 50.

⁸⁴Statute, August 17, 1778, Polnoe Sobranie Zakonov, No. 14784.

⁸⁵Ikonnikov, Znachenie, p. 50.

State Commerce School, in 1777, "at the demand of the middle class".⁸⁶ In Moscow the Land Survey School was founded in 1779.⁸⁷ This school contributed much to the successful surveying of the immense empire in the first half of the nineteenth century.

Evidence simply refutes the theory that the 1770's were a period of stagnation. The fact that Moscow University professors were participating in seven private schools,⁸⁸ also suggests a growing interest in education. Beside the growing number of government established schools, there were a number of educational institutions founded by private citizens. Novikov opened two schools in Moscow, in 1777. Private boarding schools were springing up in all major population centers,⁸⁹ and some of the Russian schools,

⁸⁶Rozhdestvensky, Ocherki, p. 361.

⁸⁷Ikonnikov, Znachenie, p. 50.

⁸⁸Sychev-Mykhailov, Iz istorii, p. 90.

⁸⁹Catherine tolerated and even encouraged private participation in the Russian Enlightenment. In 1783, she still had the courage to support a free press in Russia. Only in the last decade she became suspicious of all "idealists", who seemed to ignore Russian reality. In her drama, Obmanshchik [The Deceiver], in 1784, she singled out the Masons for criticism, but the Order was not yet banned.

founded in the 1770's were as good as any schools in western Europe. However, these schools served only a very small minority, and Russia was just beginning to awaken to its greatest problem--illiteracy.

Since her accession, Catherine had struggled to remove the stigma of ignorance and backwardness from Russia, and the philosophes had been welcome allies in this effort. However, the assumption that Catherine was interested only in the philosophes' propaganda is misleading. She seriously tried to engage D'Alembert, Rousseau, and eventually Diderot, in her educational reform planning, but they either rejected her invitation, or they presented her with proposals that were entirely unfeasible for Russia. Therefore, the influence of the philosophes was declining long before the French Revolution of 1789. It virtually came to an end in 1774, with Diderot's failure to convince Catherine that he had a practical solution to her problem. She finally concluded that the philosophes did not understand the reality of Russia, and her attention focused more and more on the German Aufklärer who eventually became the new mediators of western Enlightenment.

In this shift, from a French stimulated to a German dominated Russian Enlightenment, Friedrich Melchior Grimm's

position and function were of a unique nature. Grimm, the Gallicized German, shared the ideals of the French Enlightenment, but he was a pragmatist with a clear grasp of the realities of this world. When Grimm advised Catherine to opt for the more practical German Aufklärer, he also cautioned her against the crusader type.

For Catherine, Grimm was much more than a cool adviser or an amusing correspondent. In him, for the first time, Catherine encountered a man who entered with her into a dialogue. Diderot was domineering, he did not tolerate the opinion of "mortals". Grimm, being of lesser fame, but also of a different character, always listened, but he had the courage to express his opinion. He observed the court etiquette, but he treated Catherine as an intellectual equal. He opened to her the thrilling experience of dialogue between two people who respect and appreciate each other. "How he understands me!" Catherine exclaimed in 1778, "It is as though only he understands me well".⁹⁰

The period between the dissolution of the Legislative Commission and the Mogilev meeting of Catherine II with

⁹⁰Catherine to Grimm, March 4, 1778, Sbornik, vol. XXIII, p. 83.

Joseph II of Austria in 1780, can appropriately be called an era of reorientation. Since neither Betskoy nor the Legislative Commission had developed acceptable plans, the Empress personally began an intensive study of European models. The experience of the first decade of her reign had opened her eyes to the need of serious stock-taking before introducing major reforms. She realized that the establishment of individual schools, on Betskoy's model, could not eliminate illiteracy in Russia. A comprehensive school system, accessible to all Russians, was needed. Prussia had introduced a public school system in 1763, but Catherine's obstacles on the reform road were incomparably more formidable than Frederick's. The three conditions for a successful public school system: a) a teaching profession, b) a well organized administrative apparatus, and c) sufficient financial resources, were all nonexistent in Russia--they had to be created first. Therefore, it is not surprising that Catherine hesitated for years, when France and England, where conditions were far more favorable, did not even consider the introduction of a public school system. After a decade of uncertainty, encouraged by Grimm, Aepinus, and Schaden, Catherine finally made a decision, and in 1780 she initiated the most active period of the Russian Enlightenment.

CHAPTER IV

THE BEGINNING OF A SYSTEM
OF PUBLIC EDUCATION IN RUSSIA

1782-1796

Only scoundrels and contemptible knaves
are afraid of educated nations.¹

Grimm

Nobody can scare me. I am not afraid of
an educated population.... But, when
will nations be educated?²

Catherine II

The reorientation of the Enlightenment in the 1770's was not a unique Russian experience. It was a response to developments in Central Europe, where the German Aufklärung began to challenge the prevailing philosophy of the early Enlightenment. Born almost simultaneously with the French Enlightenment, but in the shadow of that intellectual explosion, the German Aufklärung had developed almost unnoticed.

¹Grimm to Catherine, September 6, 1780, Sbornik, vol. XXXIII, p. 69.

²Catherine to Grimm, September 23, 1780, Sbornik, vol. XXIII, p. 189.

However, the appearance of Lessing and Kant on the stage of the German Aufklärung, in the 1760's, signaled an almost immediate change of attitude toward the Aufklärer. Lessing and Kant rejected the materialistic outlook of the idols of intellectual Europe, and Lessing quite systematically cut down the philosophes to their proper size. His famous epitaph for Voltaire is characteristic:

Here rests--if one can trust you,
Dear pious gentlemen!--
Who should have been here long ago.
Dear God forgive him...his tragedies,
And his cheap poetry,
Since for the rest which he would sell,
I say, he did quite well.³

Lessing and Kant were among the first who refused to swim with the current of the accepted intellectual fashion. Lessing's pen spared neither philosophes nor philosopher kings. He refused to pay homage to the idols of the philosophes, and even Frederick II was not spared by him.

"Be Vienna as it may", he wrote to his publisher friend Nicolai, "it is still more promising for German literature than your Frenchified Berlin... . Don't ask me to think and write about Freedom in Berlin. It is reduced to the sole freedom to carry

³G. E. Lessing, Dichtung und Briefe, (Tempel Verlag, Berlin, 1965), vol. I, p. 47.

against religion as many fools' stories to market as you like. And by now a man of integrity must be ashamed to use this liberty."⁴

Lessing and Kant probably made no immediate impact on Russia, although Kant was elected as a member of the St. Petersburg Academy in 1794, but they changed the intellectual climate of Central Europe, which affected the Russian Enlightenment. Most significant in this context are the developments in the field of education.

While in Catholic Europe, including France, the Jesuits continued to dominate the field of education, in Protestant Germany the first steps were taken toward a universal public school system. In 1751, the first teachers' seminary in Germany was established in Hannover. In 1763, Prussia introduced the first public school system. In 1768, a teachers' seminary was opened in Baden. In 1769, the "General Landschulen Reglament" was introduced in Prussia, by which teachers were required to obtain a certificate of qualification. In the same year, Bishop Leopold Ernst of Passau urged governments to accept responsibility for the education of the masses. These

⁴G. E. Lessing, Dichtung und Briefe, vol. I, p. 1134.

developments carried over into Austria and in 1771 a teachers' seminary was opened in Vienna. When the Jesuits were expelled in 1773, the transition from a Church dominated to a secular government-sponsored school was facilitated. Austria was forced to take action to replace the system of the Jesuits. In 1775, 14 new schools opened in and around Vienna, and by 1780, Austria had established an amazingly successful school system.

The Russian Enlighteners had observed these changes, and Catherine was well informed through Grimm, Golitsyn, and other correspondents. In the wake of these developments, French influence declined in Russia, as it did in Europe in general. Diderot's project of 1775 came too late. French educational models no longer competed with the German models, the reorientation from French to German influence had been completed, and it was now merely a question of choice between two German models, the Prussian and the Austrian.

In February 1780, Catherine still appears to be totally uncommitted to any project. In a letter to Grimm she writes:

You don't know that the Empress often would like to deal with the familiar subject, and it is not her fault if that is not done,

because everything that is needed for that task is still lacking. In that state is also the work in which I asked you to participate when you were here the last time. The apple is good for nothing until it is ripe. As for Dalberg's project, that is impossible... . Before God a thousand years are an instant. One more year does not mean anything in a vast empire; let the apple ripen. It is true that this is tedious, but it cannot be done in any other way, because for every project I need at least a year in order to think it over.⁵

However, four months later the Empress has come to a decision. On May 25, 1780, she informs Grimm about her successful meeting with Joseph II at Mogilev. Commenting on the school question she writes:

Russia has declared herself for normal schools. I must inform you that these schools were one of the subjects of discussion, and judging from what I heard, they are excellent institutions. However, we need normal school teachers.⁶

To Catherine's request that Grimm find out Dalberg's opinion on Austrian normal schools,⁷ Grimm replied on

⁵Catherine to Grimm, February 2, 1780, Sbornik, vol. XXIII, p. 173.

⁶Ibid., May 25, 1780, pp. 180-181.

⁷Ibid., July 24, 1780, p. 183.

September 6, 1780, that Dalberg had sent his evaluation before Grimm could forward a request. Grimm furthermore stated in the same letter that he had already mailed Dalberg's project to the "Mistress of the normal schools" [Catherine].⁸ Between August 18, 1780, and the end of 1780, Grimm sent her several brochures and memoranda concerning education. One of his memoranda deals with Basedow's Philanthropium in Dessau, giving it the final blow. More seriously he treats two brochures on primary and secondary schools in Mainz, Germany. From the Mainz experience, Grimm deduced that language instruction in Russia should be developed along similar lines. He argues that Russian schools should teach Russian, Latin, German, and Greek, leaving the still fashionable French to private instruction. This advice was later put into practice by Catherine's reformers. In his critical memorandum on German schools, Grimm points out that in Mainz normal schools had been operating since 1773 and that their experience should be of interest to Catherine.⁹ Concerning normal and primary schools in Austria Grimm comments that

⁸Grimm to Catherine, September 6, 1780, Sbornik, vol. XXXIII, pp. 51-72-

⁹Ibid., August-September (?), 1780, p. 430.

Catherine should pay special attention to the brochure, "Outline for the Establishment of German Schools". He suggests that the method proposed by the author of the essay should be further investigated and that more information should be obtained from Vienna.¹⁰

The most elaborate of Grimm's memoranda deals with Schaden's educational philosophy and his stress on teacher training. He tells Catherine that "Schaden's ideas reveal him as a wise and worthy man" whose project would eventually "supply schools with capable and well prepared teachers". "Schaden", says Grimm, "proposes to educate mind and heart of students and to prepare not only scholars, but rather scholars and citizens". Schaden's project also stressed the need for a central school administration for the whole empire, and recommended drama as an educational tool in the classroom and in society.¹¹ It is not quite clear why Schaden's project was not passed on by its author directly to Catherine. Schaden either feared some opposition from the men around Catherine or he simply wanted to add the

¹⁰Grimm to Catherine, August-September, 1780, Sbornik, vol. XXXIII, p. 433.

¹¹Ibid., pp. 425-429.

weight of Grimm's judgement to his own proposal.

The decision to adopt the Austrian system was announced in May 1780, at Mogilev, but all signs had actually been pointing in that direction for some time. Grimm, Aepinus, Schaden, and Miller had been advocating the adoption of one of the German systems, and as the dialogue between Catherine and her advisers continued, the Austrian system became more attractive. There may have been several reasons for this development. The Prussian system had been developed gradually, while Austria seemed to have performed the miracle in only five years. Something that Catherine would have liked to see in Russia. Furthermore, the Russian Church viewed with suspicion anything imported from the "atheist Berlin" of Frederick II. Catherine could not afford to have atheism associated with her most important project--education. It may also be that Catherine agreed with the German Aufklärer that the Enlightenment had better chances in liberal Vienna.¹² It is significant that in the final round all the Aufklärer

¹²Lessing did not agree with Kant's dictum, that the Age of Enlightenment was synonymous with the Age of Frederick the Great.

friends of Catherine, Grimm, Dalberg, Aepinus, Schaden, and Miller¹³ gave unanimous approval for the adoption of the Austrian school model. However, the most valid reason for the choice of the Austrian school system was Austria's multi-national society with a large segment of Slavs.

Next to Grimm, the academic Aepinus was Catherine's most trusted adviser, and his influence on Catherine's decisions may have been greater than Grimm's. Every author on Catherine's Russian school reforms mentions Aepinus as a member of Catherine's School Commission, but only D. A. Tolstoy seems to appreciate fully his contribution. A careful study of Aepinus' "Plan for public schools"¹⁴ reveals him as an outstanding educator, wise counselor and man of integrity. Aepinus had been invited to teach at the Academy of Sciences in St. Petersburg, and in 1757 he became a member of the Academy. He seems to have been a universal genius. In 1765 he was appointed

¹³Gerhard Friedrich Miller (1705-1783), member of the Academy of Sciences, came to Russia in 1725. In 1733 he joined Behring's Siberian expedition. He wrote the first History of Siberia and published other works on Russian history.

¹⁴Aepinus, "Plan des wirklichen Staats'Rats Hrn. Aepinus", D. A. Tolstoy, Gorodskie uchilishcha, (St. Petersburg, 1886), Appendix No. 2.

as tutor of Grand Duke Paul, and soon he became Catherine's most influential adviser in questions of education. It is also interesting to note that Catherine's "Doctrine of Armed Neutrality", of 1780, was probably developed jointly by Catherine and Aepinus. Aepinus spoke Russian and must have been competent in that language, because he was one of the men who examined the texts of Serbian and Slavonic schools in Austria. Commenting on those texts he told Catherine: "The fact that I can read without great difficulty the text books of the Illyrian and Slavonic schools proves that these dialects deviate very little from Russian."¹⁵ Aepinus was one of those Germans who adopted Russia as their homeland and consequently became Russian patriots. In his memorandum on education he speaks of "Wir Russen" [we Russians]. This explains why he held a position of trust without resentment on the part of his Russian colleagues.

When after the Mogilev meeting with Joseph II,¹⁶

¹⁵Aepinus, "Vorschläge so ich nach reifer Überlegung I.K.M. machen zu können glaube", D. A. Tolstoy, Gorodskie uchilishcha, Appendix No. 2, p. 140.

¹⁶Catherine's journal of the Mogilev meeting, from May 11 to June 10, 1780, mentions only the presence of Graf Falkenstein. [Sbornik, vol. I, pp. 384-420]. Joseph II had insisted on travelling incognito. In her letter to

in May 1780, Catherine announced that Russia had decided to adopt the Austrian school system, the Austrian Emperor received undue credit for his role in the decision. Evidence suggests that Catherine had all the information about Austrian schools that she needed, before that meeting and that education was not the number one issue at Mogilev. It seems more likely that the announcement after the Mogilev meeting was a political maneuver on the part of the Empress and that the decision had actually been made prior to the meeting. A careful screening of the wording of Aepinus' "Plan for Russian Schools" sheds some light on this subject. Aepinus' "Plan" was partially implemented by Catherine and in 1783 it was published by Schlözer in Mainz, Germany. Thanks to this Mainz publication the undistorted original text is available. [Any distortions would have been challenged by Catherine and by Aepinus.] The paper is divided into four chapters: 1) Criteria for a national school, 2) A detailed outline of the

Grimm of May 25, 1780, Catherine again used the name Falkenstein, but from diplomatic correspondence, prior to and after Mogilev, the identity of "Falkenstein" is evident. Two months after Mogilev "Falkenstein" visited Catherine at Czarskoe Selo, and European statesmen watched that Austro-Russian rapprochement with suspicion. In our context the rapprochement is of interest because it may have been a factor in Catherine's decision to adopt the Austrian school system.

Austrian school system, 3) A critical evaluation of the Austrian system, and 4) Recommendations for a Russian school system. The approximate date of the paper can be determined from the first recommendation in chapter 4:

I wish that your Majesty would commit herself to the adoption of the Austrian School-Plan.¹⁷

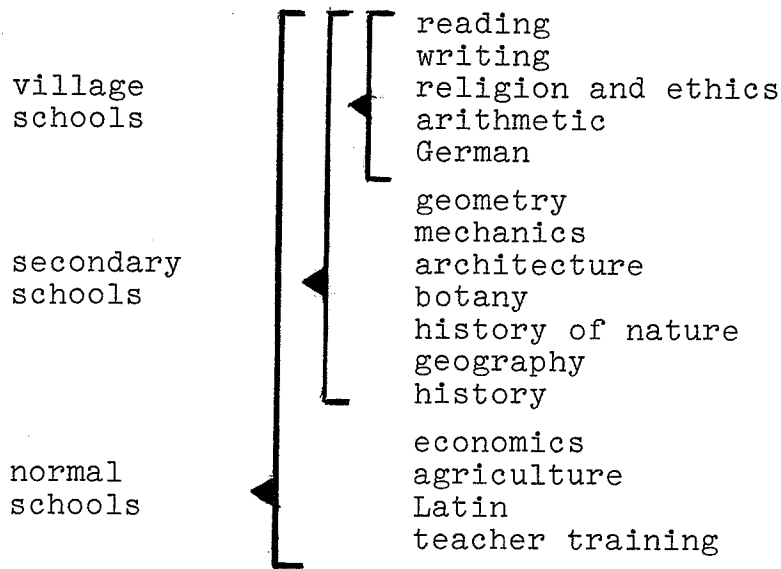
Since Catherine's letter, of February 2, 1780, does not mention Aepinus' recommendations, it can be assumed that Aepinus' "Plan" was presented to Catherine not before February 2, 1780, but prior to the Mogilev meeting in May, 1780. Obviously, after the meeting there was no longer any reason to urge Catherine "to commit herself" to the Austrian system. Hence, it would appear that Aepinus played a very significant role in the initial stages of the major reforms of the 1780's, and that Catherine's own plan was based on Aepinus' recommendations. Therefore, his "Plan" is of interest.

In his introduction Aepinus emphasizes that "it would be easy, but useless" to legislate schools into being, without the necessary preparation. "Besides wasting

¹⁷Aepinus, "Plan...Recommendations", D. A. Tolstoy, Gorodskie uchilishcha, Appendix 2, p. 139.

energy and resources, bad schools would do more harm than good." He urges Catherine to charge competent men with drafting a plan for the Russian schools, and to open schools only after a sufficient number of teachers have been found. The success of the Austrian schools, as Aepinus saw it, rested on the simplicity of the whole system, on trained teachers, and on a centralized, competent administration. The system had three parallel levels of schools: 1) normal schools, 2) secondary, or city schools, 3) primary, or village schools. There was a single common curriculum, with courses added at each higher level. The normal schools offered instruction on all levels, the secondary schools offered instruction on the two lower levels, and primary schools had a common curriculum with the lower level of the city schools.

Curriculum of the Austrian schools:



Strict adherence to common text books, and teachers trained at good normal schools, Aepinus argued, would assure the uniformity of all schools.

In a special chapter, "Proposals...presented to Her Imperial Majesty", Aepinus forwarded a detailed plan of action to Catherine. The directness of these recommendations reveals something of the relationship between the author and his monarch. The first statement of the recommendations, "I wish that Your Majesty would make a commitment [sich entscheidend entschliessen] to adopt the Austrian school plan, without changes", airs an impatience. It appears that the Austrian plan had been discussed prior to the presentation of Aepinus' paper. The second recommendation starts with the same note of urgency: "In view of the great expansion of Your Majesty's empire, it will be necessary to establish normal schools without delay, in St. Petersburg, Moscow, Kazan, and in Kiev."¹⁸ In respect to the recruitment of educators for the new schools he agreed with Grimm that Russia could not rely on west Europeans, and he advised Catherine to find teachers of Slavonic Greek Orthodox background in Austria. Finally, he

¹⁸Aepinus, "Plan", paragraph 4, p. 139.

urged Catherine to establish "immediately" an Imperial School Directorate of three competent men whose only motivation should be "to do something good". Impatience, idealism, frankness, and a pragmatic approach seem to be common to all of Catherine's Aufklärer, but Aepinus' directness would hardly find a match. Yet, his manners were by no means the result of insensitivity, or perhaps unawareness of court etiquette. The last statement in his recommendations leaves no doubt in that respect: "Your Majesty's orders entitle me to this boldness. We have the undeniable right, (I would like to say, more than a right), to do our duty."¹⁹ This was the type of man that Catherine seemed to appreciate most. In any case, in 1780 she accepted most of Aepinus' recommendations, and incorporated them into her own plan for Russian schools, which she prepared prior to Yankovich's arrival.

With the adoption of the Austrian school system the Russian government accepted responsibility for the education of the whole nation. The goal was set." In sixty years all divisions will disappear", Catherine told

¹⁹Aepinus, "Plan", paragraph 4, p. 141.

Khrapovitsky, "as soon as public schools will be established securely, ignorance will destroy itself."²⁰ Catherine was thinking in terms of universal education, and thus Russia became the third country in the world, after Prussia and Austria, to recognize the responsibility of the government in respect to education. Aepinus' recommendations were supplemented by an equally elaborate appendix in which he analyzed the role of the Church in society. He implored Catherine not to close her eyes to the important role of the Church. "Nothing is more dangerous", Aepinus says, "and nothing has more devastating consequences than a disproportion in the enlightenment of the clergy and the rest of the nation."²¹ If the Church reserves education for itself, the results are ignorance and superstition of the masses and an undue status of a priesthood, which has lost its original meaning and goal. But Aepinus warns Catherine, that a situation where the public would be educated while the Church remained ignorant would be equally disastrous for a nation. Among the upper classes, Aepinus claims, the evil already to be apparent. He

²⁰Khrapovitsky, Dnevnik, June 4, 1782, p. 1.

²¹Aepinus, "Plan", pp. 141-147.

concludes with an impassionate plea:

What would happen to this unhappy nation, if Your Imperial Majesty succeeds in freeing the people from ignorance, while the priesthood remains in its present state?... . I cannot help it, I must implore Your Majesty not to take any step for the enlightenment of the people, that is not accompanied by enlightenment of the priesthood.²²

Aepinus argued, that the clergy must be educated for a role of leadership in the enlightenment of the nation.

From Aepinus' presentation it is also clear that the Russian enlighteners did not stumble into an adventure without realizing the cost. Neither Catherine nor her advisers were blind to the fact that the educational reforms would be very expensive. Reflecting on this aspect, Aepinus comments:

If Your truly motherly concern for Your nation had not been known to me, I would have had doubts concerning this most deserving undertaking of the Monarch. It cannot be concealed that the cost of this work will be staggeringly high... . However, You pleased to instruct me not to worry about the great cost.²³

²²Aepinus, "Plan", p. 142.

²³Ibid., p. 147.

Between the Mogilev meeting of May 1780, and Yankovich's arrival, in September 1782, the Empress was busy preparing for the actual reform drive, but at the same time she established seven schools in St. Petersburg. The first one of these schools, the Isaak School, was established by Catherine from her private purse. The example seems to have been imitated by other private citizens, since none of these schools received any government grants.²⁴ It cannot be determined with accuracy when Catherine drafted her school reform plan. Since the plan incorporated Aepinus' recommendations, it may be concluded that it was written between June and September 1780. The Empress' plan proposed detailed measures for the introduction of the Austrian system. The handwritten draft also shows that the Empress had instructed the Russian ambassador in Vienna, Golitsyn, to recruit teachers among

²⁴All seven schools were established in the neighborhood of churches whose name they adopted: Isaak School, Voznesenski School, St. Vladimir School, Simeon Bogopriimets School, Andrei Pervozvany School, Vvedenie School. In 1783 these schools were reformed and they received teachers from Yankovich's first teacher class. [D. A. Tolstoy, Die Stadtschulen, während der Regierung der Kaiserin Katharina II, (St. Petersburg, 1887), pp. 89-90]. The fact that they were established in the neighborhood of larger churches suggests that they had some church affiliation. They may have been run by the clergy until 1783. However, no records of their early years are available.

the Slavs in Austria.²⁵ In this first draft Catherine proposed to establish a School Commission of four men: Fieldmarshal Golitsyn, Melissino, Aepinus, and Pallas. It would appear that even in the composition of the Commission, Catherine originally followed Aepinus' recommendation.²⁶ Catherine's three school levels corresponded with the Austrian division. She proposed to establish: 1) village schools, 2) city schools, and 3) middle schools. The middle schools were also to function as normal schools and thus corresponded more or less to the Austrian normal schools. It would appear that Catherine hoped that the middle school could be the link with the university. Significantly, Catherine called the first level simply "village schools". This would suggest that she was definitely committed to universal education, including the village population. Her project also implies that Russian reform plans were at an advanced stage when Yankovich arrived, and that it may not be quite correct to ascribe the whole reform plan to him.

²⁵Catherine's Plan was not available to the author, therefore he relies on Rozhdestvensky. The handwritten document is in the Gosudarstvenny Arkhiv, X, No. 434 [Rozhdestvensky, Ocherki, p. 554].

²⁶Aepinus recommended Golitsyn as chairman, and two competent educators, to be chosen by the Empress.

Yankovich de Mirievo arrived in St. Petersburg on September 4, 1782. Kniazkov and Tolstoy are of the opinion that he had been recommended to Catherine at the Mogilev meeting, in 1780. However, it is difficult to conceive that Catherine would have waited for two years to invite a good candidate, when she was eager to start her reforms. She never mentions Yankovich in her letters until September 1782. Furthermore, Yankovich's letter of recommendation from Joseph II, dated August 8, 1782, seems to dispell all doubts. "Graf Cobenzel [Austrian ambassador in St. Petersburg] informed me", writes Joseph, "that You would like to have a man of Greek Orthodox faith in St. Petersburg, capable of composing a normal school plan. I have chosen the bearer of this letter, the Director Yankovich. In justice to him I must say that he is not only capable and experienced but also that I do not have a better man."²⁷ Joseph makes no reference to an earlier recommendation, although among the text books, which he had sent to Catherine in June 1780, there was a teachers' manual for Serbian schools, by Yankovich.

Yankovich de Mirievo proved to be the ideal choice

²⁷Joseph to Catherine, August 8, 1782, D. A. Tolstoy, Die Stadtschulen, p. 45.

for the Russian project. He had that rare combination of talent--he was a pedagogical genius and a skillful organizer. He spoke Russian, was of Greek Orthodox faith, and he had valuable experience in the Austrian normal school system. In 1773, Maria Theresa had made him Director of schools in the Temesvar Banat. In 1774, she gave recognition to this outstanding educator by raising him into the Austrian nobility. In 1776, he studied the new system in Vienna. He translated German texts into Serbian, adapting them to the local Serbian situation. Thus, he was not only gifted--he seemed to have been groomed specifically for the Russian reform effort.

After Yankovich's arrival Catherine wasted no time. A decree of September 7, 1782, established a special School Commission to supervise school reforms in the Russian Empire. This was in line with Catherine's first plan, recognizing the necessity of a central administration in a public school system, but the composition of the School Commission was not the same as in her original plan. The appointed members now were, Zavadovsky, Pastukhov, and Aepinus.²⁸ Yankovich joined the Commission in an

²⁸Decree, establishing the special School Commission, September 7, 1782, Polnoe sobranie zakonov, No. 15507.

unofficial capacity. The reasons for this change are not clear. Aepinus was the only man left of the originally planned Commission, and he was certainly an acknowledged educator. Zavadovsky must have been reasonably capable. After all the Commission was relatively successful, and it would be absurd to attribute every bit of that success to Yankovich alone. Pastukhov, on the other hand, seems to have had no qualifications for his appointment and one is led to suspect that he was Zavadovsky's choice.

The Commission was charged with four initial tasks: 1) Select, translate and prepare text books, 2) get the approval of the Archbishop of Novgorod for books on religion, 3) present a plan for schools, to be prepared by Yankovich, and 4) start the introduction of the new system in St. Petersburg, in the school established by the Empress out of her own purse.²⁹ The Empress also charged the Commission with finding and preparing the necessary teachers for these first reform schools. The first act of the Commission was the presentation of a plan, on September 21, 1782, signed by Catherine on September 27, 1782. The Empress was delighted with the quick action of the

²⁹Catherine was probably referring to the Isaak School, which she established in 1781. It was one of the first to be reformed by the Commission, in 1783.

Commission, and on October 10, 1782, she is in high spirits, explaining to her secretary, Khrapovitski, that "with the introduction of public schools various customs in Russia will eventually come to agree, and morals and manners will be corrected. Empress Maria Theresa established more than 800 schools after the example of one school."³⁰

The Russian plan of 1782 resembled the Austrian model, but it did not establish normal schools as part of the whole system. It dealt with the academic, administrative, and economic aspects of the school reform, but only the academic part was developed in detail.³¹ It was probably hoped that experience would help to develop the latter part in more detail. A comparison of the curricula of the Russian and Austrian plans, show a resemblance:

Russian Plan

alphabet
phonetics
reading
writing
arithmetic
spelling

Austrian Plan

reading
writing
religion
arithmetic
German

³⁰Khrapovitski, Dnevik, October 10, 1782.

³¹Plan for public schools in the Russian Empire, D. A. Tolstoy, Gorodskie uchilishcha, Appendix 4, p. 202.

Russian Plan (cont'd)

religion
 church history
 Christian ethics
 New Testament
 calligraphy
 grammar
 geography
 history

composition
 geometry
 architecture
 mechanics
 physics
 history of nature
 political history
 painting
 German

Austrian Plan

geometry
 mechanics
 architecture
 botany
 history of nature
 geography
 history

economics
 agriculture
 Latin
 teachers training

The Russian curriculum is more detailed and covers more subjects, but it follows the Austrian practice of having all classes of the lower level school also in the next higher institution. However, the Russian reformers were divided on the issue of teacher training and therefore they proposed only a preliminary solution. Schools offered the whole range of education, and in the first major³² school of St. Petersburg the School Commission introduced

³²The "major school" [glavnoe uchilishche] was a five-year advanced educational institution which combined elementary and lower secondary education. The term was a translation of the German word "Hauptschule". "Minor schools" [malye shkoly] were two-year elementary schools.

special courses for teachers. Eventually, in 1786, an independent teachers seminary was established in St. Petersburg, and the Austrian normal school was never introduced.

The significance of the school decrees of 1782, is in the establishment of an unofficial ministry of education--the School Commission, and in the initiation of a four year experimental stage which prepared the important school legislation of 1786. While Yankovich's plan of 1782, looked very much like Catherine's or like the Austrian plan, it soon became clear that the School Commission was in no position to implement the whole plan, because of the lack of teachers. It was simply impossible to repeat the success of the Austrian reformers, because Russia lacked the class of educated clergy that had run the Austrian reform. Between 1782 and 1786, Catherine had to be content with the introduction of minor schools in the capital city and in the neighboring gubernias, but even this modest start excited Russian enlighteners. There was at last a clear direction, and the Commission developed an almost feverish activity. The translation and adaptation of German texts for the minor schools began in October 1782. By the end of the year, in just

four months, the Commission printed 5 texts, and by the end of 1787, 20 texts had been revised, translated, and printed.³³ The Commission also supervised the preparation and printing of historical and geographical maps, atlases, and of a first Russian globe for school use. Yankovich, who was only an unofficial member of the Commission, deserves much of the credit for the initial success. He must have been a genius with an unusual capacity to work. He was the author of a number of texts, and although it is obvious that most of the material was copied from German or Austrian texts, he deserves full credit for adapting those books to Russian needs. Within one year the Commission prepared all textbooks for the two year minor schools. This was a unique achievement for the reformers.

³³The following books were printed between 1782 and 1787: 1) Alphabet for Church Slavonic and Secular Use, 2) Reader for Beginners, 3) Rules for Calligraphy and Samples of Good Writing, 4) Brief Catechism, 5) Rules for Students, 6) Expanded Catechism, 7) Church History, 8) Manual for Teachers of Minor Schools, 9) On the Responsibilities of Men and Citizens, 10) World History, 11) Brief Russian History, 12) Introduction to Arithmetic, 13) The World Around Us, in German, Latin, and Russian, adapted from Comenius', The Visible World, 14) Manual for Mechanics, 15) Geography of Russia, 16) A Brief Geography of the Russian Empire, 17) A Brief Introduction to Mathematical Geography, 18) The History of Nature, 19) Brief Manual for Geometry, 20) Brief Manual for Physics. Obviously, Yankovich could not have compiled and translated all the material himself. He actually supervised a team of quite capable men: professors Barsov, Syreishchik, Svetov, Pakhomov, and Kovalev. [Sychev-Mikhailov, Iz istorii, p. 93].

On January 31, 1783, Catherine approved the finished texts and ordered the printing of all necessary books, "without further approval" by the Empress. Thus, she encouraged the Commission by indicating that she was ready to foot the whole bill.

Catherine's letter to Grimm, of November 15, 1782, is full of optimism:

For the normal schools that we are going to establish, 20 teachers are now in training, thanks to brother Joseph [Joseph II], who sent me an expert in this matter, and who has already established a hundred of these schools [in Austria]. He is Greek Orthodox and he speaks Russian as well as I do and even better. A reading text for normal schools is being edited from Alexander's library [Alexander I, Catherine's grandson], Professor Pallas' History of Nature, Professor Aepinus' Mathematics, Russian History by the professor of history at the Academy [most likely Professor Stritter]; in this way we are patching together text books. This is a great undertaking that will happen like a lightning, because all this is in the making since September 1, [1782].³⁴

However, not only Catherine was expressing this optimism. The reports of foreign travelers and diplomats were also quite favorable. William Coxe, who spent a second winter in Russia, 1784-1785, was impressed by the

³⁴Catherine to Grimm, November 15, 1782, Sbornik, Vol. XXIII, p. 254.

progress of the Russian Enlightenment. Only the British diplomat, Harris, remained sceptical. However, Harris was embittered by his failure to dissuade Catherine from proclaiming Russia's "Armed Neutrality", in 1780, and his judgement was probably not free of prejudice. Leading European intellectuals, like Schlözer, Zimmermann, Sulzer, Dalberg, were full of hope for the Russian Enlightenment. Schlözer wrote in his Staats-Anzeige:

Of all achievements that distinguish the government of Catherine II, none will make a greater impact on future generations, none will be recorded in history with more appreciation than Rumiantsev's victory over the Turks and the establishment of schools throughout the Russian Empire.³⁵

Russian observers were no less enthusiastic about their progress. "Of all establishments", wrote Bezborodko on March 14, 1784, to Prince Vorontsov, "the public schools, which here are known as normal schools, grow at the fastest rate, thanks to the efforts of our friend Peter Vassilievich [Zavadovsky]. This guberniia is full of them, and now

³⁵"Russische Schulprojekte", Staats-Anzeige, III, 257, (Göttingen, 1783), in Bilbassov's, Katharina II, Kaiserin von Russland im Urteile der Weltliteratur, (Berlin, 1897), No. 423.

they spread into neighboring gubernias."³⁶ Bezborodko and Vorontsov had no reason for pretense in their private correspondence, they simply reflect a general enthusiasm of the Russian enlighteners who finally saw their dream coming true.

While the Commission was busy preparing texts, and planning the establishment of the first new schools, Yankovich also ran a short course for future teachers. These were the twenty teachers mentioned by Catherine in her letter to Grimm, November 15, 1782. After four months of intensive training these teachers were entrusted with the first ten public schools,³⁷ established by the Commission early in 1783. Seven of these schools had been founded in 1781, and they were now reorganized, while three new schools were established, one in St. Petersburg, one in Schlüsselburg, and one in Kronstadt. These reformed schools were an immediate success. Students flocked to them, and by 1784 they could not cope with the number of applicants. "Do you realize", writes a jubilant Catherine to Grimm, on

³⁶Bezborodko to Vorontsov, March 14, 1784, Arkhib Kn. Vorontsova, XIII, p. 38, quoted by D. A. Tolstoy, Gorodskie uchilishcha, p. 92.

³⁷All schools of the new public school system were simply called normal schools. Teacher training was eventually entrusted to a special teachers seminary.

April 5, 1784, "that with God's grace, in one year we have established ten normal schools here in St. Petersburg and that there are more than 1000 students in these schools."³⁸ Evidence shows that Catherine did not exaggerate, school records actually provide a higher figure. By 1785 there were a total of 1192 students in only eight of these schools.³⁹ However, even for the minor schools the teacher supply was very limited. Schools were established in Pavlovsk (1784), in Narva (1785), and some in the Baltic provinces, but the rest of Russia had to wait for the graduates from the St. Petersburg Major School. That school was established on June 9, 1783,⁴⁰ with one hundred students from theological seminaries and military schools. Yankovich was appointed as director of the Major School, with the task of training teachers for all guberniias, and

³⁸Catherine to Grimm, April 5, 1784, Sbornik, vol. XXIII, pp. 300-301.

³⁹From the records of St. Petersburg schools:
 1) Voznesenskaia - 230; 2) Andreievskaiia - 200; 3) Vvedenskaia - 150; 4) Samsonova - 38; 5) Vladimira - 199;
 6) Simeona - 115; 7) Isaaka - 96; 8) Kazan - 169; [Tolstoy, Gorodskie uchilishcha, p. 91].

⁴⁰Catherine's decree, June 9, 1783, Polnoe sobranie zakonov, No. 15755.

the teacher training program was actually started in January 1784.⁴¹ In 1786, the Commission was able to establish major schools in 25 gubernias. This was a significant achievement, since it made it possible for the gubernias to train their own minor school teachers.

While the Commission was busy establishing new schools, Catherine turned her attention to another area of education. Following Aepinus' advice, she began to investigate the state of private schools. By a decree of August 29, 1783, the St. Peter's School in St. Petersburg was instructed to introduce the new plan for public schools. St. Peter's became a German major school, with the privilege to offer any courses in addition to the major school curriculum.⁴² The school received a grant of 1800 rubles annually and 3000 rubles for the translation of text books into German. By this decree, the School Board of

⁴¹From the many decrees of this period it must be concluded that the whole project was relatively well financed at this stage, but as the project expanded Catherine found it more and more difficult to find the necessary financial means. This became especially critical at the time of the second Turkish War (1787-1792), although the reform drive was not halted.

⁴²Decree of August 29, 1783, Polnoe sobranie zakonov, No. 15826.

St. Peter's also became the central administration for all German schools in Russia.⁴³

On September 4, 1784, a decree ordered the introduction of Russian in all schools of the Baltic provinces,⁴⁴ which until then had used German. On September 5, 1784, all private schools in St. Petersburg were placed under the Board of Public Welfare. The Board was then instructed to investigate standards and curricula, to examine teachers at those schools, and to introduce the new public school program in all private schools.⁴⁵ The School Commission had powers to close a school if it failed to meet the prescribed standards, and without its verification of the credentials of the instructors, no additional private schools could be opened. It was found that in St. Petersburg 28 boarding schools were operated by foreigners, in

⁴³St. Peter's was one of Russia's most successful schools and Catherine gave recognition to it. However, when St. Peter's dragged its feet on the translation of the Commission's new texts, considerable tension developed. The Board of St. Peter's maintained that German texts were still the best available and that the Commission's books were translations of German texts. The dispute was finally resolved, when the School Commission, in 1791 translated its books for all German schools in Russia.

⁴⁴Decree, September 4, 1784, Polnoe sobranie zakonov, No. 16055.

⁴⁵Ibid., September 5, No. 16058.

addition to 18 "free Russian schools". The instructors of the 28 "German schools" were examined by the new Board of St. Peter's. With the results of the examination, the Commission proceeded to divide these schools into lower and higher schools. Lower boarding schools used the curriculum of the lower two classes of major schools, while the higher boarding schools offered the courses of the upper two classes of major schools. All private schools were thus obligated to introduce the plan of the School Commission, and Russian was made an obligatory subject in all schools. At the same time the Commission found that few of the instructors of the so called "free Russian schools" had any qualifications at all,⁴⁶ and therefore most of those schools were closed. The same kind of revision of private schools was carried out in Moscow, in 1785,⁴⁷ by a special commission composed of two representatives of the Board of Public Welfare, two representatives of the Church, and professors Chebotarev and Schaden. Seven of the sixteen private schools in Moscow had university professors as instructors, and two were operated

⁴⁶Rozhdestvensky, Ocherki, pp. 614-615.

⁴⁷Instructions to Graf Bruce, October 7, 1785, Polnoe sobranie zakonov, No. 16275.

by Lutheran Churches and proved to have well qualified teachers. Of the remaining seven, one French boarding school was closed, because it did not meet the set standards, while the only "free Russian school" was found to be the best boarding school in Moscow.⁴⁸ Thus, the boarding schools of St. Petersburg and Moscow were brought under the control of the School Commission and in general, their standards were raised considerably. Private schools were authorized to offer as many courses as they liked, as long as they met the requirements of the public schools. Most of these boarding schools offered several modern languages besides the general program, and they continued to be the favored schools of the nobility.

In 1785, Catherine expanded her reform efforts in the Baltic provinces, in St. Petersburg, and in Moscow.⁴⁹ The governors of Riga and Moscow were instructed to start building schools immediately, and the governor of Moscow also received the go-ahead for the first major school. The new projects were provided with the necessary funds, but

⁴⁸M. V. Sychev-Mikhailov, Iz istorii russkoi shkoly i pedagogiki XVIII veka, Moscow, 1960.

⁴⁹Decrees of February 4, and June 7, 1785, No. 16147 and No. 16212.

the governor of Moscow found that financing was not the greatest problem. It was far more difficult to find teachers. In St. Petersburg the Commission at this time prepared the opening of the City Marine School, and on January 29, 1786 the plan was approved by the Empress.⁵⁰

The next part of the Empire to receive Catherine's attention was the gubernia of Orenburg. That gubernia had a large Tatar population, and during the Pugachev rebellion many of the Tatars had sided with Pugachev. Nonetheless, Catherine practiced great restraint in dealing with that rebellion. She understood that harsh measures against the ignorant masses could only lead to new uprisings and her instructions to the governor of the province, Baron Igelstrom, of September 4, 1785, demonstrate her political realism.⁵¹ On August 6, 1785, Igelstrom had informed her that the mosques in Orenburg and Troitsk had been completed. Catherine now urged the governor to open schools near those mosques for the Tatars. "With time", she tells Igelstrom, "this approach will do more to restrain them from wilful

⁵⁰Resolution of January 29, 1786, Polnoe sobranie zakonov, no. 16316.

⁵¹Ibid., September 4, 1785, No. 16255.

actions than any show of force."⁵² This policy was pursued by Catherine consistently and with obvious success to the benefit of both parties. The Tatars were among the first of Catherine's subjects to receive schools and free education.

After four years of experimentation with Yankovich's plan, the Commission was ready to implement a comprehensive plan for the whole Russian Empire. On August 5, 1786, Catherine signed one of the most important documents of her reign--the Statute of Public Schools in Russia.⁵³ This document deals with the public school question in great detail. The duties of administrators, teachers, and students are described in every detail to assure uniformity of the whole system.

The Austrian school system was seen as a model for Russian plans, but in the process of adaptation the model changed considerably. Catherine's draft, of 1782, had followed the Austrian system very closely, while the School Commission's experimental plan of September 27, 1782,

⁵²Catherine to Igelstrom, Instructions, Sept. 4, 1785, P. S. Z., No. 16255.

⁵³Statute of Public Schools, August 5, 1786, P. S. Z., No. 16421.

already deviated from the model.⁵⁴ The Russian plan of 1782 proposed to introduce three types of schools: 1) two year minor schools, corresponding to the Austrian village schools, 2) three year middle schools, similar to the Austrian city schools, and 3) major schools, corresponding to the Austrian Hauptschule. There is still some similarity to the Austrian plan, but during the experimental stage, the middle schools were simply dropped, and never even tried. Normal schools as teacher training centers were not part of that plan, and the term "normal schools" was used for all schools of the new public school system. The question of teacher training was not solved, but the major school in St. Petersburg temporarily was used as a training center.

The Statute of 1786 simplified the plan of 1782, leaving only two types of schools: 1) two year minor schools, and 2) five year major schools. Teacher training was not given the priority it had in the Austrian system, and eventually this would prove to be a major weakness of the Russian project. However, Russia at last had a well defined public school plan--the direction now was clear.

⁵⁴Since Aepinus and Zavadovsky were in the Commission, it must be assumed that the Commission knew about Catherine's draft, yet, the Commission felt free to propose its own ideas and the Empress accepted them. In this respect Catherine showed much greater wisdom than either Frederick II or Joseph II. She encouraged participation and respected individual opinion.

In every gubernia there was to be one major school with four grades in a five year program. The curriculum for grade IV was covered in two years. In addition to this general program, with a detailed prescription of curriculum and texts,⁵⁵ the major schools offered Latin for those who intended to continue their education, and "a foreign language that was most useful", depending on the geographic location of the school. These languages were to be taught starting from grade I, to assure that students would really master a foreign language by the time of their graduation.⁵⁶

The curriculum of the minor schools was identical with the curriculum of the first two grades of the major schools, including foreign language instruction. Minor schools were to be established in all district towns and

⁵⁵See appendix No. 4.

⁵⁶French was not an optional language, Catherine had crossed it out before signing the Statute. It appears that Catherine's decision may have been influenced by Aepinus, who advised Catherine in 1782 to think carefully about the choice of foreign languages. "That foreign language which is used most frequently by a nation", said Aepinus, "will naturally lead to more extensive reading in that language. The influence of the character, the philosophy and way of thinking of the writing nation on the character of the reading nation is unavoidable... . What is preferable to the Monarch of the Russian Empire, that his nation accept a nuance of the German or of the French national character?" [Aepinus, "Vorschlage so ich nach reifer Uberlegung I.K.M. machen zu konnen glaube", D. A. Tolstoy, Gorodskie uchilishcha, Appendix 2, p. 143].

"wherever the Department of Welfare may find them necessary" [Ch. II].

Chapter III deals with staffing of schools and with the duties of teachers. Minor schools were to have one teacher for each grade, and only where the student enrollment would be too low for two teachers, one teacher could teach both grades. Major schools were to employ six teachers, but this ideal goal was probably not reached during Catherine's reign. Most major schools started with only four teachers, and the St. Petersburg and Moscow schools were probably the only exceptions in this respect. The teacher was expected to be an example to his students in "honesty, manners, kindness, politeness, and in diligence". The Statute emphasized the importance of relationships **among** teachers, and between teachers and students. Paragraph 28 stresses that teachers "must accept and teach all boys and girls who come to their classes", without demanding remuneration, and they "must treat children of poor parents like all others". Teachers are reminded that they are preparing students to become members of society.⁵⁷

⁵⁷Statute, paragraph 28, Polnoe sobranie zakonov, No. 16421.

While the Statute of Public Schools devoted 30 paragraphs [26-56] to the responsibilities and rights of teachers, only one [10] touched on the important question of teacher training, and that only in a very general statement about the responsibility of major schools to offer training to those "who would like to become teachers in minor schools". It would appear that the Commission had not yet reached an agreement on the question and that it had decided to carry on with the temporary arrangement of 1783. By that arrangement, teachers of minor schools were prepared in the Major School of St. Petersburg, and 100 students were trained as major school teachers in a special wing of the same school. In July 1786, the teachers seminary became an independent institution, but the Statute of August 5, 1786, does not even mention its existence. The reason behind this silence on the teachers seminary and teacher training is not quite clear. However, it would appear that the Commission was divided on the question. Aepinus had consistently pressed for the introduction of the whole Austrian system, which was based on good teacher training. Would he now suddenly ignore the main problem--the teacher supply? That is inconceivable, and a letter of Aepinus to Catherine, of June 4, 1786, which

was attached to the Commission's draft of the Statute deepens the suspicion. In this letter Aepinus explained that his ideas were well known to her and to the Commission, and he concluded with a fairly obvious hint. "I have no choice, I must leave all detail to my colleagues in the School Commission", he said, "let them choose what they like. To comply with formality, I will add my name at the end."⁵⁸ After this, Aepinus very seldom attended the meetings of the Commission. It is fairly clear that Aepinus disagreed with Zavadovsky on some major issue, but that he preferred to avoid constant confrontation.

While there seems to have been disagreement on the question of teacher training, the administrative question was solved with unanimity. Aepinus had stressed the need for centralization of the whole school system, and under the circumstances there could be no disagreement on that point. The Commission realized that the educational reforms would have to be guided and supervised by a competent centralized institution. The Austrian success rested on good administration of its reformed schools as much as on the thorough preparation of teachers. However, it would

⁵⁸Aepinus to Catherine, June 4, 1786, D. A. Tolstoy, Gorodskie uchilishcha, Appendix 5, p. 213.

have been impossible to apply the Austrian administrative model in Russia, since it depended to a great extent on educated village and town priests who acted as inspectors or trustees of the new schools. This was an inexpensive and most effective supervision, but the Russian reformers had no educated clergy in towns and villages, and therefore they could not even attempt to copy the Austrian administrative arrangement. The Russian School Commission solved the administrative question on the basis of the Administrative Reforms of 1775. This was not an ideal solution, but it may have been the best possible solution under the circumstances. The highest authority in the hierarchy of school administrators was the Empress herself, and the Central School Administration of the Russian Empire, the former School Commission, was directly responsible to the Empress. On the next level governors of guberniias were charged with all responsibilities related to the educational system within their guberniias.⁵⁹ The governor was responsible for the establishment of schools as well as for their supervision. He had the authority to recruit teachers from ecclesiastical seminaries if a

⁵⁹Statute, August 5, 1786, chapter 5, par. 63-93, Polnoe sobranie zakonov, No. 16421.

sufficient number of volunteers could not be found.⁶⁰ The governor appointed a director of public schools for his gubernia, who was responsible for the academic and moral standards in the schools of the gubernia. The director checked the qualifications of teachers, supervised "open exams", and attended to all complaints from teachers and students. Significantly, he had to see to it that teachers would "register all students of both sexes who expressed the desire to study", and that "nobody would be prevented from entering the classroom, except persons with contagious diseases". The director also supervised all private schools of his gubernia. The supervision of minor schools in the various districts of a gubernia was in the hands of a district inspector, also appointed by the governor. In this way, the governor had control over all schools in his gubernia and he was held responsible for any mismanagement or lack of progress.

Russia now had a plan for its school reforms and a more or less viable administrative model for schools, but the problem of staffing the whole public school system had

⁶⁰It would appear that governors had to use this authority to obtain the necessary number of teachers. There were few volunteers for the teaching profession, since educated men found the opportunities in the civil service much more attractive.

yet to be solved. Educated school administrators were as rare as trained teachers.

Early in March 1786, Catherine was informed that 100 teachers for major schools would graduate by September 1786, and that the Commission planned to open 25 major schools. At the same time the Commission lamented the fact that it was unable to find enough teachers for minor schools. Again the Empress had to turn to the Church for the necessary number of teachers. She informed the Metropolitan of Novgorod and St. Petersburg, Gavril, that she needed forty students, to be trained in a three months teacher course at the Major School of St. Petersburg. "I hope", said Catherine, "that the selection of students will be carried out with all due respect for the good cause."⁶¹

When the first major school was opened in 1783, the Commission stressed its role as teacher training center. In Yankovich the school had a recognized educator as director, and professors from the St. Petersburg Academy guaranteed the quality of teaching. Since the school had highly qualified teachers it could afford to offer special courses for future major school teachers. However, there were disciplinary problems from the start and in 1785,

⁶¹Rescript of the Holy Synod, March 9, 1786, Polnoe sobranie zakonov, No. 16342.

Yankovich was relieved from the directorship.⁶² In July 1786, the Teachers Seminary, which trained the best students as teachers for the major schools, was established as an independent school. Professors of the Academy continued to instruct students at the Seminary, while the major school was staffed with new teachers.

The Teachers Seminary started with a very strong faculty, but unfortunately it was soon degraded, when in 1788, professors of the Academy were replaced by graduates of the school. As a result the reputation of the Seminary declined and the recruitment of students became even more difficult.⁶³ Only 20 students were recruited in 1788, and the Commission began to wonder whether the Teachers Seminary was necessary. In 1792, the training of major school teachers was actually interrupted, since all gubernias had been provided with one major school and the Commission apparently did not see the need for more schools.

⁶²It would appear that Yankovich was a good theoretician, author, and organizer, but that he was less successful in establishing a teacher-student relationship.

⁶³Teachers were not paid well enough and many tried to escape the profession by pretending to be ill. Others had to be disciplined for excessive drinking. Tolstoy says that the teachers "outstanding vice" was drunkenness, which they had brought from the Church seminaries.

However, the second partitioning of Poland in 1793 revived the Teachers Seminary, since the new provinces needed schools. After 1804, the Teachers Seminary was known as the Teachers Gymnasium of St. Petersburg and its usefulness was no longer questioned.

The record of the Commission's first Teachers Seminary may not be impressive and yet, its contribution to the Russian Enlightenment must not be underestimated. In 18 years of its existence it trained 400 teachers for major schools,⁶⁴ which obviously was a significant contribution to the development of Russia's public school system.

On August 12, 1786, Catherine sent rescripts of a decree about the establishment of one major school and several minor schools in each guberniia, to 25 governors.⁶⁵ She informed the governors that by September 22, 1786, teachers would arrive with the necessary books to start a major school. This was a historic event of significance, although 16 provinces still remained without

⁶⁴Konstantinov, Ocherki, p. 71.

⁶⁵Instructions to governors, August 12, 1786, Polnoe sobranie zakonov, No. 16425.

major schools.⁶⁶ Governors were also instructed to make every effort to establish as many minor schools as possible. Catherine told her governors that she realized that the Departments of Welfare lacked funds and that she had to rely on their resourcefulness and on the good will of local societies and individuals. "I am convinced," she wrote to the governor of Moscow, Peter Eropkin, "that you will find the means for the support of these schools, without making heavy demands on the treasury and without taking anything away from any other useful institutions."⁶⁷ In September Eropkin opened in Moscow one major school and three minor schools. Prokofii Demidov was again one of the most active supporters of the school reform. In a letter of October 5, 1786, Catherine thanked Eropkin for his efforts and asked him to convey her gratitude to Demidov.⁶⁸

⁶⁶In 1786 major schools were opened in 25 gubernias: Novgorod, Tula, Tver, Olonets, Arkhangelsk, Pskov, Smolensk, Kaluga, Orlov, Kursk, Yaroslavl, Vologda, Vladimir, Kostroma, Nizhegorod, Penza, Kazan, Viatka, Simbirsk, Saratov, Voronezh, Riazan, Tambov, Perm, Moscow. [Tolstoy, Gorodskie uchilishcha, p. 93]

⁶⁷Catherine to Eropkin, August 12, 1786, Russkii Arkhiv, 1872, pp. 274-275.

⁶⁸Ibid., October 5, 1786, pp. 277-278.

Immediately after the graduation of its first class, in 1786, the Teachers Seminary recruited another group of 100 students from church seminaries, to prepare teachers for the 16 guberniias that were still without major schools. Two years later, on November 3, 1788, Catherine sent rescripts to the governors of 14 guberniias, instructing them to open schools as soon as the teachers would arrive with the necessary books.⁶⁹ Potemkin had already opened schools in Astrakhan and Cherkassk, earlier in 1788, while in the remaining guberniias 14 major schools were opened in 1789,⁷⁰ and in the Ekaterinoslav guberniia and Taurida region in 1792.

There is an obvious pattern in the expansion of the school system. New schools were first introduced in St. Petersburg, then in the central guberniias of Russia, and finally in the guberniias surrounding the old core of Muscovite Russia. Although it would have been easier to start with the western, south-western and Baltic guberniias, because they were far more advanced in every respect, the

⁶⁹Catherine to governors, November 3, 1788, Polnoe sobranie zakonov, No. 16726.

⁷⁰The 14 guberniias to open major schools in 1789 were: Vyborg, Revel, Riga, Polotsk, Mogilev, Novgorod-Seversk, Chernigov, Kiev, Kharkov, Caucasus, Ufa, Kolywan, Tobolsk, and Irkutsk.

approach taken by Catherine makes sense. St. Petersburg was not only Russia's showcase, it was Russia's most European city, with an openness to new ideas. Furthermore, when Catherine had to choose between the intellectual communities of the University of Moscow and the Academy of Sciences in St. Petersburg, to spearhead the reforms, she was easily persuaded to rely on the Academy, since the University of Moscow had always been more conservative. But the weightiest argument for the choice of St. Petersburg, as center of the reform drive, was the Empress' presence in St. Petersburg. The enlightened monarchs believed in personal involvement. Catherine was very much aware of the fact that she needed the experts, and she would not stand in their way, once she had been convinced of a man's competence, but she was involved at every stage of the reform. The great number of decrees and rescripts between 1782 and 1788, is indicative of her interest, but in addition to these legislative activities she also wrote numerous letters to her representative in the gubernias.⁷¹ Since the School Commission was directly

⁷¹Between August 12, 1786, and October 23, 1786, Catherine wrote at least nine letters to Eropkin, governor of Moscow. Two of these letters dealt with the establishment of the public school system, one with problems of the

responsible to her, it was most practical for the Commission to have its quarters and "testing ground" in St. Petersburg. The choice of central Russia for the first major expansion of the school system had practical as well as political reasons. While it was perhaps more difficult to start in the less developed gubernias, it helped to offset regional differences in the level of development. Central Russia was given a few years to improve its relative position in respect to the more advanced Ukrainian, western and Baltic regions. Politically this pattern was even more important. Russians would have taken exception if the Empress had given preference to the recently acquired provinces, and those provinces were not at all eager to accept the Russian school system. The Baltic gubernias resisted Russification, and in the Ukraine the Cossack nobility, in spite of some economic advantages, was very reluctant to accept total amalgamation. Thus, those years between 1782 and

university, one with a court case, one with the problem of gambling, one with the safe arrangement of cannons on the Kremlin walls, and three with flooding and erosion problems of the Moscow river. [Russkii Arkhiv, 1872, pp. 273-278].

1789, when the system was introduced in Old Russia, helped to condition the gubernias on the periphery for the acceptance of the inevitable.

The introduction of uniform public schools in all gubernias was accompanied by a vigorous reorganization of all schools in the Russian Empire. The reformers agreed unanimously that the diversity of types of schools had been a major problem of past efforts. Curriculum, standards, and goals varied to such an extent that it was impossible to develop common textbooks or a common code for teachers. A centralized school administration could not tolerate such idiosyncrasy because its very principle was at stake. This explains why the School Commission began to reorganize established institutions before it had tested its own model. The reorganization of established schools began simultaneously with the introduction of new public schools. Between 1783 and 1785 all existing schools in St. Petersburg and Moscow were reorganized according to the preliminary new plan.⁷² Eventually this reorganization affected all types of

⁷²Rescripts, Polnoe sobranie zakonov, Nos.15660; 15866; 15934; 16058; 16275.

existing schools, and by the end of Catherine's reign, uniformity of teaching methods, text books, and teacher training had been achieved throughout Russia.

The significance of this reorganization should not be underestimated, especially with regard to its impact on the supply of teachers. While Russia maintained only one teachers seminary for major school teachers, the ever growing number of major schools did in fact take care of the supply of teachers for minor schools. This fact has been ignored in evaluations of the Russian effort. Hundreds of minor school teachers graduated from the teacher training courses of the major schools, and from reformed church seminaries.⁷³ By the end of Catherine's reign 790 qualified teachers were employed in the public school system--a significant achievement by eighteenth century standards.

However, serious shortcomings are found in another area of Catherine's educational system. The Statute of 1786 includes neither gymnasium nor university education. The question arises: What was the reason for this apparent rejection of higher education? The first answer could

⁷³Instructions to Church authorities concerning schools, May, July, 1788, Polnoe sobranie zakonov, No. 16659, and 16691.

be found in the general European trend. The reputation of universities was declining and Voltaire and his friends denounced universities as old-fashioned and stuffy institutions. Furthermore, the enlighteners believed that primary education was more important than higher education. They did not argue that higher education was unnecessary, but rather that it was impossible without a primary school system. The Russian experience, from Peter I to Catherine II, had proved that point sufficiently. Neither the University of Moscow, nor the university of the Academy in St. Petersburg had attracted a sufficient number of Russian students to justify their existence. It was Catherine's intention to correct this situation. In September 1784, she decreed that a university be established in Ekaterinoslav as soon as possible.⁷⁴ Potemkin, who actually suggested this project to Catherine, began to collect a library and a geological collection for this university, but the plan died with its initiator. In January 1786, Catherine instructed the School Commission to prepare a model plan for universities and gymnasiums. "Recognizing with

⁷⁴Instructions to the School Commission, September 4, 1784, Polnoe sobranie zakonov, No. 16057.

satisfaction the success and benefits of the Commission's work", she said, "We feel it is now necessary to prepare a plan for universities and gymnasiums in the various parts of Our Empire."⁷⁵ All information that she had collected on such institutions for evaluation, she submitted to the School Commission. In addition to the existing universities, Catherine proposed to establish universities at Pskov, Chernigov, and Pensa, while the decision on the location of the gymnasiums was left to the Commission. The Commission was also advised to plan for a Faculty of Medicine, but not to include a Faculty of Theology, "because of Our ancestors' tradition, which is sacred to us, that the teaching of theology must be left to the church academies."⁷⁶

With the addition of a Faculty of Medicine, Russian universities were to have three faculties: philosophy,⁷⁷

⁷⁵Instructions to the School Commission, January 29, 1786, Polnoe sobranie zakonov, No. 16315.

⁷⁶In the 1770's, Catherine attempted to establish a Faculty of Theology at the University of Moscow. The project was dropped for unexplained reasons. The decree of January 29, 1786, seems to support the suspicion that Gavril and Platon resisted that move, and that Catherine was wise enough to "respect" that tradition.

⁷⁷The term "philosophy" was used in the broadest sense. The Faculty of Philosophy offered a broad general education.

law, and medicine. From this decree it is obvious that Catherine was aware of the gap between the new public school system and the university. She takes it for granted that the gymnasium would fill that gap and form the necessary link. However, the Commission proposed a different solution, entirely ignoring the gymnasium question.⁷⁸ It is difficult to say why the Commission took such unfavorable stand against the gymnasiums. When in 1785, the gymnasium in Kazan came under the jurisdiction of the Department of Public Welfare,⁷⁹ the Commission launched an investigation which concluded that the standards of the gymnasium were far lower than those of the major schools. However, no constructive criticism was offered, and one is led to believe that the Commission was prejudiced against the gymnasium. The Commission's university project of 1787 justifies such suspicion. According

⁷⁸It would appear that the Commission had become more obsessed with the idea of uniformity than the Empress. It imposed the major school plan on the Smolny Girls School, and on St. Peter's School, thus forcing two gymnasium type schools into a lower status, although the Commission claimed that the major schools were superior to any others. With St. Peter's, the Commission developed a protracted quarrel over textbooks, insisting that the German school translate the Commission's texts into German, which were German texts that had been translated into Russian, with some minor changes. [D. A. Tolstoy, Gorodskie uchilishcha, pp. 120-122].

⁷⁹Order to the Senate, August 27, 1785, Polnoe sobranie zakonov, No. 16248.

to that plan, the Faculty of Philosophy was to be the link between public school and university education.⁸⁰ It is now clear, that the Commission saw the major school as the basis for university education and that from its point of view there was no need for the gymnasium. The university project was never implemented by Catherine. Obviously, the second Turkish War and the French Revolution were delaying factors, but the importance of these factors should not be stressed unduly. While the Russian economy was strained and the Empress was short of finances, the records of the Polnoe sobranie zakonov and of the Gosudarstvenny arkhiv suggest that the direction and implementation of the educational reforms were not affected directly. However, there are several quite conceivable reasons. It goes without saying that Catherine's principle, "do it well or don't do it at all" was at stake. Catherine was far too intelligent not to see the implications of the suggested degradation of the Russian university. Russia was to be a leader in every field and not a distant second best. Therefore, the university plan of the Commission, which projected the largest and most important faculty of

⁸⁰S. V. Rozhdestvensky, "Universitetskii vopros v tsarstvovanie Imperatritsy Ekateriny II", Vestnik Evropy, July, 1907.

the university as a better middle school, according to European standards, could not be accepted by Catherine. Furthermore, although there is no definite proof to this effect, Aepinus could not have supported this plan. His letter of resignation from any real responsibility for the decisions of the School Commission, with that bitter remark, "let them choose what they like", was sent to Catherine during the Commission's deliberations on the university project.⁸¹ For Aepinus, an elimination of the gymnasium and a lowering of the university's level of teaching must have been unacceptable, and Catherine's regard for his opinion was very high.

However, the greatest obstacle may yet have been overlooked--the lack of university teachers. Since Russian had become the language of instruction, this problem had become almost insurmountable. When the deliberations on the university plan began, in spring 1786, Zavadovsky turned to the Academy of St. Petersburg and to the University of Moscow for professors who could staff the new universities. Princess Dashkova, the Director of the Academy, informed the Commission, that "among the Russian academicians there is not a single one willing to

⁸¹Aepinus to Catherine, June 4, 1786, D. A. Tolstoy, Gorodskie uchilishcha, Appendix 5, p. 213.

teach at the new universities". The Curator of the University of Moscow, I. I. Shuvalov, had a similar reply, but he was willing "to prepare several students as professors" [italics by G. E.].⁸² Thus, the new universities would have had to rely on foreign non-Russian speaking professors. This would have been equal to a public confession to western Europe that progress in Russia was much slower than was generally believed in the West.

Nevertheless, it must be stressed that Russia made progress in almost all areas of education.⁸³ The gymnasium of the Academy had only 70 students, but the gymnasium of the University of Moscow experienced an unprecedented popularity. The enrollment between 1768 and 1787 increased from 246 to 1010 students.⁸⁴ Obviously, these facts were known to Catherine and they vindicated

⁸²S. V. Rozhdestvensky, "Universitetskii vopros", Vestnik Evropy, p. 31.

⁸³Some of the important developments of the Russian Enlightenment during the 1780's are the following: The establishment of the Russian Academy (1783), the Marine School in St. Petersburg (1786), the Medical School in St. Petersburg (1787), the Agricultural School in Nikolaev (1787), the Asian School in Omsk (1789); the University of Moscow grants doctoral degree (1791); several mining schools opened (1780's). [Ikonnikov, Znachenie, pp. 49-51, and Polnoe sobranie zakonov, 1783-1791.]

⁸⁴Sychev-Mikhailov, Iz istorii russkoi shkoly, p. 74.

her reluctance to accept the Commission's university project which would have eliminated these successful institutions.

While the gymnasium type school found no place in the School Commission's public school system, it actually flourished in Russia's military schools since Catherine's early reforms of the cadet corps. "Military and civil education must not be separated throughout the whole period of the cadet's training", Catherine instructed Betskoy when she charged him with reforming Russia's military education.⁸⁵ As a result, the cadet corps schools in fact were turned into military gymnasiums. Here the Russian nobility received an education that opened the doors not only to military and civilian government careers but also to Russian and western universities. Therefore, the cadet corps schools must be seen as major factors in the Russian Enlightenment. Due to the great popularity of the military schools the number of cadets rose steadily, and in 1792 the Empress was compelled to limit the enrollment of the Marine Cadet Corps to 600, because the navy could not absorb all the graduates. However, a

⁸⁵Statute of the Land Cadet Corps, September 11, 1766, Polnoe sobranie zakonov, No. 12741.

serious dilemma emerged. After the proclamation of the Charter of the Nobility in 1785, the nobility showed little interest in long-term military service. The young nobleman still preferred the education of the cadet corps and he liked to add a commissioned officer's rank to his title, but as soon as he had achieved that end he retired. In March 1792, Admiral Pushchin complained that too many cadets left the service after "only one year". As a result, the navy was short of lower commissioned officers and never reaped the benefits from training these men. Pushchin suggested that it was a nobleman's duty to serve his country "in that rank for which he had received years of training at government expense." He urged the Empress to find ways that would not infringe on the nobility's privileges and yet oblige it to serve for a certain number of years.⁸⁶ From Pushchin's complaint it can be concluded that the military cadet corps in fact contributed more to the general education of the Russian upper class than any other schools. The consequences of the Charter of 1785 made a consistently high enrollment in these schools absolutely necessary. Thus, the frustrations

⁸⁶Pushchin to Catherine, March 15, 1792, Arkhiv gosudarstvennogo soveta, 1768-1796, (St. Petersburg, 1869), vol. I, p. 196.

of the generals should have been the delight of the Russian enlighteners.⁸⁷

Zavadovsky had attempted to reform the military schools in line with his ideas for public schools, but this attempt may have been futile because the directors of these schools were usually strong personalities who gave direction and status to their schools. From 1786 on, the popularity of the Land Cadet Corps rose with the appointment of a well known German educator, Count Anhalt, as director of the Corps, and it would be surprising if he had followed the Commission's line in detail. Nevertheless, after the second Turkish War, maybe in response to Pushchin's report, Catherine planned to restructure the whole setup of the military schools, and Platon Zubov was charged with the development of the

⁸⁷During Catherine's time, 4000 cadets graduated from the Noble Land Cadet Corps, 2149 from the Marine Cadet Corps, 1000 from the Artillery and Engineering Cadet Corps. [Ikonnikov, Znachenie, pp. 49-50] For other schools total numbers are not available but they must have been high considering their yearly enrollment. The Zorich School, which later was known as the First Moscow Cadet Corps, enrolled 300 students, the Greek Gymnasium, which prepared officers for the navy, had 200 students, and the Marine Corps at Nikolaev enrolled 360 students. [Arkhiv gosudarstvennogo soveta, pp. 192-195] At the same time the Russian universities did not attract the nobility. The University of the Academy had an enrollment of 2 to 9 students, and the University of Moscow had 82 students in 1787, which was one of its better years. [Ikonnikov, Znachenie, pp. 51-52].

complete project. Zubov's plan called for two cadet corps in St. Petersburg and 10 lower military schools in key guberniias. The military schools of the guberniias were to use the curriculum of the gymnasium and offer some courses in military architecture. Only those students who were physically fit and interested in a military career would continue at the two military cadet corps in the capital.⁸⁸ The merit of this system is obvious. It expanded the general school system, it centralized and streamlined military education, and it was less expensive than the old diversified corps approach. Catherine did not have time to implement Zubov's project, but Alexander's reformers recognized its advantages and adopted the whole plan in 1805. In our context it is interesting to note, that Zubov's plan in fact called for the establishment of 10 "military gymnasiums". These gymnasiums were to serve as preparatory schools for the cadet corps but also as the link between the major schools and the university.

The School Commission's effort to develop the major school as a model for all educational institutions was not

⁸⁸Maikov, Betskoy, pp. 375-376.

without competition. This is reflected in the fluctuating student enrollment of the major school in Moscow:

1786	-	105 students	⁸⁹
1789	-	346 students	
1791	-	253 students	
1801	-	137 students	

At the same time, the enrollment at the Noble Boarding School of the University of Moscow quickly rose to 400, and boarding schools sprang up all over Russia. In the last twenty years of the eighteenth century new boarding schools were established in Tver, Riazan, Novgorod, Voronezh, Kursk, Chernigov, Nizhni-Novgorod, and Kazan.⁹⁰ However, boarding schools were not the only type of competition that major schools had to face. After 1785, when the nobility was relieved from its obligation to serve, private tutors became again fashionable. These major efforts on the part of the nobility cannot be attributed solely to the growing interest in education and the records of the first major school in Moscow may shed some light on these developments.

Catherine's School Commission had never wavered on

⁸⁹Sychev-Mikhailov, Iz istorii, p. 93.

⁹⁰Rozhdestvensky, Ocherki, p. 449.

the principle of a school system "open to all classes", as the records of the major schools show. The composition of the student body, for 1801, was surprisingly democratic:

nobility	-	33% ⁹¹
middle class [<u>meshchanie</u>]	-	14%
merchant class	-	12%
children of soldiers	-	11%
serfs	-	11%
civil servants	-	8%
peasants	-	5%
Cossacks and foreigners	-	4%

Sychev-Mikhailov, the latest Soviet author on the subject [1960], claims that in the first major school of Moscow, serfs [dvorovye] made up 50% of the students, but that this high percentage declined to 30%.⁹² Obviously, the serfs were disadvantaged, but they were not excluded. In response to this "shocking" democracy the well-to-do nobility moved out of the major schools to the boarding schools or to private tutoring. In the provinces this led to a lack of support for the expansion of the public school system. The rich nobility, that segment of society

⁹¹Konstantinov, Ocherki, p. 78.

⁹²Sychev-Mikhailov, Iz istorii, p. 93.

which could afford to support the government effort, opted out and refused to accept any responsibility toward the new schools. As a result the government faced growing financial difficulties, and after 1791, the expansion of the system was retarded. The system had grown to the point where the mounting expenses began to dictate a slower pace of expansion.

The contribution of the Russian Orthodox Church to education stands in sharp contrast to the disappointing performance of the nobility. While the church schools were not part of the public school system, they made an important contribution to the pool of educated people from which the government drafted teachers and civil servants,⁹³ and the lower church schools, although they were primitive, helped to spread literacy across the empire. On the periphery these schools generally preceded public schools. At the end of Catherine's reign the government had opened one public school in Kamchatka, while the Church apparently operated 20 elementary schools on the peninsula.⁹⁴

⁹³In 1783 the state recruited 1455 seminarists for state service.

⁹⁴A. I. Baranow, B. B. Kafenhau, Period feodalizma vo vtoroi polovine XVIII veka, in Ocherki istorii SSSR, (Moscow, 1956), p. 427. Statistics on the parochial schools are usually not very reliable. The total population of

What are the tenable results of Catherine's most important reform? Although Catherine's own expectations were not realized, the record is still impressive. In 1782 the School Commission started with a general idea about schools, but without a plan, without teachers, without school administrators, and, above all, without experience. Yet, within 5 years the Commission had not only developed a reasonable plan for a whole school system, it had established a teachers seminary, trained 100 major school teachers, found and examined 400 minor school teachers, and established 26 major schools and 192 minor schools. During the same 5 year period, 20 school texts had been translated and published.⁹⁵ It is true that the

Kamchatka, in 1796, was probably in the neighborhood of 7000. The census taken in 1799, when 5000 people on Kamchatka had died of smallpox, records a male population of only 1339. [Efron-Brockhaus, Entsiklopedicheskii slovar, (St. Petersburg, 1895), vol. XXVII, pp. 225-228.] The active role of the Church on Kamchatka could be explained by the Church's interest in the native peoples on Russia's periphery. At least half of Kamchatka's population was of Asian origin.

⁹⁵The Russian achievement in book printing during Catherine's time is impressive. Between 1771 and 1780, 1466 books came off the press, and from 1781 to 1790, Russian publishers printed 2685 books [Konstantinov, Ocherki, p. 82]. William Coxe was especially impressed by the publications of the Academy of Sciences. "It may not be an exaggeration to assert", he said, "that no society in Europe has more distinguished itself for the excellence of its publications." [W. Coxe, Travels in Poland and Russia, vol. III, p. 164.]

last text book for the major schools was not printed before 1802, but all 12 texts for minor schools were delivered to the schools in September 1784. Indeed, an amazing achievement by any standards.

No less impressive is the rapid expansion of the public school system during the first decade, as the records of the School Commission show:

<u>Years</u>	<u>Schools</u>	<u>Teachers</u>	<u>Boys</u>	<u>Girls</u>	<u>Total</u> ⁹⁶
1782	8	26	474	44	518
1783	9	28	654	77	731
1784	11	33	1,082	152	1,234
1785	12	38	1,282	209	1,491
1786	165	394	10,230	858	11,088
1787	218	525	11,968	1,571	13,539
1788	227	520	13,635	924	14,559
1789	225	516	13,187	1,202	14,389
1790	269	629	15,604	921	16,525
1791	288	700	16,723	1,064	17,787
1792	302	718	16,322	1,178	17,500
1793	311	738	16,165	1,132	17,297
1794	302	767	15,540	1,080	16,620
1795	307	716	16,035	1,062	17,097
1796	316	744	16,220	1,121	17,341
1797	285	644	14,457	1,171	15,628
1798	284	752	15,396	1,405	16,801
1799	277	705	15,754	1,561	17,315
1800	315	790	18,128	1,787	19,915

A striking rise between 1785 and 1787, and again between 1789 and 1791, is explained by the graduation years of

⁹⁶Kniazkov, Serbov, Ocherki, p. 145.

the Teachers Seminary [1786 and 1788]. When the School Commission relinquished the initiative to local authorities, the expansion of the system was immediately retarded and after Catherine's death some schools were actually closed, because of lack of support. The Charter of the Nobility had not created "noble men", and the Empress may well have been disappointed. The nobility now participated in local government, but it refused to support Catherine's public schools. The most capable governors found it difficult to solicit the support of the local well-to-do classes. When Derzhavin, governor of the Tambov gubernia, appealed to the nobility of his gubernia in 1786, Gudovich, the spokesman for the nobility, told him that he could collect money for schools, but "without any pressure". The nobility of Tambov finally came up with a few hundred rubles,⁹⁷ but too late for the opening of the first major school of the gubernia. Yet, Derzhavin succeeded in establishing one major school and ten minor

⁹⁷The pettiness of this contribution is best compared with the very low annual teachers' salaries of that period. Grade three and four teachers received 400 rubles, grade two teachers received 200 rubles and grade one instructors 150 rubles.

schools, but soon after his departure from the gubernia, six of those schools were closed,⁹⁸ and statistics for 1799 show only four surviving schools in that gubernia. Obviously, the successor of Derzhavin must have shown little interest in education. The example of the Tambov gubernia is only one of many to demonstrate how much Catherine's reforms depended on individual administrators. A gubernia rose and fell with its governor. Kozodavlev's report to the Central School Administration [School Commission until 1786], after his first inspection of 10 gubernias in 1789, showed that in general the public had little interest in education, beyond the first two grades of the minor or major schools.⁹⁹ He suggested two alternatives to the government: 1) proceed immediately with the establishment of universities, to give students of major schools a goal in sight, or 2) concentrate entirely on minor schools until the country would be ready for the next step. Kozodavlev's report was of no consequence, but it tells something about the struggles, frustrations, and searching of the reformers at every stage of the effort.

⁹⁸D. A. Tolstoy, Gorodskie uchilishcha, pp. 116-117.

⁹⁹Rozhdestvensky, Ocherki, p. 607.

The retarding effect of the Turkish War on the educational reforms of the 1780's is obvious, but it is futile to speculate on what Catherine might have achieved if the resources that went into the war effort had been available to the Central School Administration. However, there was at least one extremely important factor in the development that was not beyond the Empress' control--the appointments to the School Commission. It would appear that Catherine could have composed a much stronger Commission. Zavadovsky's choice might be justified on the basis of his determination to get things done, although he was no educator, but Pastukhov appears to have been nothing more than a yes-man for Zavadovsky. As a result the experienced scholar and educator Aepinus, unquestionably the most capable man on the Commission, was actually rendered ineffective, and he became a mere co-signer of a plan that he found inadequate.

The Statute of 1786, provided for a centralized school administration, but not for an independent school government. The Central School Administration depended on local political authorities for appointments to the various positions in the school administration and also for material support. While it may be argued that Catherine did not

have the human and material resources for an independent school government, the fact remains that the administrative arrangement proved to be unsatisfactory. Governors were not always interested in education, and it was difficult to find suitable men to provide leadership on the local level. In general the administrative staff was ill prepared and uncooperative. As a result, teachers received little or no support from local authorities, except in those guberniias where governors, like Derzhavin, Sievers, Ingelstrom, Eropkin, Braun, Potemkin, and a few others, personally forced their subordinates and society to support schools. But even Eropkin could not claim more than limited success in Moscow. Kozodavlev's report listed Moscow among the backward guberniias, where teachers in general found little support. In 1789, only half of the towns of the Moscow guberniia had a school, and only Novgorod [Sievers], Tambov and Riazan [Derzhavin], and Tver were praised for their efforts.

The financial arrangement was in general very

unsatisfactory.¹⁰⁰ The central government did not have sufficient funds and the nobility gave little support to the public schools. The gratitude for the Charter of the

¹⁰⁰Georgi's "Income Record" of the Department of Public Welfare of St. Petersburg, for 1780-1782, throws some light on this problem. St. Petersburg was the most generous city.

Government funds	15,417
Catherine II	15,000
Contributions for a monument of Catherine II [designated for schools]	52,659
Merchants	5,000
German merchants	5,000
Metropolitan Gavril	2,120
S. Yakovlev [industrialist]	5,000
Volodimirov [merchant]	4,000
Strugovshchikov	1,000
Nobility of gubernia	3,010
Four anonymous contributors	4,000
Russian merchants	1,400
Golikov	1,200
Unknown	5,027
Betskoy	5,000
Tverdyshev	14,000
Income from court cases	11,114
Demidov	20,000
Catherine II for hospital	8,000
Catherine II for schools	16,000
Merchants	6,000
Sale of confiscated alcohol	83,736
Duty and penalties	9,709
Government treasury	3,000
Church collections	2,481
Total income	(rubles) <u>303,175</u>

[Georgi, Versuch einer Beschreibung der Russisch Kayserlichen Residenz, (St. Petersburg, 1790), pp. 251-253].

Nobility of 1785 was not forthcoming, and during the war years Catherine had to appeal to the Church for collections, to keep the schools going. The maintenance of schools and personnel was not secure, and this added to the low moral of teachers. It is surprising that most schools did survive under these circumstances.

It is also clear that moral education, the most important aspect from the enlighteners' point of view, fell short of Catherine's expectations. The Church had been excluded from participation in public schools, although in some districts educated priests could have provided better moral instruction than the majority of teachers, among whom drunkenness was a serious problem.¹⁰¹

However, in spite of all weaknesses of the new school system, its immediate achievements and its significance for the future cannot be denied. The government had recognized its responsibility and accepted the challenge of the task--educating a whole nation. In principle public schools were open to all Russian subjects. School legislation treated serfs as equals, and the enrollment of 30-50% of serfs in some schools, dispells any doubt as to

¹⁰¹D. A. Tolstoy, Gorodskie uchilishcha, pp. 112-113.

Catherine's intentions. The School Reform of 1786 could not undo the Charter of the Nobility, but it held some promise for the eventual emancipation of the serfs. If the majority of the nobility refused to support Catherine's reforms, it must also be remembered that a significant minority of the same class supported Catherine's reforms. The Russian Enlightenment was carried by an enlightened segment of the upper class; the middle class was not ready for that role.

The awakening of a considerable segment of Russian society to an interest in education was in itself an achievement, but there were also some tangible results. A more or less well arranged school system had been started and the direction was clear for Catherine's successors. Standardized school texts and teaching methods improved the standards of instruction in all Russian schools, and teacher training was at last recognized as an essential part of the school system. Success was not complete, but the fact that between 1781 and 1796, in the new public schools, 164,135 boys and 12,595 girls received elementary education,¹⁰² must be seen as a significant accomplishment.

¹⁰²Ikonikov, Znachenie, p. 49

CHAPTER V

CATHERINE II AS AN EDUCATOR

Every individual family must be inspired by the example of the larger family [the nation], which embraces all individual families.¹

Catherine II

Too bad that fairies are not in fashion today... I would have given them rich presents, whispering into their ears: Ladies, unspoiled nature, please, more unspoiled nature--experience will accomplish the rest.²

Catherine II

[at the cradle of Alexander I]

Pokrovsky's verdict that Catherine II was nothing more than a stupid plagiarist³ will not be upheld by

¹Catherine II, "On Education", Nakaz, Sochinenia, vol. I, ed. by Smirdin, paragraph 349, p. 85.

²Catherine to Grimm, 1779, Sbornik, vol. XXIII, p. 72.

³Mikhail N. Pokrovsky, Izbrannye proizvedenia, (Moscow, 1965), vol. II, pp. 67-69.

history. She was a disciple of the philosophes and the Aufklärer and adopted their ideas, but she was not a mere imitator. For eighteen years her true companions had been books and ideas, and her pastime had been reading and meditation. She was not an original thinker, but she had learned to select and coordinate ideas, adapting them to her own needs. The philosophes found nothing wrong with Catherine's "plagiarism", on the contrary, they applauded their illustrious pupil. Furthermore, Catherine never pretended to be an original thinker, and she informed Voltaire and Diderot that she had "robbed Montesquieu" for the Nakaz, adding that he would not mind, since it served a good cause. Again, in June 1781, she told Grimm that she had made excerpts from best works on education and printed them. The book sold 20,000 copies in two weeks.⁴ Catherine selected, adapted, popularized and disseminated the ideas of the Enlightenment in Russia and to an extent her role in Russia was similar to the role of the philosophes in western Europe. Their prime contribution was the dissemination of ideas, and while Catherine was less original, she was not necessarily less effective than her western tutors.

⁴Catherine to Grimm, June 25, 1779, Sbornik, vol. XXIII, p. 209.

When Catherine arrived in Russia she had one ambition--to be ruler of a great nation. However, soon after her arrival a new element entered her thinking. Her first ambition never changed, but it gradually developed into a means toward another ambition. The coarseness of Russian society shocked Catherine to the roots of her being. She observed how foreign diplomats looked down on Russians, frequently not even hiding their contempt. The people Catherine intended to rule had to be respected members of the European community, and she vowed to change Russia. During her prime years this second ambition dominated her thinking--Catherine II would be known as the reformer of Russia. This was the bent of her mind when she began to study Montesquieu, Voltaire, Bayle, Montaigne, the Encyclopedists, and later Locke and Beccaria. She had read every significant new publication, and as her intellectual tastes matured, her interest shifted to a few select authors. It is not surprising that Montesquieu, Montaigne, Beccaria, and Locke were leading that select group. From Catherine's point of view all of them were educators--reformers of an ignorant and corrupt society. Montesquieu and Beccaria shaped her views on justice and politics, and Montaigne and Locke contributed to her

educational philosophy.⁵

Montaigne (1533-1592) was probably the first important European writer to challenge the educational theories of medieval scholasticism. From Montaigne's point of view, the authoritarian approach of the scholastics was an obstacle rather than a help to students. "Let the variety of ideas be set before the student, he will choose if he can, if not, he will remain in doubt. Only fools are certain and assured," Montaigne said.⁶ Soul and body need equal attention, and moral education is far more important than knowledge itself. "It seems to me", wrote Montaigne, "that the first lessons in which we should steep a child's mind must be those that regulate his behavior and his sense that will teach him to know himself and to die and live well."⁷

⁵During the early years of Catherine's reign Rousseau's influence on Russian educational philosophy was considerable, but his influence came mainly through Betskoy. Catherine never gave any credit to Rousseau, although it is known that she read his works and that Rousseau was invited to settle in Russia. Until September 1763, Rousseau's books were sold by the Academy of Science.

⁶Michel de Montaigne, "Of the Education of Children", The Complete Essays of Montaigne, (Translated by D. M. Frame, Stanford University Press, 1955), p. 111.

⁷Ibid., p. 117.

Montaigne gave a new direction to philosophers of education and for Catherine the early experience with Montaigne was quite decisive. Her first inspiration for the educational reforms came through his essays, and he also led her to the discovery of Locke.

If Rousseau's influence on Catherine is debatable, Locke's lasting impression is beyond doubt.⁸ Locke's Thoughts Concerning Education were printed in Russian in 1759, but Catherine could have read the German translation. It was Locke's practical approach that appealed to the pragmatic Empress. Montaigne was a thinker with some thoughts on education, but Locke was an educator in the best sense of the word. He was a physician by training, a gifted psychologist, and an experienced successful teacher.⁹ Thoughts Concerning Education was written in

⁸D. A. Tolstoy has drawn attention to the fact that Catherine's "Instructions for the Education of the Grand Princes" were inspired and in part directly copied from Locke's essay on education [D.A. Tolstoy, Ein Blick auf das Unterrichtswesen, Appendix 2, pp. 111-121].

⁹Locke's fame as a philosopher often obscures the fact that he was not only a thinker, who happened to have some ideas on education, but also a well known educator. He was the tutor of Lord Shaftesbury and also of Shaftesbury's son. He was also the author of the first project for trade schools ["working schools"], for children of working class parents, which he submitted to Parliament after his return from exile.

1693, when Locke was sixty, and when he said that he "imagined the minds of children could easily be turned this or that way, as water itself",¹⁰ his statement carried the conviction of the talented and successful educator. The idea that all men could be "made perfect" became dear to every enlightener, and Locke's utilitarian moral purpose of education appealed to the best minds. Laharpe considered Locke to be "the most reliable guide" toward the recognition of truth, and Catherine was thrilled to read that "of all the men we meet with, nine parts of ten are what they are, good or evil, useful or not, by their education".¹¹ He gave Catherine the confirmation that Russia could be changed.

Catherine adopted Locke's ideas on physical and moral education, in fact copying many of his rules, but it would be wrong to conclude that she was a mere imitator. She accepted the advice of Locke, the medical expert, without hesitation, but she added her own ideas. Where Locke tolerated physical punishment as an exceptional measure, Catherine banned corporal punishment altogether, maintaining that authority must assert itself without force, and

¹⁰John Locke, Thoughts Concerning Education, (London, 1880), p. 60.

¹¹Ibid.

on teaching methods and curriculum Catherine's ideas sometimes directly contradict Locke's theory.¹²

Next to Montaigne and Locke, Basedow deserves mentioning in connection with Catherine's educational theory. His model school was ultimately rejected, but the correspondence between Catherine and Basedow extended over a period of 10 years. In 1770, Catherine financed the publication of Basedow's Methodenbuch, and between 1769 and 1775 there was no other educational theory that fascinated Catherine more than Basedow's. Basedow insisted on the introduction of better elementary education as the first step in any educational reform attempt. He stressed the role of parents as educators, besides that of teachers, reversing the trend that denied parents any beneficial influence on their children. Finally, Basedow was the first educator to ban all religious and class prejudices from his proposed school system.¹³ These points are also prominent in Catherine's educational writings and her public school system is based on Basedow's principle of

¹²Catherine II, "On the Education of the Grand Princes", Sbornik, vol. XXVII, pp. 301-331.

¹³Basedow's Methodenbuch, (Dessau, 1773; Paderborn, 1914), pp. 6-14.

universal education. If Basedow's influence is disputable, it will have to be granted that there is a striking similarity of issues.

Catherine's educational philosophy is also found in her literary works, and she was one of the most prolific writers of the Russian Enlightenment.¹⁴ Although most of her works do not deal directly with education, her preoccupation with that issue is obvious in every one of them. Dishonest characters, divided families, corrupt society are being ridiculed, and Mr. Honest and Mr. Truth are the heroes. The enlighteners' message is always on the surface. However, while her belletristic writing is didactic, it does not lack originality. Less original are her educational writings, but it must be remembered that the

¹⁴Major works of Catherine II, in Smirdin's edition of Works of Catherine II (Sochineniia):

Vol. I: Nakaz; Elementary Education; Instructions to Prince Saltykov; Selected Russian Proverbs; The Tale About Prince Khlor; The Tale About Prince Fevei; Essay on Prince Riurik; Essay on Oleg's Administration; Boleslavich (opera); Kosometovich (opera); Fedul and His Children (opera); The Swindler (comedy); The Deluded (comedy).

Vol. II: O, Time; Misunderstanding; The Birthday Party of Mrs. Vorchalkina; Mrs. Vestnikova's Family; The Upset Family; A Translation from Shakespeare; The Shaman of Siberia; The Vague Fellow; The Foolish Prejudice (comedy); The Flatterer and the Seduced; There Cannot be Evil Without Good (comedy); The Journey of Promotaev (comedy).

Vol. III: Facts and Fables; Answers and Questions; Notes; The Secret against an Absurd Society; Letters.
[Catherine II, Sochineniia, ed. Smirdin, 1849-1850]

Empress never intended to develop an educational philosophy of her own.

The recurring question is: Was this whole effort necessary to satisfy Catherine's vanity? The education of the Grand Dukes should throw some light on this question.

While it is generally agreed that Catherine eventually did everything to keep her son Paul off the Russian throne, there is no substance to the claim that Catherine neglected Paul's education. She had to prepare Paul for the role of future ruler, as long as there was no alternative to him. And therefore, while Catherine may have failed as a mother, she did not fail to give Paul the best possible education. Among Paul's teachers were such outstanding educators as Archbishop Platon, N. Panin, Poroshin, and Aepinus. Indeed, it would have been difficult to find better men, and Paul has never complained about his teachers. Neither Aepinus nor Platon were subservient men, who would have agreed to any scheming against Paul. Poroshin was a fervent Russian patriot who saw in the Grand Duke the rightful heir, and Panin was Paul's most consistent friend. However, Catherine considered them to be honest men, and

therefore they met her standards. The choice of these highly qualified tutors also weighs against the suspicion that Catherine's interest in D'Alembert was intended for publicity only. D'Alembert was invited in 1762, to join the group of Paul's tutors, but he declined. The correspondence between Catherine and D'Alembert, concerning Paul's education, was carried on at least until late 1763. "You were called to contribute to the happiness and enlightenment of a whole nation", Catherine told D'Alembert in 1762. "To refuse to accept such call, I think, is the same as refusing to do good, for which you were destined. Your philosophy is based on compassion and sympathy for mankind. Permit me to say, that the consequences of refusing to serve this philosophy, when it is possible to serve, is that the goal will never be reached."¹⁵ A year later D'Alembert commented:

If it were a matter of training Your Prince to be a good mathematician, a decent literary man, or maybe a mediocre philosopher, I would not worry about the success. But there is a great difference between mathematicians, literary men, or philosophers and good rulers.¹⁶

¹⁵Catherine to D'Alembert, Nov. 13, 1762, Sbornik, vol. VII, p. 179.

¹⁶D'Alembert to Catherine, October 17, 1763, Sbornik, vol. VII, p. 181.

In retrospect these words seem to be full of premonition. Paul received a good education, but he was not fit to rule an empire, and when Catherine at the cradle of Alexander prayed for "unspoiled nature" in the child, her own son must have been on her mind.

In 1764, Catherine's thinking on education was first formulated in Betskoy's presentation to the Senate, "On the Education of Youth of both Sexes".¹⁷ Betskoy emphasized in his report that he had done his best to present "every word" of all points of the Empress' oral orders. Whether the presentation was all Catherine's own or not is difficult to say, but it is her first statement of an accepted educational philosophy. It is significant that even at this stage several major points crystallize:

- 1) It is the monarch's will to change the whole nation through education.
- 2) The family's role in society is recognized.
- 3) "Education is the root of good and evil".
- 4) Moral education [instilling "virtue"] takes precedence over scientific knowledge.

¹⁷Betskoy's report, March 22, 1764, Polnoe sobranie zakonov, No. 12103.

- 5) The educational reforms are placed under the motto, "do it well or don't do it at all".

The theory is further developed in another document prepared by Betskoy and distributed by the Senate in December 1766, to every administrative unit in all guberniias.¹⁸ This rescript deals with education in school and family, stressing physical education, as implied by the title, "A Brief Manual: Selections from best authors with some observations on physical education". Locke is the only author mentioned by name and the predominance of his philosophy is obvious. It is interesting to note that the essay starts with a moral declaration in defence of women: "He who offends a pregnant woman is a villain."¹⁹ Other major points of the rescript can be traced directly to Locke: 1) a sound body is a prerequisite for a sound mind, 2) learning must be made enjoyable, 3) a sound mind and a good heart are more important than quick progress

¹⁸Brief Instructions on Education, November 16, 1766, Polnoe sobranie zakonov, No. 12,785 .

¹⁹It is interesting to note that this maxim is upheld in Russia to the present day. Nowhere is the respect for "mother", officially, stressed more than in Soviet Russian society.

in learning. At this stage Catherine makes very few changes in adopted theories, and even concerning corporal punishment she follows Locke's rules, that "children should be punished rarely", rather than asserting her own inclination to ban force altogether.

Soon after the "Brief Manual", Catherine published her Instructions [Nakaz] to the Legislative Commission. While only ten paragraphs out of a total of 655 deal with education, the educational overtones of the whole document are quite obvious. The first paragraph of the document is again a declaration of moral principle: "Christian rules teach us to do good to each other, as much as possible."²⁰ The following paragraphs commit the members of the Commission to accept the consequences of such high moral principle. Good legislation and education are simply inseparable in Catherine's eyes, since the ultimate goal of both is the "good citizen".

The arrival of Catherine's first grandson, Alexander, December 2, 1777, seems to give new impetus to Catherine. She never lost interest in education, as her correspondence with Grimm and Basedow clearly proves, but during the difficult years, between 1769 and 1776, her attention had to focus

²⁰Catherine II, Nakaz, in Smirdin, (ed.), Sochinenia vol. I, p. 3.

on war, rebellion, and on most necessary administrative reforms. Alexander appeared as the bright star on a clearing sky. This event initiates a transition from Catherine the educational reformer, to Catherine the educator-reformer. Paul had received an excellent education, but he was eight before Catherine had any influence on his development, and she was not yet ready to play that role which she accepted in the education of her grandsons, Alexander and Constantine. These princes received her whole attention, with all the motherly love that Paul had missed. Between March 1779, and March 1785, Catherine's letters take on the appearance of a teacher's diary, whose only concern seems to be the education of two brilliant students. A keen sense of observation, a good grasp of basic educational principles, and an unusual understanding of human nature emanate from this correspondence. "God knows, no education can make up for what nature did not provide," she writes to Grimm on July 1, 1779, and only four days later, she informs him:

We learn something new every day. We become extraordinary inventive, making ten or twelve toys out of one... . What do you think? Will

we develop an open mind or mindlessness? Lady nature created us with a strong body and a receptive mind.²¹

On July 14, 1779, she asks Grimm jokingly whether he can imagine that she in fact is showing the alphabet to little Alexander, who is not yet two years old. At the same time Catherine studied teaching methods in preparation of her role as educator of the Dukes. She was greatly impressed by Mme. D'Epinay's Conversations with Emilie, which had been recommended to her by Grimm. Mme. D'Epinay urged parents, especially mothers, to play an active role in the education of their children. She pointed out to mothers that every conversation with a child has an educational value, positive or negative. The novelty was not in the idea itself, but rather in the fact that mothers were challenged to accept greater responsibility in the educational process, and Catherine was eager to take upon herself the education of her grandsons. When Alexander approached the age of four, she was delighted

²¹Catherine to Grimm, July 1779, Sbornik, vol. XXIII, pp. 147-152.

to report to Grimm that "both boys grow and develop extraordinarily," and that her methods were "amazingly successful."--"God knows, what the oldest one [Alexander] does not yet know. He combines letters into words, he paints, he writes, he digs the soil, he fences, he rides on horseback... ."22 These letters, in fact, establish Catherine as a practical educator.

However, Catherine did not only apply her theories in a real teaching situation, she also wrote the texts for her students, adapting them to their needs. Catherine is the author of eight texts, prepared for her grandsons, Alexander and Constantine:

Russian Alphabet and Elementary Education,
Chinese Reflections on Conscience,
The Tale About Prince Khlor,
Dialogues and Stories,
Essays on Russian History,
Selected Russian Proverbs,
The Tale About Prince Fevei,
Part II of Elementary Education.23

²²Catherine to Grimm, April - June 1781, Sbornik, vol. XXIII, pp. 201-208.

²³Catherine to Saltykov, March 13, 1784, "Sobstvennoruchny imennoi ukaz i nastavlenie Imp. Ekateriny II, generaluanshefu N. I. Saltykovu o vospitanii velikikh kniazai Alexandra i Konstantina Pavlovichei", Sbornik, vol. XXVII, p. 317.

While all of these texts betray Catherine's views on education, since she selected and edited all material, several of them are Catherine's own creations, and therefore they represent best her educational philosophy. Smirdin, the editor of Catherine's works, was greatly impressed by Catherine's Elementary Education, and he decided to print the Empress' original text without any changes in syntax and orthography. "Let Russian citizens become aware of the true monument of Catherine--writer on the education of their children," he said in his introduction.²⁴ Part I of Elementary Education concentrates entirely on moral education, and it is quite obvious that Catherine did not limit her teaching to the school room, in the narrow sense. Her school room was Russia, and her students were not just children. "It is the duty of parents to educate their children," she addresses parents,²⁵ and in a less direct way almost every one of her rules appeal to society as a whole: "By helping your neighbor you help yourself"; "Laziness is a bad teacher"; "Always listen to both sides of an argument"; "Give everybody a

²⁴Catherine II, Sochinenija, vol. I, p. 168.

²⁵Ibid., p. 169.

chance to defend his cause...".²⁶ Part II of Elementary Education contains a few scientific facts, but the stress is still on ethical values. The fact, that these books were written for the Grand Dukes adds another dimension to these books. Catherine tells the Dukes, that "before God all men are equal" and that by "nature there is hardly any difference between two people, but due to education the difference can be very great."²⁷ Instructing the Dukes to be tolerant, she said: "He who can get along only with pleasant people is not yet a wise man. A wise man can accept in his heart all people; a madman drives out even the worthy ones." And finally the Empress reminds the Dukes, that it is the Czar's duty "to do good and to suffer slander".²⁸

The two tales about the Princes Khlor and Ferei, are more original in content, but clearly of a didactic nature. The Tale About the Prince Khlor is an allegorical narrative, representing the struggle of the spirit for virtue, against external and inner obstacles. Khlor, a beautiful and wise

²⁶Catherine II, Sochinenija, vol. I, pp. 169-176.

²⁷Ibid., p. 183.

²⁸Ibid., p. 184.

prince, is kidnapped. He has to go through all possible temptations, but he remains victorious. Significantly, he is finally saved by two simple peasants [not princes], "Chestnost" [honesty] and "Pravda" [truth], his true friends on the road toward "virtue".²⁹

The Tale About Prince Fevei, is written in simple narrative style. A Czar is utterly depressed because he has no children due to the illness of his Czarina. However, a wise man saves the country. He advises the Czar: "Prohibit your Czarina to sleep during the day, to speak at night, to eat between meals; let her get up and not lie down, except at night... . Force your Czarina to walk and ride, and breath fresh air." Soon the Czarina had a son, Fevei. Then the story shows the gradual process of growing up. Fevei grows physically and spiritually, until "virtue" is dominant in his character.³⁰ It is implied that education is the key to his success. Lavrovsky, a leading nineteenth century authority on Russian education,

²⁹Catherine II, The Tale About Prince Khlor, Sochinenija, ed. Smirdin, vol. I, pp. 279-296.

³⁰Catherine II, The Tale About the Prince Fevei, Sochinenija, vol. I, pp. 259-278.

has pointed to the sound pedagogical principles prevailing in Catherine's educational writing.³¹ The stories about Khlor and Fevei certainly justify that claim, but the most reliable reflection of Catherine's educational principles will be found in her "Instructions for the Education of the Grand Dukes, Alexander and Constantine."³²

For the first seven years of Alexander's life, Catherine had made herself the chief tutor of the Grand Duke and his brother, but in March 1784, she charged General N. I. Saltykov with the supervision of the education of the Grand Dukes. The "Instructions" for Saltykov cover the whole range of training, from infancy to manhood, under seven headings:

- 1) Instructions concerning health and bodily care.
- 2) Developing a kind disposition.
- 3) On virtues and obligations of children.
- 4) On courtesy.

³¹N. Lavrovsky, O pedagogicheskom znachenii sochinenii Ekateriny II, (Kharkov, 1856), p. 181.

³²Catherine II, "Sobstvennoruchny imennoi ukaz i nastavlenie Imp. Ekateriny II general-anshefu Nikolaiu Ivanovichu Saltykovu o vospitanii velikikh kniazei Alexandra i Konstantina Pavlovichei", Sbornik, vol. XXVII, pp. 301-330.

- 5) On general behavior and manners.
- 6) Instructions on learning and knowledge.
- 7) On teacher-student relations.

There is no change in the general philosophy from the 1760's, but twenty years of experience are reflected in the document. The sections on physical and moral education are dominated by Locke, but she has introduced her own ideas, blending them with Locke's original principles. The section on teaching is more original, although Aepinus' indirect contribution must be suspected.

What are the basic elements of Catherine's philosophy of education at this point?

In contrast to Locke, and her own earlier position, she now categorically rejects corporal punishment. A wise teacher will use "shame" and "praise" as effective tools for guiding and correcting his students. Any kind of coercion must be avoided.

The most important virtue is a strong Christian faith, "the deep recognition of God, the creator".

Children must learn to control their desires and to subordinate them to reason. Failing to do so in childhood, they will find it impossible to follow "sound reason" when

they grow up, and therefore, obedience must be stressed and expected at all times.

Children must learn to love all people, regardless of their station in life.

Courage is an important virtue, and tutors are instructed not to pamper their students. "If somebody falls, don't rush to help him, unless absolutely necessary, let him get up by himself", and tears are not to be tolerated.

The most despicable of vices is lying, and not even in jokes is lying to be excused. Next to a strong faith in God, honesty is the most important virtue.³³

Catherine stresses that a "thorough understanding of things of this world" is very necessary, and therefore good instruction is important, but the teacher must know how to "arouse the curiosity of the child, to stimulate its desire to study without coercion. "When children study without coercion, of their own free will, they will study as willingly as they play."³⁴

³³Catherine II, "Sobstvennoruchny imennoi ukas...", Sbornik, vol. XXVII, pp. 308-311.

³⁴Ibid., p. 316.

In contrast to Locke, Catherine stressed language instruction, as an important aspect of education. The Grand Dukes received instruction in Russian, German, and French, and Alexander also studied English, while Constantine had to master Greek. Yet, in spite of this stress on general knowledge and on languages, she contends that "languages and knowledge actually are the less important part of education of the Dukes" and that the moral aspect is of far greater value.³⁵

The "Instructions on the Education of the Grand Dukes" present an enlightened and informed opinion on education and must be taken as one of the significant contributions of the Russian Enlightenment. However, the idealistic Weltanschauung of the enlighteners led them to some erroneous conclusions, and Catherine was no exception in this respect. The "Instructions" were written for an ideal situation, where teachers and students were a very select group, yet, one of Catherine's principles was challenged almost immediately. The very gifted and most successful tutor of the Dukes, Laharpe, at first succeeded in raising the curiosity of his students, vindicating Catherine's theory that students must do everything with

³⁵Catherine II, "Sobstvennoruchny imennoi ukaz...", Sbornik, vol. XXVII, p. 317.

"joy and of their own free will." But two years later Laharpe complains that his students practice too little and that to improve their reading he proposes "to force them to learn poetry and prose by heart."³⁶ Catherine continued to dislike coercion in education, but she was too much of a realist to disregard Laharpe's complaint, and the tutor's less idealistic methods were tolerated.

The choice of Frederick-Cesar Laharpe³⁷ constitutes an interesting chapter in Catherine's educational efforts. Why was a known ardent republican chosen as tutor of the Grand Dukes of the most autocratic state of Europe? Was the Empress unaware of the implications?

Frederic Cesar de Laharpe (1754-1838) was born in Rolle, Switzerland. He received his secondary training at the well known Swiss "republican school" of Haldenstein, studied philosophy at Geneva, and law at the University of Tübingen. A doctor of law at the age of twenty, he returned to Switzerland. His success as a defence lawyer

³⁶Laharpe, "Report on the education of the Grand Dukes", Ruskaia Starina, (St. Petersburg, 1870-1903) vol. I, p. 155.

³⁷Since most sources use the simplified version of de la Harpe's name, Laharpe, that version has been adopted by this author.

was immediate, but he was unhappy in Bern, because of the city's reputation as oppressor of Switzerland. From Laharpe's point of view, the patricians of Bern constituted the greatest danger to the freedom of the Swiss cantons. The center of opposition to the domination of Bern was the Lausanne Literary Society, one of the temples of the Enlightenment. Democratic Lausanne and its Societe litteraire, founded in 1772, soon became a meeting place for nonconformist European intellectuals.³⁸ Laharpe was elected as a member of the Literary Society of Lausanne, in 1780. It is not known under what circumstances Grimm made the acquaintance of Laharpe, but it can be assumed that it was through the Literary Society. Early in 1782, Laharpe was ready to leave for free America, when through the warm recommendations of Grimm he was offered the position as companion and mentor of Alexander Lanskoj's younger brother, who was on an Italian tour. This was the beginning of Laharpe's long Russian service and his lasting love for

³⁸Lausanne was known for a number of reformist societies, and among famous Europeans who visited or even settled in Lausanne were the historians Gibbon, Gillies, Ferguson, Voltaire and Rousseau, Prince Henry of Prussia and Princes Mikhail and Boris Golitsyn, who belonged to the Literary Society. Another Russian, Count Razumovsky, was a co-founder of the Societe des Sciences Phisiques de Lausanne. [Sukhomlinov, "Fridrikh-Tsezar Laharpe", Isledovanija i Stati, vol. II, pp. 53-56]

that country, in spite of his political convictions.

When young Lanskoj returned to Russia, Laharpe was invited to settle in St. Petersburg. General Alexander Lanskoj, Catherine's favorite, and Catherine were both impressed by the intelligent Laharpe. Undoubtedly, Grimm played an important part in these developments. During 1782, Laharpe was repeatedly the object of Catherine's correspondence with Grimm, who related to her his very favorable judgement.³⁹ When Laharpe prepared to return to western Europe, late in 1783, he was offered the position of tutor to the Grand Dukes. On March 28, 1784, Catherine informed Grimm that Laharpe had been appointed as Alexander's French teacher.⁴⁰ Laharpe accepted the position, but soon he made it clear that he intended to be more than a language teacher. He prepared a "Memorandum" for the Empress in which he expounded his philosophy of education, also frankly stating, that he hoped to teach more than a language. The "Memorandum" was submitted to Catherine on June 10, 1784. Two weeks later, Alexander Lanskoj died

³⁹Catherine to Grimm, 1782, Sbornik, vol. XXIII.

⁴⁰Catherine to Grimm, March 28, 1784, Sbornik, vol. XXIII, p. 297.

and Laharpe was convinced that his Memorandum was forgotten and his opportunity gone with his friend, Lanskoj. He did not realize that his great supporter was Grimm, and that the Memorandum had already been weighed by Catherine. Few rulers would have tolerated Laharpe's bluntness, but Catherine's response was typical. On the margin of Laharpe's Memorandum she noted: "Indeed, he who is capable of such ^a memorandum can teach more than French."⁴¹ Laharpe now was given a position next to Saltykov's, officially, but in fact he became the most influential tutor of the Dukes.⁴²

Catherine's personal records on the progress of the education of Alexander and Constantine show that from late in 1784, Laharpe taught the Dukes, reading, history, and geography, besides writing [composition], arithmetic, and geometry.⁴³ It is obvious, that a good teacher can influence young minds most effectively through selective

⁴¹Sukhomlinov, "Laharpe", vol. II, p. 69.

⁴²Saltykov supervised the education of the Dukes. Under him were 10 teachers: Laharpe, Protasov, Koshelev, Budberg, Kushelev, Saken, Khrushchev, Lamsdorf, Turkovsky, Grek.

⁴³Catherine II, Personal records concerning the education of the Grand Dukes, 1784, Sbornik, vol. XLII, pp. 449-455.

readings and convincing interpretations of history. Catherine was aware of this fact, since Laharpe never minced words, and his "Memorandum" stated quite bluntly, that he would select examples from history to demonstrate "virtue and greatness".⁴⁴ History was the most important subject for Laharpe and for the enlighteners in general. Why then did Catherine entrust the teaching of this most important subject to a republican whose radical sentiments had been reported to her from Vienna, before his arrival? It was also no secret that the Russian nobility was unhappy with her choice.

However, the opposition learned to live with the idea of a republican tutor of Russia's Grand Dukes. This may be attributed to Laharpe's character. He avoided unnecessary clashes, and his absolute honesty impressed friends and enemies. Furthermore, he was one of the few foreigners who were eager to serve Russia, without ulterior motives. Like Aepinus, he immediately set out to study Russian, and eventually he spoke the language of the country which he adopted, although it did not quite accept him. Nevertheless, the fact that he respected Russia

⁴⁴Lavater-Slonam, Katharina II, p. 390.

helped to win the good will of many. The Empress herself seems to have had no scruples at all about the republicanism of the tutor. It must be recalled that she was a disciple of Montesquieu who taught that "a monarchical state ought to be of moderate extent, [and] were it small, it would form itself into a republic."⁴⁵ Thus, it was quite natural that Laharpe, a Swiss citizen, was a republican, but the largest empire on Earth could at best be a monarchy. The Swiss republican was not seen as a threat to Russian institutions, and Catherine could afford to introduce her grandsons to republicanism. Laharpe's membership in the Literary Society of Lausanne did not create problems for Catherine, since that "radical" society had rather attractive principles. A membership candidate had to answer a number of questions on the affirmative before being accepted:

Do you love all people regardless of their beliefs, their religion, their way of thinking, and do you wish prosperity and perfection to all mankind?

Do you agree that nobody should suffer defamation, persecution or punishment for his thoughts and beliefs?

⁴⁵Montesquieu, Spirit of the Law, p. 121.

Do you promise sincerely to search for truth and do you love truth for its own sake? And if you will find the truth, are you prepared to accept it with joy and communicate it impartially to others?

Do you promise to make every effort to ban from the search for truth all passion, all prejudice, all bias and ill will against those who disagree with you? Do you promise to listen to controversies with good humour, using only spiritual weapons for defense and disagreement?⁴⁶

These principles only reassured Catherine that Laharpe was the right man. However, as time went on Laharpe's opponents became more concerned. Was he not questioning old accepted values? And was his criticism of corrupt Rome not a thinly veiled attack on the abuses of the Russian nobility, and on autocracy itself? In Laharpe's lectures Julius Caesar was no longer a hero. According to Laharpe, a common thief told Caesar: "The only difference between me and you is that I rob people all by myself, and out of necessity, while you do it at the head of many thousands, for personal satisfaction, surrounded by flatterers who praise you for your robberies." But there were also good emperors who deserved admiration.

⁴⁶"Reglements et protokoles de la societe litteraire de Lausanne, 1772-1782", quoted by Sukhomlinov, vol. II, p. 56.

Marcus Aurelius and Trajan were truly wise and great emperors. Handing the sword to an officer of the Praetorian guard, Trajan, according to Laharpe, says: "Use it for me, if I am just, turn it against me if I start doing wrong." A risky advice indeed. Laharpe also taught that all men were equal and that "not birth, but personal achievements, virtue and talent make great men." The capable Marius was a simple peasant's son. "The peasants are the least corrupted", Laharpe told the Dukes, "and from them the country profits most." However, nobody wants to educate them and thus, "they are condemned to ignorance with all the coarse and unrestrained passions". But Laharpe carried his history lessons yet a step farther. "In vain do tyrants try to convince mankind that it is a crime to rise against them," he told the Dukes. "Instinct teaches the animal to defend itself, how can man be expected not to defend his human rights?" Rome was victorious over the gladiators, but it was an unjust victory, because the gladiators only defended their human rights. The murder of Caesar is justified by Laharpe, since he was an unjust despot, and Cromwell was a hero who justly

eliminated the weak and lazy Stuarts.⁴⁷

It is obvious that Laharpe used history arbitrarily, to influence his students. He is not consistent in his demand for common sense and justice. The people are always right, when they rise, and even their violence is justified, since they have a cause against oppression. However, not Laharpe's objectivity is of interest in our context, but rather the fact that his obvious bias was tolerated in St. Petersburg, after the Pugachev Rebellion. The question arises: Did Catherine know about Laharpe's biased interpretation of history?

When Laharpe died in 1838, the Public Library of Lausanne inherited his manuscripts which proved to be the complete series of his lectures for the Grand Dukes, Alexander and Constantine. Nine of the total of eleven volumes contain Laharpe's history lectures. These lectures were written out in every detail, and Count Uvarov, who discovered and studied these documents, is convinced that Laharpe must have read them to his students.⁴⁸ The assumption is supported by Laharpe's "Records on the

⁴⁷Sukhomlinov, "Laharpe", Izsledovaniia, vol. II, pp. 71-74.

⁴⁸Count Uvarov, "Laharpe's Manuscripts", Russkii Arkhiv, 1869, vol. VII, pp. 75-82.

education of the Dukes",⁴⁹ where he states that he "dictated" history to the Dukes. The reading of lectures was customary, and Catherine probably saw these lectures before they were read to the Dukes. There is sufficient evidence to support this assumption. Catherine told Saltykov that she had discussed Laharpe's plan of instructions with Fitzherbert, the British ambassador, agreeing with him, that "it could not be planned better... . Express my satisfaction to Laharpe."⁵⁰ On her Crimean journey she proudly related some of Laharpe's history lectures to De Ligne and Fitzherbert, expressing great satisfaction as to the choice of the Swiss tutor. On December 15, 1788, she rejected a bid to replace Laharpe, telling Saltykov, that she did not wish to replace Laharpe as history teacher of the Dukes, since "he does excellent work".⁵¹ When the French Revolution was in

⁴⁹Laharpe, "Records on the education of the Grand Dukes, 1786-1794", Ruskaia Starina, 1870, vol. I, p. 159.

⁵⁰Catherine to Saltykov, [date unknown], Russkii Arkhiv, 1866, p. 82.

⁵¹Ibid., p. 71.

progress, Laharpe's enemies complained that his instructions were plain "Jacobinism", but the Empress continued to support him, obviously well informed at this point.⁵² However, even without such evidence it would be inconceivable that the Empress could have been ignorant of Laharpe's philosophy over a period of twelve years. It will have to be granted that she knew about Laharpe's bias, and his rather selective approach to history, but that she was not disturbed by that fact. There were elements in Laharpe's teaching which from the Empress' point of view far outweighed the "risks". In his "Memorandum" of June 10, 1784, Laharpe had stated:

The ruler does not have to be a physicist, nor a naturalist, nor a mathematician, nor a geographer, nor a philologue, nor a jurist, and so forth. But, he must be an honest man and an enlightened citizen, and he must know the subjects of study sufficiently to understand their true value. He must have a clear concept of the responsibilities of a monarch, in whose hands rest happiness and misfortune of millions.⁵³

These concepts earned him Catherine's admiration and

⁵²"Laharpe in Russia", from his autobiographical notes, Russkii Arkhiv, 1866, p. 84.

⁵³Sukhomlinov, "Laharpe", Izsledovania, vol. II, p. 70.

loyalty. She recognized that Laharpe's prime concern was not really history for its own sake, but rather the moral lessons that could be deduced from history. This she could accept without hesitation, since it coincided with her own philosophy. Under these circumstances Laharpe's critics could not hope to dislodge the republican.

Laharpe's preoccupation with history was not unique, the philosophes and the Aufklärer used history to prove their point, but Laharpe based his whole educational program on history. From his point of view, a broad liberal education was desirable, but history was the one subject that every citizen had to study. Of eleven volumes of his lectures only two are devoted to language studies, mathematics, and geometry, nine deal exclusively with history.⁵⁴ History is also identified as the most important subjects in Laharpe's "Reports". In one of these reports he explains to Catherine:

Convinced that the public servant [monarch] must not search in history for useless stories or battles or events, that do not affect the following epoch, I touched upon ancient Rome and Greece, endeavoring to acquaint the Princes with significant events and especially with those that were influenced by people, whose virtues and

⁵⁴Uvarov, "Bumagi Laharpa", Russkii Arkhiv, 1869, pp. 75-76.

vices, noble actions or mistakes must in the first place serve as lessons for people, who are called to play a role on the political stage of the world.⁵⁵

The basic principles of Laharpe's philosophy recur in his lectures over the years:

- 1) Men are equal by birth, and only their actions entitle them to a position of trust and power.
- 2) Even a monarch is a citizen, and a citizen obeys the law. Good rulers are good citizens--they are not above the law.
- 3) The higher a man's position the more he is exposed to criticism. Therefore, he must set an example that would not be criticized by honest men.
- 4) Power must not be abused, because an abuse of power leads to rebellion.
- 5) Every living creature has a right to defend its safety, and consequently, man has a right to defend himself against injustice and oppression.⁵⁶

The first four of these principles will be found in some form in Catherine's writings. She may have had reservations about the last one, but she did not delete it from

⁵⁵Laharpe, "Records...", Russkaia Starina, 1870, vol. I, p. 160.

⁵⁶The author has to rely on Uvarov's and Sukhomlinov's excerpts from Laharpe's Manuscripts. [Gr. Uvarov, "Bumagi Laharpa", Russkii Arkhiv, 1869, pp. 75-80; Sukhomlinov, "Laharpe", Izsledovanĭa i stati, vol. II, pp. 69-88].

Laharpe's lectures. On May 26, 1789, a series of Laharpe's history lectures were read at the meeting of the Helvetic Society, in Olten, Switzerland. The Society then sent a congratulatory message to the "noble Swiss citizen, who at the steps of the throne did not renounce his republican convictions."⁵⁷ What the authors of this message overlooked was the fact that this republican was tolerated "at the steps of the throne".

Laharpe owed his key position as tutor to his "Memorandum", but no memorandum or imperial decree could guarantee the influence which he desired to have on the Dukes. A teacher's influence is determined by his relationship with students. This most important axiom of education was well understood by the enlighteners, and Catherine's experience as teacher of her grandsons had vindicated her belief in this axiom. However, did she anticipate the close ties of friendship between Laharpe and his students? When Laharpe was put in charge, Alexander was only seven years old, and following Catherine's instructions "children were not to be forced to study". Yet, within a few weeks Laharpe had won the confidence of the boys, and Alexander asked for daily French lessons. "Education

⁵⁷Sukhomlinov, "Laharpe", Izsledovanija, vol. II, p. 88.

without coercion", Catherine's ideal, seemed to be possible, and Catherine was delighted with the success of her tutor. However, these boys would have been abnormal if they had not grown tired of the "game" of learning. There is no complaint from the teacher during the first two years, but in September 1786, Laharpe suggested that more discipline was necessary.⁵⁸ Catherine's response is not known, but from Alexander's letters to Laharpe it can be concluded that Laharpe had his way. Laharpe himself was no disciplinarian, but he knew how to deal with reality, and the pragmatic grandmother simply left it to the tutor to find a workable method. Alexander's numerous letters, between 1785 and 1794, show that Laharpe's task was not easy. At the same time, those letters reveal a growing attachment between teacher and students, in spite of the teacher's insistence on strict discipline. On April 8, 1791, Alexander is ordered to leave the room, because of "inappropriate language". Then he has to write down his offense and display the little document in his room:

Grand Duke Alexander forgot himself to the point of using inappropriate language. As a

⁵⁸Laharpe, "Records..." Russkaia Starina, 1870, vol. I, p. 155.

reminder of this unpardonable offense, this paper will be displayed in his study as a memorial in his honor.⁵⁹

April 10, 1791, a similar "memorial" is written and displayed, because "the Grand Duke read without interest". These confrontations seem to be almost commonplace, but by 1793, a more mature Alexander begins to call Laharpe his best friend. When Laharpe was finally dismissed, in 1795, Alexander cried on his shoulder, and this was not a mere emotional outburst of feelings. In March 1796, Alexander wrote to Laharpe:

I owe to you everything: my disposition, rules morals, the little knowledge I have, and of which I could have much more, if I had made better use of your endless efforts, for which I will never be able to pay you, except with my eternal loyalty and respect for you, my dear friend.⁶⁰

When Paul ascended the throne he cut Laharpe's pension, although Laharpe had refused to take sides against him, and Alexander received strict orders not to write to Laharpe. However, in May 1801, their correspondence is

⁵⁹Alexander's Letters, Sbornik, vol V, p. 8.

⁶⁰Alexander to Laharpe, March 12, 1796, Sbornik, vol. V. p. 25.

renewed, and Alexander's first letter reveals his undiminished attachment to his teacher:

The first true joy that I have experienced since I became head of my unhappy country, was the moment when I received your letter, my dear friend. I cannot express what I felt... . Believe me, dear friend, that nothing in the world could change my attachment to you and my appreciation of what you have done for me... . It is not in my power to evaluate everything that you have done for me, and I will never be able to repay you for your sacred commitment.⁶¹

Catherine knew about Laharpe's political views and about the growing attachment of her grandsons to their teacher, but she was not concerned about his "republican influence". Yet, there remain some unanswered questions concerning Catherine's genuine feelings with regard to republicanism. She expressed her sympathy for a republican form of government repeatedly. She defended the professed republican Laharpe against the joint pressure of French emigres and Russian reactionaries until late 1794, for more than a year after the execution of Louis XVI. When Alexander, at a festive gathering of Russian and foreign dignitaries, explained the advantages and disadvantages of the new republican form of government in

⁶¹Alexander to Laharpe, May 21, 1801, Sbornik, vol. V, p. 29.

France, Laharpe's enemies immediately jumped to the conclusion that these were the fruits of his indoctrination. However, they were astonished to learn that it was not Laharpe, but rather Catherine who discussed the various stages of the French Revolution with her grandson.⁶² Laharpe had actually been very cautious since 1789, as he explains in his autobiography. While he openly sympathized with the French Revolution, he made sure that his lectures would not be a cause for criticism. He dropped a series of lectures, "On the Origin of Society", which he had already prepared, because his enemies declared them to be pure "Jacobinism", but he never deviated from his goal. Instead of presenting his own lectures he read with his students the most critical authors of the pre-revolutionary period. "Recognizing my responsibility to a great nation", Laharpe says, "I succeeded in fulfilling my duty by reading Demosthenes, Plutarch, Tacitus, The History of the Stuarts, Locke, Sidney, Mably, Rousseau, Gibbon, and Duclos."⁶³ These authors were read by the Grand Dukes between 1790 and 1795,

⁶²Lavater-Slonam, Katharina II, p. 444.

⁶³"Laharpe in Russia", Russkii Arkhiv, 1866, p. 83.

with Catherine's approval. If Laharpe's opponents were ignorant of Demosthenes, who defended the Athenian republic against the monarch of Macedonia, they certainly knew about Mably, Rousseau, and Duclos. Yet, they were not able to persuade Catherine to fire Laharpe. No, the "reactionary" Catherine approved the reading of Rousseau and Duclos with the Grand Dukes, and the opposition grew desperate. However, the lawyer Laharpe had a good argument for his choice of authors. The Dukes were not ordinary people, they had to be informed about the state of contemporary Europe, and whose books should they read, if not the work of Duclos, Royal Historiographer of His Majesty the King of France.⁶⁴ However, it is quite possible that the French émigrés were not as informed on Duclos as the Russian Grand Dukes. When Count Esterhazy, spokesman of the French émigrés, at a reception praised the good old days and the pre-revolutionary French

⁶⁴Laharpe used Duclos' Memoires secrets sur les regnes de Louis XIV et de Louis XV, published in 1791, in Lausanne. [See also "Laharpe", Russkii Arkhiv, 1866, p. 83]. Duclos discredits the French monarchy whose "immorality and corruption ruined the nation", while "the people suffered from high taxes and forced resettlement to far away colonies." There was no justice in France, he says, because even the courts preferred wealth and an easy undisturbed life to justice. [vol. I, pp. 88, 226, 145, 224; vol. II, pp. 101 and 107].

government, Constantine contradicted him in public. The Empress was apparently not upset by her grandson's tactlessness, she only demanded that Constantine prove his point, and she was thrilled by his spirited and well informed defence of his case. When she asked him about the source of his information, he replied: "I have read this with Laharpe. This is from the most reliable historian [Duclos]."⁶⁵ Esterhazy and his friends would not forget this embarrassment, and efforts to dispose of the republican were doubled. Esterhazy's wife was a Bernese, and the patricians of Bern used her to discredit Laharpe in St. Petersburg, because he continued to write articles against the oligarchy in Bern. He was sentenced to death [1792 ?] by the Bernese council, as a dangerous revolutionary, and the French emigres took it upon themselves to obtain his extradition or at least exile to Siberia.⁶⁶ Catherine finally got tired of the continued harangue and called in Laharpe. Masson has an interesting account of this confrontation.

⁶⁵Sukhomlinov, "Laharpe", p. 93.

⁶⁶"Laharpe in Russia", Russkii Arkhiv, 1866, pp. 85-86.

Catherine: Come, sit down Mr. Jacobin. I have something to say to you.

Laharpe: I must protest against the title which your Majesty thinks proper to give me, and know not how I have deserved it. [sic]

After being informed of the charges against him, Laharpe replied "nearly in the following words":

Your Majesty knew previous to entrusting me with the education of the grand-dukes, that I was a Swiss, and consequently a republican. I have not changed my sentiments; and you are too just, madam, to consider that as a crime in me now, which did not appear so then. My countrymen are oppressed by the Bernese; I exhort them to claim, by legal modes, our ancient rights: this is not being factious. For the rest, madam, I admire your great qualities, I respect your government, and I faithfully discharge the duties I imposed upon myself, when I devoted myself to the education of the grand-dukes. I shall always endeavour to render myself worthy of the confidence with which you have honored me, by inspiring them with sentiments suitable to their birth and condition, and by endeavouring to render them capable of imitating, some future day, the example you have set before them. This, madam, is my defence: it remains with your majesty to pass judgement on me, after examining into [sic] my conduct in the past with which you have deigned to entrust me.

"Sir, be a Jacobin, a republican, or what you please: I believe you are an honest man, and that is sufficient for me", Catherine replied to Laharpe's defence. "Stay with my grandsons, retain my perfect confidence, and instruct them

with your wonted zeal."⁶⁷ Masson adds that this happened "soon after the death of Louis XVI".⁶⁸

Laharpe does not give a detailed account of this conversation, but he states with satisfaction that the Empress trusted him more than his enemies, and as an obvious sign of her support she asked him to write the reply to the Bernese council. The republican continued in his position as tutor of the Russian Grand Dukes. However, in 1793 events in France scared all of Europe. In January the king of France was executed and soon after the reign of terror began, which took the lives of at least 20,000 Frenchmen. Even the most liberal reformers were shocked by the bloody events in Paris. The Revolution lost its friends in Europe, and even England joined the coalition against republican France. Therefore, it is not surprising that Catherine asked Laharpe to refrain from participation in Swiss political debates, "as long as he was in the service of Russia," and Laharpe complied.

In June 1793, Count Esterhazy and Count D'Artua made another attempt to dislodge Laharpe, and Catherine

⁶⁷ Charles Masson, The Secret Memoirs of the Court of St. Petersburg, 1802, pp. 277-278.

⁶⁸ Laharpe's autobiography would suggest that this confrontation occurred no later than 1792. Louis XVI was executed on January 21, 1793.

apparently indicated her willingness to end the matter. But Laharpe asked Catherine for one more audience. On June 30, 1793, she received Laharpe. For more than two hours she listened to him, and Laharpe later said that he would never forget the "intimate and lively" conversation. "Catherine II wanted to know my opinion about the French Revolution. She felt that France was lost, but I took the courage to contradict her... . I defended my point with such conviction and evidence, that she expressed her approval with great compliments."⁶⁹ Catherine praised Laharpe publicly for consistently defending his principles even under the most trying circumstances, and again asked him to continue to instruct the Grand Dukes. As a result, Laharpe's enemies attributed the recall of the order to the Russian army in Poland, to join the coalition forces against France, to Laharpe's influence. Laharpe relates this with obvious satisfaction, although he does not actually claim that credit. But finally, on January 1, 1795, Laharpe had to go. In Laharpe's words, "Catherine II was tired" of the continued attack on him. Alexander was married and that served as the official reason for

⁶⁹"Laharpe in Russia", Russkii Arkhiv, 1866, pp. 89-90.

Laharpe's dismissal.⁷⁰ He continued to meet with the Dukes until May 1795. In the summer of 1795 he was back in Switzerland, where he immediately became involved in politics, eventually being elected President of the Helvetian Directorate.

The opposition to Laharpe was not limited to French émigrés and Russian reactionaries. There were Russians who respected Laharpe's honesty, which was never doubted even by his enemies, and who appreciated his idealism, but they questioned his suitability as tutor of Russian dukes. They felt that Laharpe could not possibly understand the true essence of Russian problems, and that his republican sentiments could only serve to confuse a duke who would be called to rule with absolute power. They feared that Laharpe would educate unrealistic dreamers rather than rulers for Russia. This sentiment was best expressed by the poet Krylov (1766-1844) in his fable, "The Education

⁷⁰It is possible that the very integrity of Laharpe, which was so much admired by Catherine, may have been the true cause of his removal. Laharpe refused to cooperate in a plot to bypass Paul as heir to the Russian throne. There is no definite proof for this theory, but when Paul cut Laharpe's pension, he reminded the Czar that he was indebted to Laharpe for "not siding against him in 1793-1794. [Letter to Paul, Sukhomlinov, "Laharpe", vol. II, Appendix 3, p. 182].

of the Lion" [Vospitanie lva].⁷¹ In Krylov's fable, the king of beasts deliberates on the choice of the best teacher for the crown prince of his kingdom. The fox, he says, is clever, but "he is a liar", the mole lacks vision, and the snow leopard does not understand the "rights of citizens"... . Finally the eagle, a great friend of the king, eagerly offers his services, and he is accepted as tutor. When the young lion's education is completed, "he knows about all the needs of birds" and he promises "to teach all beasts how to weave nests". Sukhomlinov was first to point to an analogy between Krylov's eagle and Catherine's tutor. Laharpe was eager to be the tutor of the future Czar of Russia, and attempted to change Russian society, which opponents, like Krylov, felt he did not understand. They agreed that he was honest and reliable, but feared that his well-intentioned ignorance courted disaster. Obviously, Catherine did not have these doubts, on the contrary, Laharpe was correct when he explained that his and Catherine's philosophies of education were in agreement.

Catherine had sufficiently demonstrated that honesty

⁷¹Ivan Krylov, Basni, prosa, piesy, stikhi, (Leningrad, 1970), pp. 83-86.

and competence were more important to her than political views. Yet, while the republican Laharpe was defended by her, two other enlighteners, Novikov and Radishchev, who were good monarchists, were not tolerated. Obviously, Laharpe appeared to be less dangerous, and Catherine was right. She did not fear change, she actually prepared for it--but she feared a destructive revolution, and the Pugachev Rebellion and the French Revolution justified such fear. Radishchev exposed the cruelty of serfdom, touching upon Catherine's most sensitive nerve, since she did not know how to change that institution without risks for the country and for herself. Laharpe was wise enough never to comment on Russia's political system. He hoped to change Russia, by educating for her a highminded ruler, who would bring happiness to his people without bloodshed. That approach was in agreement with Catherine's plans for Russia, and it is not surprising that the two remained loyal to each other. The few critical remarks that Laharpe made after Catherine's death have been stressed unduly, and out of context. His letters and his autobiography are full of appreciation and praise for Catherine. Very much convinced of the importance of his role, he wrote about his Russian experience, that "Providence apparently had pity

However, the fact remains that the Russian Grand Dukes were educated by one of the most radical intellectuals, whose sentiments were well known to Catherine and yet tolerated by her until 1795. This factor cannot be ignored in a serious discussion of Catherine's educational efforts. She had accepted the fact that she could not change Russia overnight. By charging Laharpe with the education of Alexander she hoped to prepare the reformer who would not be inhibited by the problems that her irregular succession placed in her way. Catherine would overcome the first obstacles to Russia's progress, Alexander would continue her reforms to the glorious end. In the light of this investigation it must be concluded that the history of Catherine's educational efforts would be incomplete without the Laharpe episode.

CHAPTER VI

CATHERINE'S EDUCATIONAL POLICIES IN RETROSPECT

We wanted to do in a few years, what can only be done in centuries. We began to build the structure of our education on sand.¹

Boltin

Our generation will at least be proud of the fact, that we are laying the foundation of everything.²

Ertov

Catherine's Educational Reform was not only one of the outstanding events of her reign...it was the beginning of the Enlightenment in Russia.³

D.A.Tolstoy

¹Ivan Boltin (1735-1792) was the most gifted eighteenth century Russian historians. The quoted remark was made by him in 1782.

²Ivan D. Ertov is a less known writer, but his book, Kartina prosveshchenija Rossian pred nachalom deviatnadtsatogo veka (1799), is of interest, because of the author's style and expressed optimism.

³D. A. Tolstoy (1823-1889) is the well known Russian statesman, writer, historian, educator. He was Minister of Education from 1866 to 1880, and wrote several books on the history of education in Russia.

The sudden departure of Catherine II from the political arena, on November 6, 1796, shocked Russians and Europeans alike. The climate at the court of St. Petersburg changed overnight. Catherine's admirers were banished; Laharpe's pension was cut; and fear and suspicion began to reign in St. Petersburg.⁴ It seemed that the Russian Enlightenment had come to an abrupt end.

The overwhelming majority of Catherine's contemporaries paid tribute to the deceased Empress, in spite of the fact that Paul discouraged favorable comments about his mother. The young Gribovsky, her last secretary, recording his impressions immediately after her death, probably spoke for many Russians when he said:

⁴When Paul approached St. Petersburg, hundreds of sleighs were on the way out of the capital. Hundreds felt it was safer to leave Russia, and the road to the Finnish border offered the best escape route. Catherine's apprehensions about Paul were fully justified. When Zubov arrived at Gatchina, to inform the Crown Prince of Catherine's death, Paul completely lost his nerves. He was convinced that there was a plot against him, but when he finally realized that he was safe and that power was at last in his hands, he acted exactly as many leading Russians had feared. His purge of the Russian army, just before a great war, finds a parallel only in twentieth century Russian history. Paul relieved 7 fieldmarshals, more than 300 generals, and 2000 officers of their duties. [Pokrovsky, Izbrannye proizvedeniia, vol. II, p. 168].

Catherine the Great is no longer! Terrible words... . Yesterday I could not have written them, but today I shall attempt to record truthfully who Catherine was... . She knew how to listen... . Her great soul was guarded against all deceitfulness... . She was greater than Peter I... . She was a builder of the Empire and not a despot. She never gambled [in politics] like Peter I... . Her court knew nothing theatrical... . She knew herself and had the gift to appreciate others.⁵

Finally, in anticipation of all the slander that Catherine would suffer, Gribovsky concluded:

The hunters of anecdotes, and those collectors of historical material who distort facts, and others allegedly unprejudiced, in order to say a smart word to make money, and others who are ill-disposed by inclination, will try to belittle her glory, but she will come out of it.⁶

From Pavel Sumarokov's selection of "Odes to Catherine", written by unknown authors, at least one must be quoted here;

Is it possible that Russia could forget you?
 You gave her a soul and freed her from darkness,
 You drafted for her the sacred Nakaz,

 You made us appreciate the arts and the sciences,

⁵A.M. Gribovsky, Zapiski o Imperatritse Ekaterine Velikoi, (Moscow, 1864), pp. 33-37.

⁶Ibid., p. 47.

You multiplied commerce and opened for us
The road to golden ages,⁷

The almost unreserved appreciation, expressed by her contemporaries, seems to be marred only by the single voice of Shcherbatov,⁸ while the most prominent member of the Novikov circle, Karamzin, surpassed even Derzhavin in his high praises of Catherine's achievements. These Russian enlighteners saw Catherine not only as a benevolent ruler during a crucial period of Russian history, they saw her also as the central actor of the Russian Enlightenment. Conscious of Russia's many problems, they enthusiastically applauded every reform attempt. That the appearance of progress and the reality of Russian life were often far apart is obvious. Yet, while a critical reader will have his reservations, the overwhelmingly favorable appraisal by contemporary Russian observers cannot be ignored. There

⁷Pavel Sumarokov, Obozrenie Tsarstvovanija, p. 245.

⁸Prince Mikhail M. Shcherbatov's On the Corruption of Morals in Russia, is extremely critical of Catherine and her whole reign. However, his gloomy picture may be explained by a series of bitter disappointments. Catherine blocked his appointment as chairman of the Legislative Commission, because he opposed her reforms. He was also one of the generals who were relieved of their command, for lack of initiative, during the Pugachev rebellion.

must be a rationale for the almost phenomenal appreciation of Catherine's efforts by generations of Russians. To appreciate their response to Catherine's achievements, Russian conditions of the pre-Catherinian period must be kept in mind.

The decades between Peter I and Catherine II can be best described as a period of stagnation. When Catherine assumed power, the Russian state was bankrupt. The treasury recorded an income of 16 million rubles and a deficit of 17 million, and Holland had just refused to lend Russia the minimum 2 million rubles which Elizabeth needed to satisfy the immediate demands of her creditors. This dismal financial situation explains in part why Shuvalov's school reform proposals, in 1760, were not even seriously considered by Elizabeth. Under the circumstances the Academy of Sciences in St. Petersburg, founded by Peter I, and the University of Moscow, founded by Shuvalov in 1755, could not find the support that they needed for a healthy development. The two professional military schools, founded by Peter I, and the Noble Cadet Corps, established by Empress Anne, in 1731, survived, but they offered little more than military training. At the same time, in many of the traditional parochial schools semi-

illiterate priests taught only the basic reading skills, and elementary education was practically nonexistent. Pososhkov complained to Peter I, that many villages had "not a single literate person", and that situation had changed for the worse. The parochial schools declined throughout the eighteenth century, because they lacked financial support, and even more so, because there were not enough literate priests to teach reading. According to Simkovich, as late as 1786 there were 381 totally illiterate priests in the diocese of Kazan. It is not difficult to imagine the spiritual darkness that must have prevailed over Russia, and this darkness did not exclude the Russian court. Catherine was shocked by the coarse manners of Elizabeth and her attendants. Men like Ivan Shuvalov, Panin, and Betskoy were rare exceptions in Russian "higher society", and even more exceptional were Catherine and Princess Dashkova among the ladies at the court. This was the Russian society that Catherine's contemporaries compared with the Russia that Catherine left behind after thirty-four years of firm rule and international success. Had Catherine succeeded in procuring the immediate succession of Alexander, her critics might have been less generous, but the brief reign of Paul forced

her contemporaries to see the difference between obscurantist despotism and enlightened absolutism. The contrast was too stark to be overlooked.

As we have seen, the first stage of Catherine's reign was marked by an idealism that was typical of the western Enlightenment. Both, Catherine and Betskoy, her unofficial minister of education during that period, were enthusiastic disciples of the French philosophes. While they were basically correct in their assumption that only education could change Russia, they underestimated the obstacles in their way and the time needed for a project of such immense proportions. Nevertheless, their initial assault on Russian backwardness was not without success. Four months after Catherine's accession the first educational reform plan was ready, and within four years Catherine established five new educational institutions and completely reorganized the professional schools that she inherited from Peter I and from Empress Anne.⁹ This

⁹Six new educational institutions were established between 1762 and 1765, but the St. Peter's School in St. Petersburg, which received a charter and financial support from the Empress, was founded on Büsching's and not on Catherine's initiative. The five institutions founded by Catherine II and Betskoy were the following: 1) "School of Arts and Science" [Shkola khudozhesty] at the Artillery

was an important accomplishment under the circumstances, and at the same time, Catherine and Betskoy also developed the basic guidelines for an educational philosophy. General liberal education triumphed over professional training, and for the first time the education of the whole nation became an issue.

However, in the context of eighteenth century Russian history the term itself, "the whole nation", presents a problem. The Russian Empire had grown into an extremely complex political unit, which included a large number of national minorities. The heterogeneous political body could hardly be called a nation. It is no accident that the Russian language never introduced the internationally accepted term "nation". Russian rulers have always carefully avoided that term, using instead the term "the people" [narod]. Nevertheless, the composition of the Legislative Commission of 1767-1768, demonstrates that Catherine was not without awareness of the problem. Out of a total of 564 delegates, 56 were representatives of national minorities [inorodtsy]. However, not all minority

and Engineering Corps, Oct. 25, 1762, 2) Imperial Educational Institution and Hospital for Orphans, April 21, 1764, 3) School for Noble Girls, June 28, 1764, 4) Boarding School at the Academy of Arts, Nov. 4, 1764, and 5) School for Common Girls, January 31, 1765.

groups were treated as inorodtsy [born of other stock]. Estonians, Poles and Baltic Germans received no special status in the Legislative Commission, and Ukrainians were treated as Russians. Although Ukrainians resented the Muscovite domination, they would hardly have appreciated "inorodtsy" status. The Cossacks received special status, but this separated the Ukrainian Cossacks from the rest of the Ukrainian representatives. However, no objection was raised by any party. It must be kept in mind that Moscow and Kiev shared a common faith, Greek Orthodox, and also a similar language for legal documentation.¹⁰ Only in the nineteenth century the Ukraine began to develop a distinct cultural identity.¹¹ For this reason, Catherine never had

¹⁰Yurii Sheveliov points out that this legal language in the Ukraine was distinct from Church Slavic but also from the language of the common people [prosta mova] and that it was based on the White Russian vernacular. This is explained by the White Russian predominance during the Lithuanian occupation of the Ukraine and of White Russia.

¹¹A national consciousness, based on Kievan Orthodoxy, was apparent in the Bratstvo movement [Society of Brethren] in the sixteenth century, but it must be remembered that the stronghold of the movement--Peter Mohyla's Academy in Kiev--used Latin as a language of instruction. A national cultural identity emerges in the Ukraine only after the appearance of Kotliarevsky's Aeneid (1798) in the dialect of the province of Poltava. Only with the emergence of a national language could Ukrainian national aspirations become articulate.

to consider special privileges for the Ukrainians, who from the Russian point of view were "Malorussians" [inhabitants of the province of Little Russia]. In the Legislative Commission the Ukrainian delegates pleaded for schools, but they made no mention of a language other than Russian.

Although Catherine has never made a statement on the issue, it is fairly obvious that the Russification of the whole empire was part of her educational goal. However, she took a very cautious pragmatic approach. In Estonia and in the whole Baltic region she insisted on the introduction of Russian as a second language, in existing German private schools, while new German immigrants were lured to settle in the Ukraine and on the Volga by privileges which included the right to have their own schools, in their own language. The same pragmatic benevolence was displayed toward the Tatars of the Volga and Ural regions. Governor Igelstrom was instructed to build schools for the Tatars and to find native teachers who could teach in the native language. The Orthodox government even built mosques for the Moslems, in an attempt to win the good will of tribal leaders.

Obviously, Catherine hoped to achieve Russification through gradual erosion of native resistance, and through eventual absorption of the immigrant element. This complex situation together with the general backwardness of the empire created problems for Russian educators for which western Europeans had no real comparison. The scope of Catherine's reforms and the rate of the progress of these reforms were largely determined by those factors.

While Betskoy's educational philosophy adopted western theories without significant changes, the school projects of Dilthey (1764), Miller (1766), and of the first Commission for Educational Reforms (1767), were the first expression of emerging Russian educational theories. Drawing their inspiration from the western Enlightenment, Catherine's enlighteners had made a first effort to adapt western educational philosophy to Russian life.¹² The fact that these projects were never used does not negate their significance as contributions to the emergence of a Russian philosophy of education.

Available evidence would suggest that Catherine made

¹²Dilthey's "Serf School" project is perhaps the best example of this effort to adapt western educational theories to the Russian situation.

the most important intellectual contribution to this early stage in the development of this philosophy. While her "Brief Instructions on Education", which on November 16, 1766 were sent to every administrative unit of all gubernias, were still only a selection of favorite passages from the writings of western educators, the Nakaz reflected Catherine's own educational philosophy, and above all her philosophy about the role of education in society and the state's responsibility in respect to the education of the nation. It is true that Catherine copied much from the philosophes, but she had thoroughly examined those theories and converted them to her own use. The well informed educator and critic Laharpe considered the Nakaz to be a "most important event in the history of pedagogy". However, while the publication of the Nakaz was the climax of the early stage of Catherine's reform effort, the Legislative Commission, for whose consideration that document had been prepared, ended the first stage of Catherine's reforms with an apparent anticlimax. Nevertheless, the experience was important for Catherine. It opened her eyes to the fact that Russia was not ready for the drastic changes that she had planned. Her educational reforms found little support among the delegates of the Commission. The

lower classes were not interested, because they did not understand what education could do for them, while the nobility opposed public education because that class understood that public education would eventually undermine its privileged position. Catherine could not ignore such opposition, but after a decade of intensive investigation, which she carried on in spite of Russia's internal tensions, she was prepared to settle the issue, and in 1780 she announced her commitment to introduce general public education in Russia.

The nobility's privileged position was threatened by Catherine's educational reforms as much as by the emerging commercial capitalism which already began to erode the landowners' economic supremacy. The Charter of the Nobility [1785] emerged in that general context. The Charter recognized the nobility as a necessary stabilizing factor in Russian society. However, it is reasonable to assume that Catherine saw this arrangement as a temporary solution. Her effort to create a middle class, and the stress on public education justify such assumption. It should be also understood, that it was not the welfare of a specific class that Catherine had in mind, but rather the welfare of the state, and she understood that the existence of serfdom was not to the advantage of the state.

The enrollment regulations in Catherine's Statute of the Academy of Arts (1764) established a precedent for all state owned learning institutions in Russia. Catherine ruled that the Academy of Arts was open to all, "regardless of their social background, excluding only [those] serfs, who do not have a letter of release from their lords."¹³ In other words, Catherine said: schools are open to all, as far as the government is concerned, but the economic system is an obstacle for the serfs. On the surface this seems to leave the serf where he was before, but in principle there is a significant shift. It is no longer the status of the serf that bars him from the privilege of education, but rather the power of his lord. The state's attitude toward the serf had changed, and eventually this would be reflected in society. It is easier to legislate against prejudices than to overcome them, but the growing number of serfs enrolled in public schools shows that history was moving, slowly but steadily. The best proof of the liberalising effect of Catherine's educational reforms is provided by the rapidly growing number of private boarding schools, after the reform of the 1780's.

¹³ Statute of the Academy of Arts, November 4, 1764, Polnoe sobranie zakonov, No. 12,275.

The nobility found it difficult to accept a school where children of serfs could compete with children of noblemen. Rapidly losing its economic supremacy against growing commercial capitalism, and now being faced with the loss of educational superiority, the nobility found it more necessary than ever to stress "blood" and "ancient rights". This explains why in Russia the Age of Enlightenment is also the age of class polarization.¹⁴ Catherine had no control over this development, and she learned to live with the problem.

European reaction at the end of the eighteenth century did not spare Russia, but the Russian reaction was comparatively moderate. The educational reforms were not scrapped; the republican teacher of Alexander was not sent home until 1795; and the Russian army was not dispatched to France. The removal of Voltaire from the list of Catherine's saints was a mere expression of her frustration. Her correspondence with the German writer Zimmermann and with Zubov, at the height of the French Revolution, supports this view. From early 1785, over a period of six years,

¹⁴While developments in western Europe did not give legal approval to such polarization, attitudes were not dissimilar. None of Catherine's European contemporaries actually thought in terms of "classless society". Only the final bloody stage of the French Revolution introduced, but also discredited, the idea of "total equality".

Catherine regularly corresponded with Zimmermann, but when Zimmermann joined forces with Hofmann in Vienna, to combat German liberalism, and also solicited Catherine's support in this enterprise, the correspondence ended abruptly. Zimmermann's last letter, of January 31, 1792, was not answered.¹⁵ The letters to Zubov are even more significant. Zubov was used as a go-between by French reactionary emigrés, but in spite of his influential position, he could not sway Catherine. Zubov demanded Russian intervention in France, but Catherine refused to be involved. Whether Laharpe was instrumental in this decision is immaterial, what is important is that Zubov could not change Catherine's mind. Several interesting points are made in her letters. Late in 1791 she told Zubov, that she would not send "all the money" that she had promised to the French princes. "When peace is established, my help will be of more use", she explained. Significant is also her advice to the French aristocracy, that in the case of restoration "total amnesty will be

¹⁵Zimmermann to Catherine, September 16, 1791, and January 31, 1792, Der Briefwechsel zwischen der Kaiserin Katharina II und Joh. Georg Zimmermann, (Hannover, 1906), pp. 23-25.

necessary".¹⁶ Her conviction that violence breeds violence never changed, and the prospect of a white terror was morally and politically unacceptable to her.

None of her contemporaries could foresee the benefits of the French Revolution, but many saw the blood dripping from thousands of publicly displayed heads. Under the circumstances a reaction against liberalism was natural, while Catherine's moderation was rather exceptional. In 1762 Catherine set out to change Russia, and neither international tension nor her own success in power politics diverted her from that goal.¹⁷ Considering the unprecedented political and intellectual turmoil of

¹⁶Catherine to Zubov, November 1791, Sbornik, vol. XLII, pp. 209-211.

¹⁷At the time when French peasants de facto eliminated feudalism, when France experienced political and economic chaos, and reason succumbed to terror, Catherine quietly worked on a Charter for Villages. [Catherine's Project for "Free Villages", Sbornik, vol. XX, pp. 447-455]. This project was not implemented. It was found among Catherine's papers after her death. However, the fact that Catherine worked on this project during the last years of her reign, apparently without anybody's knowledge, is not without interest for the historian. The Charter of Villages would have given to peasants considerable control over their own affairs and protection against powerful landlords. "No new services can be imposed on villages, without the personal signature of the monarch", said one of the paragraphs, obviously designed against the many abuses that illiterate peasants had to suffer.

Catherine's time, her policy remained surprisingly consistent.

The literary value of Catherine's work may be disputed, but the encouraging effect of her literary involvement on Russian writers will hardly be questioned. The appearance of 4151 Russian publications, between 1771 and 1790,¹⁸ cannot be explained as an inevitable trend of the time. Catherine's openness to new ideas, and her benevolent attitude toward individualism during that period, created a favorable atmosphere that had been unknown to Russian writers and publishers before her time. Two of her works, the Nakaz (1767), and Elementary Civil Education (1783), were widely read in Russia, and the influence of these works on Russian contemporary thinking, particularly in the field of education, must have been considerable. It is not surprising that modern Russian literature is usually dated from the beginning of Catherine's reign, and Arkhangel'sky, a historian of Russia's Golden Age, sees the Nakaz as the first contribution to modern Russian writing.¹⁹ However, Catherine's greatest contribution is not in literary

¹⁸Konstantinov, Struminsky, Ocherki, p. 82.

¹⁹A. S. Arkhangel'sky, Imperatritsa Ekaterina II v istorii russkoi literatury, (Kazan, 1897), p. 7.

works or ideas, but rather in the creation of a climate in Russia that was favorable to the dissemination of education and culture in general. Taking into consideration the apathy, and even hostility of Russian society to any innovations, at the time of her accession, that was an important accomplishment.

Peter the Great started Russia on the road of westernisation, and in that respect Catherine was his true heir, but in their goals, as well as in their approach, there is a basic difference. Peter's westernisation aimed at political and military efficiency, Catherine's focused on culture, and therefore education received priority over other issues. The history of St. Petersburg illustrates this difference. During Peter's time St. Petersburg was a symbol of the new military ambitions of Russia, with the beginning of Catherine's reign Europeans began to see St. Petersburg as the showcase of an emerging Russian culture. The beautiful architecture of Catherine's time and the art collection of the Hermitage in St. Petersburg are lasting monuments of the era of Catherine. It is true that these monuments were not really representative of Russia, nor were they true products of the Russian Enlightenment, yet they cannot be separated from the Russian

Enlightenment. They helped to create a taste for western culture, and thus they also had an educational value.

However, the real success of the Russian Enlightenment can only be measured in terms of the dissemination of ideas, and that dissemination depended on the education of the nation. Enlightenment and education were synonymous for the disciples of the Enlightenment, and Catherine knew that her reputation as an enlightened ruler would eventually depend on the success or failure of her educational policy. Therefore, there was nothing more important on Catherine's mind than the solid foundation of the educational effort and its continuation by her successor.

Peter the Great established schools because for him knowledge was power. On the basis of this understanding he opted for higher and secondary education, almost completely neglecting elementary education, which was in the hands of the Church. At the same time, the waning of the Church's prestige led to the decline of the parochial school, which provided only a very basic but fairly widespread elementary education. This trend continued into the second half of the eighteenth century. Catherine II, following the trend of European developments, recognized that elementary education was the first step toward enlightenment. Yet, one

of her first measures, the expropriation of Church lands, further weakened the only existing elementary educational institutions--the parochial schools. From the enlighteners' point of view this was a desirable development, because of the low standards at those schools, but in retrospect the wisdom of that attitude must be questioned.²⁰ The primitive parochial schools continued to decline, while the better public schools were still out of reach for most villages. It is very likely, that quantitatively "literacy" declined to its lowest level at the very time, when the government made the greatest effort in Russian history to educate the nation. However, from Catherine's point of view literacy was not enough. Beccaria's dictum, that "ignorance was less fatal than slight and confused knowledge", was taken seriously by the enlighteners. In contrast to Peter I, who attempted to change Russia overnight,

²⁰The fact is that the parochial schools were very popular as part of an old tradition, and the uneducated masses saw in them a bulwark against "evil foreign influences". The peasant was not interested in learning more than reading. When public schools were introduced, students frequently had to be forced to attend them, while the parochial schools became "holy places" of resistance to the "evil new ways". This also explains why the reformers showed no inclination to support these centers of "prejudice and superstition".

without any definite long range plans in mind, Catherine projected her plans into the future. Therefore, the number of schools immediately founded was not as important to her as the soundness of the school system.

The "General Guidelines of Education", of March 1764, gave a new direction to Russian education--for the first time the principle of general public education was laid down by the monarch. While the debate on education in the Legislative Commission, which indicated strong opposition and little support for Catherine's educational plans, delayed the final decision, it did not change the direction of Catherine's educational policy. In 1786, Catherine's efforts climaxed in the introduction of public schools.

The Statute of Public Schools, of August 5, 1786, established several important principles for Russian schools. Following the example of Prussia and Austria, the Russian government accepted responsibility for the education of its citizens. Church and family were no longer the only propagators of moral education. This had far-reaching implications for society. While the new national school would help to break down old barriers of prejudice and superstition, it could just as easily be used to instill new

prejudices, as demonstrated by developments in our own century.

Catherine's early reforms introduced a broad liberal education in all schools, but they did not eliminate the class-professional orientation that had prevailed since the reign of Peter I. However, in 1786, the Statute of Public Schools made it clear, that the government's prime concern was general liberal education in public schools. Professional training did not become less important, but it lost its predominance.

Finally, Catherine's last reform established the principle of free public education for all classes, although it was not compulsory. The opening paragraph of the Statute said, "these schools shall be known as People's Schools".²¹ Furthermore, the Statute makes specific reference to children of poor parents. It instructed teachers to treat children with equal respect, as future "members of society". Evidence proves clearly that the new schools were open to all classes.²² The high number of

²¹Statute of Public Schools, Polnoe sobranie zakonov, No. 16421.

²²Konstantinov, Struminski, Ocherki, p. 78; Sychev-Mykhailov, Iz istorii, p. 93.

serfs in major schools is surprising. According to Konstantinov and Struminski, in 1801, 11% of all students in major schools were serfs. In Moscow 50% of the total enrollment of the first major schools were serfs.²³ In later years their number declined to 30% of the enrollment. Considering the fact that major schools were the more privileged institutions, this percentage is very high. In minor schools serf participation was undoubtedly much higher. Taking Konstantinov's average of 11% of serfs in major schools as a basis, an estimate of 30% to 50% of serf participation in minor schools may not be unrealistic. It would appear, that where schools existed serfs had access to them. In the 1780's, serfs made up half of Moscow's population of 216,903,²⁴ while their share in the Major School of Moscow fluctuated from 50% to 30%. It must be concluded that accessibility rather than social status was the real obstacle, and since public schools were established in cities and towns, the village population in general--not only serfs--suffered the consequences of this disadvantage.

²³Sychev-Mykhailov, Iz istorii, p. 93.

²⁴Ibid., p. 100.

However, the number of serfs enrolled in public schools is not the most important aspect of the issue. It is much more significant that the principle of "equality" of man was introduced with the public school system. Catherine went as far as she could have gone in 1786, three years before the French Revolution. On the other hand, it must be recognized that Catherine did not think in terms of perfect equality. Gymnasiums and universities were practically inaccessible to the lower classes, not for reasons of their status, but rather because higher education was "useless for their class". This utilitarian outlook made the cadet corps the domain of the nobility; the gymnasium and the university became schools for the professional class [raznochintsy]; and only the public schools were truly democratic institutions. However, this public school taught that all men were equal, that education [not inheritance] was the key to success, and whether Catherine understood this or not, she undermined the system that she had legalized in the Charter of the Nobility.

The neglect of the university during Catherine's time demands an explanation. Why were there 100 students at the University of Moscow, in 1755, the year of its foundation, and only 85 students in 1785? There are

probably several factors that created an unfavorable climate for the Russian university. First of all, the University of Moscow never had a reputation to recommend it to Catherine. At the end of 1759, Count S. R. Vorontsov, in a letter, pleaded with his father to remove the Vorontsovs from the university and take them either to a boarding school in St. Petersburg or to the Noble Cadet Corps. He complains that they have been examined by a teacher and that they know nothing. "The teachers are drunkards", he goes on, "and students have the most vulgar behavior. A person of best upbringing can be spoiled here, but in no way could he learn anything."²⁵ Catherine was of course, informed about the situation. In 1765, she urged the university faculty to submit proposals for a reform of the institution. According to Tolstoy, the professors asked only for better salaries and pensions, but they did not even mention academic standards or the fact that professors were not teaching their courses. This was certainly not going to win Catherine's favor. Furthermore, universities in general were in ill repute among the philosophes, who considered them to be medieval

²⁵D. A. Tolstoy, Ein Blick auf das Schulwesen, p. 48.

institutions without promise for the future. Nevertheless, Catherine recognised the need for higher education, especially since the state was always short of professional people [raznochintsy]. The university project of 1787 shows that Catherine intended to develop all levels of education, and that the elementary school system was seen by her as the first stage of a complete system. But Catherine realized that the School Commission's university plan of 1787 was inadequate. Neither Aepinus nor Grimm could have approved a plan that would have degraded the Russian university to the level of a better secondary school. Furthermore, evidence reveals that the School Commission could not find a single Russian professor for the proposed new universities. Under these circumstances the Empress had no choice--the university reforms had to be delayed.

Equally disappointing was the School Commission's position on secondary education. While Catherine's own project, of 1782, proposed a gymnasium type school, as a link between the public school and the university, the Commission developed only minor and major schools. In her instructions to the School Commission, in January, 1786, Catherine stressed again the need for gymnasiums in the

various parts of the Empire,²⁶ but the Commission did not even consider a plan for gymnasiums. The fact that Catherine finally charged Zubov with the drafting of a plan for ten "military gymnasiums" in key guberniias, suggests that she was dissatisfied with that part of the Commission's plan. Yet, when all is said, it will have to be granted that all the shortcomings and failures cannot obscure the fact that the reforms were crowned by several important achievements.

For the first time the problems of public education had been studied in depth. Educational reform projects had been analysed systematically, with a strictly objective approach, and followed by the necessary legislation. A central planning and administrative organ had been created to supervise the development of the new schools. And finally, the Russian public school system was definitely established. Russia still had a long way to go to the goal of eliminating illiteracy, but the course was set.²⁷

²⁶Instructions to the School Commission, January 29, 1786, Polnoe sobranie zakonov, No. 16315.

²⁷A few facts about the progress of education in Europe may help us to appreciate the long road that Russia had to go to catch up with western European nations. Western European schools had a long tradition and in the ninth century, Paris, Rheims, Fulda and Reichenau are only a few

Compared with the results of Peter's reforms, these were outstanding achievements. After 1782, the number of public schools was rising slowly, but consistently, and the fluctuations in the development were never again severe enough to break the upward trend:

<u>Year</u>	<u>Schools</u>	<u>Students</u> ²⁸
1782	8	518
1786	165	11,088
1790	269	16,525
1796	316	17,341

Between 1781 and 1796, 176,730 students had received some basic education in the new schools.²⁹ Other educational institutions, which were not part of the public school system, must be added to this achievement. The many orphanages established during Catherine's reign made a considerable contribution as educational institutions. The

of the many excellent learning centers. The first Italian universities go back to the tenth and eleventh centuries. By 1500 there were no fewer than 4 universities in England, 10 in France, 11 in Italy, and a total of 12 German universities. In 1700, when even tiny Switzerland had 4 universities, Russia still had none. At the time of Catherine's accession, France had 14 universities, England 6, and the German lands together had 25, while the two Russian universities barely existed, with a foreign faculty, and very low teaching standards.

²⁸Kniazkov, Serbov, Ocherki, p. 145.

²⁹Ikonnikov, Znachenie, p. 49.

mining schools opened a new era for the Russian mining industry. Medical schools at last began to provide Russia with her own medical profession. The Smolny Girls School and the schools of the Cadet Corps did not only educate thousands of young Russians, they changed manners of the upper classes beyond recognition. These classes were thoroughly westernised in their behavior and thinking. Furthermore, standards of ecclesiastic seminaries were raised, several very successful new seminaries established, and Platon's Academy in Moscow developed into a theological university. No sector of Russian education was left untouched by Catherine's reforms. The Empress provided the driving force and the favorable climate for the development of Russian schools. The newly found Russian confidence was based on achievements in the field of education as much as on the success in the international arena.³⁰

One of Catherine's great gifts was her ability to project far-reaching plans into the future. She realized that she could only start the transformation of Russia, and that the continuity of the effort was essential for the ultimate success of her reforms. Therefore, Alexander's

³⁰After Catherine's death Bezborodko remarked: "In our time [Catherine's], in Europe no cannon could be fired without our permission." [Demkov, Istoriya russkoi pedagogiki, p. 235].

education became an integral part of her plans for the enlightenment of Russia. If Catherine's own liberalism is open to doubt, the fact remains that she quite consciously prepared a liberal ruler for Russia. Thus, only one conclusion seems to be possible: seeing her own limitations, she hoped that Alexander would spearhead a more liberal reform period. Otherwise the Laharpe episode does not make sense.³¹

A brief look at Alexander's reign appears to justify this interpretation. After Paul's brief reign, Alexander ruled Russia from 1801 to 1825. Like Catherine, he started his reign with sweeping reform plans, but he too had to live with reality. His Christian oriented liberalism was genuine, but the force of circumstances was greater than his courage and energy. Nevertheless, the Russian Enlightenment found a new patron in Alexander, as Catherine had

³¹The enlighteners understood that an autocracy could be humane and liberal, and a democracy could be ruled by the narrowest despotism. They were convinced that the happiness of a nation depended on the character of the ruler. Therefore, the education of the ruler was considered to be the key to the happiness of a nation. The ruler was considered to be more important than the form of government. The republican, Laharpe, and the autocrat, Catherine, were in complete agreement on this point.

hoped, and her reforms were carried on to the next stage. Three significant legislative acts of Alexander's early reign advanced the cause of the enlighteners. In 1802, Alexander established the Ministry of Education, which supervised the whole school system through six regional curators. The new school administration was provided with sufficient funds to expand the public school system. In 1803, Alexander signed the "Guidelines for Public Schools", and in 1804, the "University Statute" was promulgated. This Statute established the link with Catherine's reform of 1786 and completed Catherine's public school system. Following Catherine's original plan, elementary schools, district schools, gymnasiums, and universities were now linked into one integrated system. Furthermore, Catherine's reform plans for the military schools were adopted and implemented without change. The restrictive clause, which prevented serfs from entering gymnasiums or universities, if they did not have a release from their masters, was eliminated from entrance regulations. Professors were granted the right to use any books, even those "declared harmful by censors". It must be concluded that Catherine and Laharpe had succeeded--they had prepared a

liberal reformer for Russia.³²

While Alexander's later reign was far less fruitful and his liberalism debatable, it is beyond question that he assured the continuity of Catherine's educational effort. At the end of Alexander's reign--in spite of the serious setback due to the Napoleonic Wars--Russia had 6 universities [Moscow, St. Petersburg, Kazan, Kharkov, Vilno, Dorpat],³³ 6 other higher schools, 62 gymnasiums, 416 district schools [uyezdnye shkoly], 718 elementary schools

³²Ironically, the first man to caution Alexander against radical reforms was Laharpe. When Alexander, in 1801, proposed to eliminate serfdom and to limit autocracy, Laharpe advised him against such radical steps. Only gradually serfdom could be eliminated, and the monarch could not afford to relinquish his power during the transition period. The word, "liberation", Laharpe counseled, should not be used, to avoid dangerous expectations and tensions. [Sukhomlinov, Izsledovanie, vol. II, pp. 116-117]. Six years of political experience, and eighteen months of actual ruling, had cautioned the radical teacher. He had learned the lesson which the Decembrists would learn in 1825--if society is not ready for change, the sacrifice of the idealist is meaningless.

³³The tradition of the last two universities goes back to a time before the Russian conquest of the respective territories. The University of Dorpat was founded by Gustav Adolf of Sweden, in 1632, but it remained an insignificant institution and ceased to function before Catherine's accession. After its revival, in 1802, it became a famous university. The University of Vilno (1803) was established on the foundation of the Jesuit Academy of Vilno, which had existed since 1579.

[prikladskie shkoly], and 402 private schools.³⁴ During Alexander's reign the public school reform gained momentum and no obstacles were to stop it again until 1917.³⁵

In the light of this investigation the author has come to the conclusion that Catherine's educational reforms must be seen as the most significant achievement of the Russian Enlightenment. During the early stage of these

³⁴Kniazkov, Serbov, Ocherki, pp. 220-222. Note that the district schools [uyezdnye shkoly] formed the link between elementary schools and gymnasiums. Statistics for this period are incomplete. The given numbers correspond to the year 1830, but since there was hardly any progress during Nicholas' early years, these figures could be accepted for 1825.

³⁵In 1855, Russia had 8,227 elementary schools with 450,000 students, while the Church recorded 10,000 parochial schools. These figures do not include the Polish territory. By 1914 the number of public schools in Russia had risen to 101,917 elementary schools, 1,654 district schools [lower secondary], and 1953 gymnasium type schools, with a total of 7,896,246 students. It should be noted that Konstantinov's figures are higher than Kniazkov's. The discrepancy is explained by the fact that Kniazkov used the records of the Ministry of Education, which apparently recorded only schools directly under the Ministry of Education, while Konstantinov used A. G. Nebolsin's statistics, which include all existing schools. These statistics claim that the Ministry of Education established 1,000 schools, while the Ministry of State Properties founded 3,000 schools, and the Ministry of Internal Affairs established 4,000 schools. [N. A. Konstantinov, E. N. Medynsky, Ocherki po istorii sovetskoi shkoly RSFSR za 30 let, (Moscow, 1948), p. 6]. Konstantinov's information seems to suggest that the pre-revolutionary Russian public school system may have been at a more advanced stage than generally believed. It appears that a century after Catherine and Alexander the end of illiteracy in Russia was in sight.

reforms Russia was opened to the educational ideas of the western Enlightenment. The first new schools were being established and others were reformed along the lines of new western educational theories. The early period also marked the beginning of education for women in Russia. Not less important is the fact that for the first time in Russian history, the government attempted to develop a philosophy of education. While the Legislative Commission fell short of Catherine's expectations, the event was not without significance in the history of education. For the first time in the history of European states a national assembly debated the merits of education and the feasibility of public schools for all citizens. The fact that the majority of the Commission failed to appreciate the government's reform plans does not negate the significance of the event. Furthermore, during the early stage of the Russian Enlightenment, Catherine emerged as a serious writer on education. Her Nakaz was recognized as one of the most liberal documents of the Enlightenment, which in Laharpe's words, "deserved a place in the history of pedagogy".

The growing public participation, as manifested in the establishment of numerous orphanages with schools, must also be appreciated. Under Catherine's leadership a more

humane society began to emerge, and the value of education was recognized by a growing segment of society.

Finally, the reforms of the 1780's, and especially the "Statute of Public Schools" of 1786, laid the foundation for a national public school system. Ertov's proud announcement that his generation [Catherine's] had laid "the foundation of everything" may not be far out when applied to Russian education. With these last reforms Catherine committed the Russian government to the establishment of elementary schools for the whole empire. Thus, the state recognized and accepted the responsibility for the education of its citizens.

Considering the country's backwardness at the time of Catherine's accession, Russia had made great strides. That the appearance and the reality, especially in the early period of her reign, were often far apart is obvious. Had she died in 1768, she might have been admired as the most liberal ruler of her time. However, for better or worse, Catherine lived to lose the glamor of the perfect hero, while preparing the Golden Age of Russian culture. Compared with the major countries of western Europe, Russia was still far behind in 1796, but the first steps had been taken, and they were taken with confidence. Catherine had

fostered this confidence in anticipation of a new era for Russia. She planned the road for Russian education, and although she built only the first mile of this road, the sign posts were set for a century. Considering her high ideals and sweeping reform plans of the early part of her reign, her success was limited, but measured by the standards of her time, Catherine's achievements must be rated as extraordinary.

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APPENDICES

The excerpts from four important documents of Catherine's time should provide the reader with samples of Russian Enlightenment thinking. Two of the translated documents are from the early period of Catherine's educational effort and two from the later phase of her reforms.

APPENDIX 1

"On the Education of Youth", Report of the First Director of the Academy of Arts, Major General Betskoy [Vysochaishe utverzhdieny doklad Akadiemii Khudozhestv Glavnogo Direktora General-Poruchika Betskogo. O vospitanii yunoshestva oboiego pola]. March 22, 1764, Polnoe sobranie zakonov, No. 12,103 .

Report: Most gracious Lady! great monarchs seldom care about matters that do not bring immediate results yet demand great efforts and limitless generosity in order to achieve advantages for posterity. More frequently the glory of transient deeds preoccupies even the greatest among us. In instant glory they find quick requital for their exploits and incentives for new deeds.

To conquer the superstitions of ages, to give the people a new education, and so to say a new birth, is an incredibly difficult task, and its advantages will entirely belong to posterity....

The Moscow Orphanage, established under your monarchical protection, is an institution of this kind. There your wise intervention is saving poor and innocent children from death, freeing merciless killers [their mothers] from

the deadly sin, changing such people, whose vices made them a burden to society, into useful members of that society.

About your present intentions, I know that I have made every effort to correctly express in every detail all instructions given to me by my August Monarch.

Russia has had the Academy and various schools for a long time, and much money has been spent for the [advanced] education of Russian youth in foreign countries, yet few, if any, tangible results have been achieved. If we analyse the causes of this fact, we have no grounds to complain about Providence or about the lack of talents in the Russian people in respect to the sciences and arts, but one can prove beyond doubt that inappropriate means were chosen to achieve the goal....

Among those young people who were sent abroad during the time of Emperor Peter the Great, were many nobles who returned with good achievements in their field of study. Yet, while on their return they were awarded with high ranks and honors, they were denied the opportunity to practice what they had learned....

It has been proven that the possessor of a mind adorned or enlightened with knowledge does not necessarily make a good and honest citizen. There are many instances where knowledge has even been detrimental, if a person was not trained from his earliest years to practice virtues, so

that these virtues could take root in his heart. If this training is neglected and a child is exposed daily to bad example, the child will become accustomed to extravagance, willfulness, dishonesty, flaccidity, and disobedience. It is obvious that under such circumstances it would be vain to flatter oneself with hope for success in the sciences and arts, or to expect the emergence of a third class in the state. It must be concluded, that education is the root of all evil and good[italics added]. In order to succeed in education, fundamentally sound means have to be chosen.

Following this well established principle, only one approach can be taken: create first of all through education a new race, so to say, or new fathers and mothers[italics added], who could instill in the hearts of their children those fundamentally sound principles of education that were passed on to them. Their children would teach the same principles to their own children, and thus from generation to generation into the future. There is only one way to carry out this undertaking--introduce educational institutions for boys and girls who will enter these schools when they are not more than five or six years of age. Needless to say, at that age children begin to develop perception, and it would be folly to think that bad habits could be corrected at a more advanced age.

Thus, a continuous effort must be made to advance the education of young people, beginning, as stated above, from five or six years of age, and completed by the time they are eighteen or twenty years of age. They must not leave the institution until they graduate. During the whole period of their training they shall not have the slightest communication with the outside world. Their closest relatives can see them only on specific days, and only within the walls of the institution, in the presence of the children's supervisors. This is necessary, because it is beyond argument that frequent indiscriminate contact with people*[italics added]* is detrimental, especially during the formative years of children, who should see the example of virtue at all times.

The objective of these educational institutions shall be to instill in young people the fear of God, strengthen a commendable disposition, and teach them the fundamental rules becoming their station; stimulate in them love for work and fear of idleness as the source of all evil and delusion; teach them good behavior in word and deed, courtesy, decency, compassion for the poor and unhappy, aversion to any impudence; teach them in every detail how to build a home, and the advantages of a good home; especially, instill in students a personal inclination for tidiness and cleanliness. In other words, instill in students all of those

virtues and characteristics that are inherent in good education and which will make students fit to become good citizens and useful members of the society they will adorn....

While their minds will be enlightened with the sciences and the arts, according to the individual's nature, sex, and inclination, it should be stressed that the choice of an art, a skill, or subject of study, must be made by the individual student....

It has been established long ago that a student will not succeed in anything that he is forced to do against his will.

Furthermore, it is very important that in these institutions everything should be observed that would contribute to the health and strong constitution of youth. Dormitories should be well ventilated and brass kitchen utensils should not be used. Students should also be entertained with all kinds of innocent games to make them always happy. Everything that contributes to boredom, melancholy, or sorrow, must be kept away from them. This rule shall be observed at all times.

On these first institutions will depend the education of the founders of the new race. Therefore, it is obvious that teachers, and especially directors and supervisors of

these institutions will have to be chosen with great caution and wisdom. Directors and supervisors must be of known and proven integrity, and their behavior, their morals, and their manners must be known to be above reproach. In particular they must be patient, prudent, consistent, and just. In other words, they must be of such character that their students would love and respect them, and constantly have their good example before their eyes....

At the beginning of this enterprise it would be appropriate to adopt the important rule: Either do it, do it well and carry it to completion, or don't start at all [italics added].

...Such educational institutions shall be established, first in St.Petersburg, at the Academy of Arts; secondly, in all gubernias of the Russian Empire; thirdly, for two-hundred noble girls[in St.Petersburg]....

APPENDIX 2

Statute of the Imperial Academy of Arts and of the Boarding School of the Academy [Ustav Imperatorskoi Akademii triekh znatieishikh khudozhestv: zhivopisi, skulptury i arkhi-
tektury, s vospitatelnym pri onoi Akademii uchilish-
chem]. November 4, 1764, Polnoe sobranie zakonov,
No. 12,275 .

Manifesto:

...As in the case of many other institutions that are useful to the state, we have accepted responsibility for the education of Russian youth in order that scholarship and art should with time flourish and multiply in our Empire, and contribute to the prosperity and welfare of our nation.

...We grant liberty and complete freedom to all [who are enrolled at present, or who have been enrolled at the Academy in the past] with their children and descendants for all eternity. No government shall force them either into our military or into our administrative service. They shall not be forced to do any particular kind of work, and only a free contract may be offered to them....

It is strictly forbidden to all and each one of these artists, masters, their children and their descendants, regardless of their previous station in society, to enter

any kind of bondage[serfdom]. And if one of them should be deceived or talked into a contract of bondage, or if one of them should marry a serf, such act shall not make the said person a serf but rather free the marriage partner [who was a serf] and all their children....

If one of the members of the Academy is in conflict with the Law, he shall be judged by the Academy in all minor offenses, while for major offenses he must be judged according to the existing laws, but no authority can arrest him without prior consultation with the Academy.

To express our appreciation of the arts, for long term service at the Academy and for outstanding contributions through their work, We grant, subject to the recommendation of the Academy, to Rectors, Adjunct-Rectors, Professors of art, and to the Secretary, when they are promoted to Councillor or Inspector, a pension wherever they may reside.

Finally, we grant this Academy the right to have its own printing shop....

STATUTE

CHAPTER I

Part I. The Boarding School of the Academy:

1. The first enrollment shall be of sixty boys of five or six years of age, regardless of their station in society, excluding only serfs who have not been released by their

owners.... New enrollments shall be made every third year.

2. ...Since this institution is to give preference to poor children, orphans shall be considered first.
3. Parents or close relatives must sign an agreement that they enrol their children of their own free will, and that they will not under any pretext demand their release[prior to graduation].
6. To achieve good order in the institution, students shall be divided into three levels: a) elementary[dietskii], b) junior[otrocheskii], c) senior[yunosheski]. At each level they will study for three years.

CURRICULUM

Elementary level, from 6 to 9 years of age:

1. religion
2. elementary education
3. Russian
4. foreign language
5. drawing
6. elementary arithmetic

Junior level, from 9 to twelve years of age[in addition to the above]:

1. geometry
2. geography

3. history

4. ethics

Senior level, from 12 to 15 years of age[in addition to all subjects of the lower levels]:

1. mathematics

2. introduction to physics and natural history

3. the rules of architecture and drafting

4. classes at the Academy for advanced students

Part II. The Inspector and His Responsibilities:

1. The Inspector must be a godfearing, intelligent, industrious man. He must be an honest man with a serene disposition, and especially with an interest in the education of children, and also with a good understanding of home-making[domostroistvo]. His personal example should be an inspiration to his students....
3. His first concern must be to instill in the hearts of young people, throughout their training period at the Academy , virtues such as, good conduct, courtesy, love for their fellow men, honesty, and an aversion to prejudice and depravity.

Part V. Examinations:

3. At the end of their nine years at the educational institution[boarding school] those who pass the examination

enter the Academy to continue their studies at the higher level, while those who do not pass the examination continue under the various masters, depending on their talents. All students continue their studies for another six years, thus becoming accustomed to a well ordered life.

CHAPTER II

Part IX. About Students and Pensions:

2. Every third year the Faculty [sobranie Akademii] shall select from among the medal winners 12 students to continue their studies abroad....
3. ...On their return to Russia, students may use their knowledge and artistic skill as free and independent men, wherever they choose to work in their country.

APPENDIX 3

Instructions of Catherine II to General Nikolai Pavlovich Saltykov on the Education of the Grand Dukes Alexander and Constantine [Sobstvennoruchny imennoi ukaz i nastavlenie Imperatritsy Ekateriny II, Generalu-Anshefu Nikolaiu Ivanovichu Saltykovu o vospitanii velikikh kniaziei Aleksandra i Konstantina Pavlovichei]. March 13, 1784, Sbornik, vol. XXVII, pp. 301-330 .

To General Nikolai Saltykov:

For twenty-two years you have been a close witness of my effort to advance the development of our Empire. Among other legislation, the education of youth has received my attention.... Today my eyes are focused on my grandchildren, Grand Dukes Alexander and Constantine. Praise God! Their natural constitution, their health, their disposition of character, and their intelligence undoubtedly fully justify the methods of their early education....

We have been looking for a supervisor of their education. This should be a respectable person of decorum, with common sense [zdravy rassudok] and honesty, who could establish a pleasant and warm relationship with children. We are convinced that you are a man of these qualities....

We are informing you of our decision, at the same

time providing you with some basic rules....

We believe that any good education must take into consideration the individual. First of all a decision must be made concerning the kind of education and the method of instruction[for the individual].

The status of the Grand Dukes demands that above all they should develop two qualities of character: justice, and love for their fellow men. Therefore, it is necessary that they acquire a good and precise understanding of the things of this world[o veshchakh], a healthy body, and a good intellect.

Furthermore, it must be concluded that the goals of education are a sound body and a disposition toward goodness....

A.

Instruction Concerning Physical Health

...Eating and drinking are necessary, but what to eat and drink must be regulated according to the requirements of the children's health. Food and drink should be simple, not spicy, and with little salt.

If they want to eat between meals, give them a slice of bread. They shall not drink any wine, except on the doctor's prescription.

It is desirable to nurture in children a cheerful

disposition. Anything objectionable, such as melancholy, depressing stories, all faint-heartedness, effeminacy, as well as flattery, must be kept away from their eyes and ears.

Idleness must not be tolerated at any time

B.

Developing a Disposition toward Goodness

Happy is the person who by natural disposition strives to be good. A kind heart, a serene disposition, courteous manners, affability and humility are appreciated by all people, just as pride, insolence, arrogance, and pretense are despised.

Praise for good behavior, criticism and avoidance of criticism, are the means to encourage good behavior and to turn children from bad behavior. Children must know that good deeds are rewarded with honor, a good reputation and fame, while shame and defamation are the rewards of bad deeds.

In general, punishment cannot be useful to children, unless accompanied by the realization of the foolishness of their behavior....

Teachers must avoid doing anything in the presence of their students that they would not like to see imitated

by the children. Bad example must be kept away from them, and when they are playing, injustice, deception, and lying are not to be tolerated. They must know that deceiving and lying are contemptible and shameful acts.

If on occasion they commit an injustice or if they deceive somebody, take away something that rightfully belongs to them, to make them understand what injustice is.

C.

Instructions Concerning Virtue and What to Expect of Children:

The first virtue of a Christian is a deep understanding of God, the Creator of the visible and the invisible....

About Human Desire:

Physical power is manifested by the overcoming of obstacles, mental power manifests itself in overcoming personal desires, and by the subjugation of these desires to sound reason. Therefore, the desires of children must be subjugated to sound reason and justice, from their earliest childhood, so that they become accustomed to obeying sound reason and justice even before their mind reaches maturity....

About Obedience:

...He who does not become accustomed to obeying the

orders and advice of his parents and teachers, will not be able to obey the counsel of sound reason and justice when he grows up....

About Stubbornness:

He who does not obey is sick, consequently he does not have the privileges of a healthy person. He must be treated as a sick person, and this treatment does not change until his common sense returns....

What to Prohibit and What to Tolerate:

Prohibit and do not tolerate that the children [the Grand Dukes] cause harm to themselves or to any living creature. Therefore, beating or scolding in their presence is not to be tolerated, nor can it be tolerated that they kick, pinch, scold, harm, or cause pain to any human being or to any living creature....

On Falsehood and Deception:

Lying and deceiving are not to be tolerated neither by the children nor by their company, not even in jokes. Lying must be made repulsive. If one of the attendants or anyone else is not telling the truth in their presence, it must be drawn to their attention that lying is shameful and dishonorable, and that it results in the loss of respect and trust of all people....

The Most Important Aspect of Instruction:

The most important aspect of the upbringing of children is that they learn to love their neighbor (don't do unto others, that which you would not like to be done to yourself), that they be well disposed toward mankind and toward individual human beings, that they be gentle and humble toward every human being, that they be constant in their good behavior, that they be honest and grateful, that they control hot temper, unnecessary apprehension, fear, and illfounded suspicion.

As they grow up, the children should learn to appreciate virtue more and more, and justice should be well rooted in their character. This must manifest itself in an obedient attitude toward the Law, in love for truth, in generosity, temperance, intelligence based on deliberation, in a sound understanding of the physical world, and in love for work....

Concerning Teaching:

When children learn without coercion, of their own free will, they will learn with joy, as if learning were a game. No compulsion must be used in the case of the Grand Dukes, they will come of their own free will and ask for instruction as they ask for a toy....

Fear has no place in education. A mind preoccupied with fear is as unperceptive for knowledge as a trembling

sheet of paper is for good writing.

Teachers must above all instill in the children the desire and love for knowledge, to make them eager to learn of their own free will....

On Language Instruction:

The only way to learn languages is by speaking them. Let the Grand Dukes not forget their own Russian, they should read and speak Russian, so that they would know their own language well.... Let one of the teachers speak only German, the other only French, and the rest only Russian....

On Learning in General:

It is desirable that they should be given infantry, cavalry, and navy training, starting from the lowest rank and ending with the highest, so that they gain a thorough understanding of all branches of military service....

If the Dukes show interest in wood carving or any other manual skill or trade, do not deny it to them. It will keep them from idleness, develop in them good will, a liberal spirit, a cheerful disposition, and diligence....

Let your conversation with the children be clear, simple, honest, and frank....

If teachers notice that students show signs of disinterest toward learning, let them find out whether this

is a general lack of interest, including games, or whether it is only a lack of interest in learning. If the child is generally active in games and only disinclined to make an effort in learning, then he must be reprimanded quietly. Tell him that wasting time is contrary to sound reason.

APPENDIX 4

Statute of the Public Schools [Vysochaishe utverzhdienny
Ustav narodnym uchilishcham v Rossiiskoi Imperii].

August 5, 1786, Polnoe sobranie zakonov, No. 16,421 .

All enlightened nations have stressed the importance of the education of young people, and indeed, they have considered education to be the only road leading to the happiness of their people--and they were right. The subjects of education are: a clear and intelligent understanding about the Creator and His sacred writings, the basic rules of unquestionable loyalty to the monarch, a true love for the fatherland, and love for our fellow citizens. These are the pillars of general prosperity of the state. Education enlightens the mind of man, adorns his soul, makes him willing to do what is good, leads him to a virtuous life, and instills in him that knowledge which is necessary to him in society. Consequently, the seeds of such necessary and useful knowledge must be cast into young hearts quite early, so that they can grow during the years of adolescence, and mature in the adult person, enriching society with their fruits. Since these fruits cannot grow without teaching, we now establish institutions where young people will receive instruction in their native language, according to a common

plan. Such institutions will be established in all gubernias and administrative districts of the Russian Empire. These schools shall be divided into Major and Minor Schools and they shall be known as Public Schools [Narodnyie Shkoly, People's Schools].

CHAPTER I

Major Schools:

1. In each gubernia there shall be one Major School, with four levels of instruction.

2-9. Curriculum of Major Schools

Level I

Subjects:

reading
writing
religion

Books and Teaching Aids:

Table of Alphabet
Table of Word Composition
Russian Reader for Beginners
Rules for Students
Brief Catechism
Church History
Samples of Good Writing
Manual for Calligraphy

Level II

reading
writing
religion
Church history
arithmetic
Calligraphy
drawing

Duties of Men and Citizens
Samples of Good Writing
Expanded Catechism
Church History
Arithmetic, Part I
Manual of Calligraphy

Level III

reading	Expanded Catechism
Russian grammar	Arithmetic, Part II
religion,	Exposition of the Gospels
history	History, Part I
geography	Geography
arithmetic	Maps of the Continents
drawing	Globe
	Russian Grammar

Level IV

geography of Russia	Geography of Russia
history	History of Russia
Russian grammar	Russian Grammar
general geography	Geography
composition	History, Part II
geometry	Geometry
mechanics	Mechanics
physics	Physics
history of nature	History of Nature
architecture	Architecture
drawing	Maps
	Globe

10. Major Schools will also educate teachers for the Minor Schools. Teachers will receive instruction on the teaching methods in that gubernia in which they will serve, and where, after an examination, they will also receive a certificate from the Director of the Department of Schools and Welfare [Prikaz obshchestvennogo prizrenia].
18. In every Major School there shall be 6 teachers.

CHAPTER II

Minor Schools:

24. Minor Schools are to be institutions where children study in their native language all subjects that are offered on the first and second levels of the Major Schools, except foreign languages.... These schools will be established in the capital city of the gubernia, where the Major School is not sufficient, in all district towns, and wherever the Department of Schools and Welfare may find them necessary.
26. In Minor Schools there shall be two teachers, one on each level as in the Major Schools, but if the number of students is low, one teacher may be sufficient.

CHAPTER III

Responsibility of Teachers:

28. Teachers must instruct free of charge all male and female students that come to the school. They must not in any way reject children of poor parents, always keeping in mind that they are educating members of the future society.
33. All teachers must be guided by the prescribed method

of teaching, and they must not use books that are not prescribed by this Statute....

34. Above all it is necessary that teachers be good examples to their students in respect to their behavior, honesty, manners, friendliness, courtesy, and industry, avoiding before students in word and deed anything that might give rise to temptation or superstition.
40. The teacher must submit to the Director a list of those students whom he intends to transfer to the next level after an open examination[public]. He must examine them in the presence of the Director and of the teacher who will instruct them on the next level.
47. Applicants for the position of teacher in public or private schools shall be examined by teachers of Major Schools. They shall be examined in the subjects they wish to teach and also in the teaching method....

CHAPTER V

Guardians of Public Schools in the Gubernija:

63. The Governor of the gubernia shall also be the Guardian of the public schools of the gubernia, and after the Governor-General he carries the primary responsibility in respect to schools....
64. The first responsibility of the Guardian shall be the establishment of public schools, starting with the Major School in the capital city of his gubernia, and

establish them not only in district towns but also in other population centers, as far as his means permit. With permission of the Governor-General, on his own initiative, and on the advice of the Director, he will obtain from the Church seminaries of his gubernia men capable of teaching....

65. Depending on the circumstances of a town and its inhabitants, the Guardian, with the permission of the Governor-General, may add a third and a fourth level in Minor Schools, if the Governor can find the means to support them.

CHAPTER VI

Directors of Public Schools:

69. The Director of public schools shall be appointed by the Governor-General. He must be a friend of learning, order, and virtue, and he must like young people. He must appreciate the importance of education. In the Department of Schools and Wellfare he shall be responsible for all business concerning schools.
72. The Director must see to it that teachers know the proper method of teaching, when they are hired....
75. The Director must see to it that teachers accept and register all male and female children who express

the desire to learn and who attend in the classroom. Nobody must be prevented from attending classes, except persons with contagious diseases....

84. The Director is in charge of the private boarding schools, and other private schools, in the gubernia....
86. In district towns the Guardian of public schools shall choose from among the citizens of the town a supervisor for the local schools.

CHAPTER IX

The Central School Administration:

108. All established public schools and private schools are to be under the supervision of the Central School Administration of the Russian Empire, which is directly responsible to Her Imperial Majesty. Her Majesty entrusts the Central School Administration to the previously established School Commission....