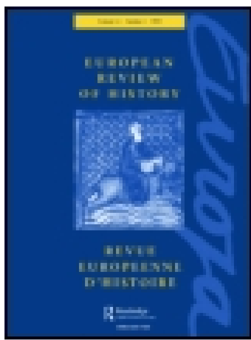

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European Review of History: Revue européenne d'histoire

ISSN: 1350-7486 (Print) 1469-8293 (Online) Journal homepage: http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/cerh20

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**To cite this article:** Lien Verpoest (2016): An Enlightened path towards conservatism: critical junctures and changing elite perceptions in early nineteenth-century Russia, European Review of History: Revue européenne d'histoire, DOI: 10.1080/13507486.2016.1233942

**To link to this article:** http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13507486.2016.1233942

Published online: 23 Nov 2016.

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EUROPEAN REVIEW OF HISTORY: REVUE EUROPÉENNE D'HISTOIRE, 2016
http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13507486.2016.1233942

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# An Enlightened path towards conservatism: critical junctures and changing elite perceptions in early nineteenth-century Russia

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**ABSTRACT**

This article explores the historical roots of Russian conservatism by analyzing the evolution of Russia's Westernized, Enlightenment-minded nobility to a conservative segment of Russian society in the early nineteenth century. The events of 1789 and 1812 were critical junctures that made the Russian nobility painfully aware of their own deep level of Westernization. The article first describes the reverberations of the French Revolution among the Russian elite. It also discusses the internal and external scrutiny of Russia's relations with France under Napoleon, which made Russian conservatism a contingency. It then describes the evolution between 1789 and 1812 of a corpus of conservative ideas ranging from traditionalism to ardent patriotism and xenophobia. Napoleon's 1812 campaign against Russia overshadowed the generational gap and diverging political and literary preferences among the elite. The reaction to it illustrates the intrinsic duality of the Russian elite: culturally Westernized, yet politically conservative. Yet the influence of several Western defenders of the *ancien régime* on Russia's conservatives shows that the essentially conservative Russian identity as propagated by Putin these days originally might have been more pan-European than purely Russian.

**ARTICLE HISTORY**
Received 25 November 2015
Accepted 28 August 2016

**KEYWORDS**
Russia; conservatism; autocracy; East–West relations

## Introduction

In his State of the Nation speech of 12 December 2013, months before the annexation of Crimea disrupted the relations of Russia with the West, President Vladimir Putin openly stressed the importance of Russian traditional, orthodox values, as opposed to Western liberal 'non-traditional values'. In this address to the members of the Russian Federal Assembly, he added that these traditional Russian values have been the spiritual and moral basis of civilization.[1] He added: 'Of course, this is a conservative position. But, to say it with the words of Nikolai Berdiaev, the point of conservatism is not to prevent development or upward and forward movement, but rather prevents backward or downward movements into darkness and chaos.'[2] By contrasting 'Russian, traditional values' with a vision of the West 'aggressively promoting non-traditional values', the Russian government seems to

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perceive its version of conservatism as a uniquely Russian project with a strong patriotic hue that has solid roots in Russian (imperial) history. Putin's tenure is often compared to that of Tsar Nicholas I (1825–55).[3] Yet his assertion that conservatism prevents us from sliding backwards into chaos and darkness reminds us both of *Burke's Reflections on the Revolution in France* and references to a 'Hobbesian nightmare of civil anarchy'.[4] This article will explore the origins of Russia's conservatism and study its development not only as a reaction to but also in strong dialogue with the West.

In this specific context, it is important to distinguish between conservatism and traditionalism. We subscribe to Karl Mannheim's (1927) clear distinction between the two. Whereas Mannheim describes traditionalism as 'the instinctive acceptance of past ways and the aversion to change', conservatism according to Mannheim appeared only in response to eighteenth-century Enlightenment and the French Revolution.[5] Or, as Colin Loader points out: conservatism was traditionalism that had become not only historically conscious, but had also become political.[6] Before, traditionalism dominated, yet the challenge of the new forces was responsible for the emergence of conservatism. In the Russian context, Minakov points out that most Russian historiographers endorse Mannheim's division between traditionalism and conservatism[7] and, like Igor' Khristoforov[8], situates the start of conservative thinking in the early nineteenth century. Minakov therefore asserts that 'conservative' books written in Russia before the start of the nineteenth century should rather be called traditionalist or pre-conservative ('*predkonservatizm*').[9]

## The legacy of 1789 and 1812

The rise of conservatism in Russia coincided with several key events that impressed and even encroached upon Russia from the European continent: the French Revolution (1789) and the invasion of Napoleon (1812). Both events influenced Russia's relations with the West, and confronted Russian society with a challenging puzzle: how does a deeply Westernized Russian elite react to West European events that affected social elites? And did these key moments turn out to be an opportunity for Russian conservatives, or did it merely unveil the dual identity of a culturally Westernized but politically essentially Russian country?

This article intends to explore the historical roots of Russian conservatism by analyzing the evolution of Russia's Westernized, Enlightenment-minded nobility in the late eighteenth century to a conservative segment of Russian society in the early nineteenth century (1789–1815). The events of 1789 and 1812 were critical junctures[10] that made the Russian nobility painfully aware of and uncomfortable with their own deep level of Westernization, and caused a 'return to Russianness'. Collier and Collier (1991) assert that 'though it makes sense intuitively that societies go through periods of basic reorientation that shape their subsequent development, too little attention has been devoted to the problems that arise in assessing claims about the scope and nature of this impact'.[11] It is the legacy of such events, they claim, that one must devote careful attention to.[12] In early nineteenth-century Russia, this legacy mainly manifested itself in an increased anti-Westernism and a renewed appreciation for Russian language and traditions (both cultural and political). Yet at the same time, these events also aligned several members of the Russian nobility with Western conservatives and *ancien régime* émigrés who had reacted negatively to the French Revolution.

The first section of this article will focus on the reverberations of the French Revolution in Russia, the monarchs' abhorrence of Jacobin terror, the mixed reactions among the

Russian elite, yet also the high level of cultural Europeanization. The second section will describe the Russian legacy of the events in France and the internal and external scrutiny of Russia's relations with Napoleon, which further laid the groundwork for the development of Russian conservatism. It will also focus on contacts between Russian statesmen and the *ancien régime* émigré community who found common ground in their condemnation of the events in France. A third and last section will focus on the impact of Napoleon's 1812 campaign, the end of Alexander I's reform liberalism and the political influence of Westerners on Russia's new conservatives.

## The French Revolution and cultural Europeanization in Russia (1789–1801)

The generation that grew up in late eighteenth-century Russia harboured the leaders of the ruling class in the early nineteenth century. With university education not yet widespread in Russia in the second half of the eighteenth century[13], most young noblemen embarked on a civil or military career after their gymnasium years. Some noblemen of the 'Catherine generation' received ample opportunities from the Empress, who added the young and ambitious to her entourage at court or sent them to study abroad, where they further acquainted themselves with Western European culture and politics.

By the time revolution struck France, Catherine the Great had procured a young noble generation that was raised with the ideas of Enlightenment and was Westernized to an extent that French had become literally the *lingua franca*, with young Russians venturing into literature, invigorated by the French classicist oeuvre.[14] Argent, Offord and Rjéoutski remark in their research project on the *History of the French Language in Imperial Russia* that while all European countries underwent the influence of French culture in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Russia was affected to an exceptional degree by this cultural and linguistic influence.[15] In the mid-eighteenth century, some Russian nobles would still preserve their correspondence in French for diplomatic and court-related matters[16], and wrote privately in Russian. In the nineteenth century French had become 'a vehicle for correspondence among the Russian nobility'.[17] As Joseph de Maistre put it in a letter from Saint Petersburg to King Victor Emmanuel in 1811:

> Le Maître des Russes, c'est le français. Le genie français monte le russe comme l'homme monte le cheval: c'est encore un des phénomènes les plus extraordinaires. Le russe se débat quelquefois contre cet empire, mais inutilement, il y retombe toujours, la langue surtout le domine: le français est, ici, tout aussi necessaire qu'à Paris, on le sait sans comparaison mieux que le russe.[18]

### *The West as a geopolitical benchmark*

Catherine II did not only look West for cultural inspiration. Also in the expansion of Russia, the West proved to be a benchmark. That she chose to surround herself with European royals and diplomats on her famous 1787 cruise along the Dnepr to the newly added imperial lands of Tauris (Crimea) seems to indicate that the Western example offered other forms of geopolitical legitimacy.[19] As Dickinson points out: 'The annexation of the Crimea provided a welcome opportunity for Russia to more assertively claim the status of a Western-style empire. By adopting Western techniques of "otherization", Russia was able to describe itself as comparatively "more European" than peoples such as Ottoman Turks and Crimean Tatars.'[20] When overlooking the impressive amount of letters, reminiscences and memoirs[21]

that circulated after this journey, indeed to a certain extent, 'the conceptualisation of the Crimea was the fruit of an international group effort.'[22]

Yet maybe of more lasting influence were people who accompanied her on this cruise and further developed their relations with Russia, like the Belgian Prince Charles-Joseph de Ligne. A 'true European', well connected with the French and Austrian courts, de Ligne had already spent two months in Saint Petersburg in 1780. He was both an avid observer of Russian court life and became a much appreciated correspondent of Empress Catherine.[23] Not only did he participate in the summer visit to Tauris in 1787, several months later he joined Prince Potemkin in Elisabethgorod, ready to fight the Ottomans.[24] Although relations with Potemkin cooled after 1788, the Empress and de Ligne still kept in touch afterwards. With Diderot, Voltaire and d'Alembert all deceased, Catherine cherished her contact with the prince, who was no *Philosophe*, but a talented writer with the gift of light-hearted flattery. De Ligne's stories about his diplomatic friendships with Catherine II, Frederick from Prussia, Marie-Antoinette and Joseph II during the *ancien régime* turned out to be a great source of inspiration for young Russian conservatives, as will be discussed later on in this article.

When the French Revolution occurred and unfolded from 1789 onwards, this provoked an intellectual shockwave throughout Western Europe and Russia. In the years that followed, several politicians, writers and philosophers reacted and condemned the violence, regicide and republicanism that sprang from it. They also challenged the anti-monarchical premises of the revolution, defended the *ancien régime* and predicted the Restoration. Among the many examples are Edmund Burke's *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790) or Joseph de Maistre's *Considérations sur la France* (1796). In Russia, Catherine II abhorred the violence of the Jacobin terror. She suspended diplomatic relations with France and welcomed the French emigrés that had fled the country. As Bisschoff points out:

> No other European monarch had been so antagonistic to the new forces as she was. […] She believed that in the holocaust of the French Revolution, spreading its terrors beyond the frontiers of France, aristocrats must stand together. French men and women living in her realm were required to take an oath of fealty to the Bourbon monarchy. The public treasury, in the first years following the fall of the Bastille, paid out two million rubles in support of the unfortunate people who found shelter in Russia.[25]

Equally shocked by the events, Prince de Ligne shared in a letter to Empress Catherine how he was tormented 'sans cesse' by memories of 'celle de la Conciergerie', alluding to Queen Marie Antoinette, who de Ligne knew well and was at that time locked up in the Conciergerie prison in Paris, awaiting the guillotine. Sharing his sadness about her tragic downfall, he expressed his longing for Russia by adding that 'j'ai bien besoin de transporter vite mon imagination à Saint-Petersbourg'.[26] De Ligne lost his estates in Belgium in the aftermath of the French Revolution, and spent the last part of his life in Vienna.

The later famous conservative Alexander Shishkov also condoned Catherine's stricter policies after 1789, reckoning that 'in the light of the French Revolution, Catherine's Russia appeared an island of sanity and decency'.[27] Simultaneously however, the Russian aristocracy remained imbued with French culture and political ideology. With the changing ideological and geopolitical balance of power, in the years to follow their ambiguous Russian and European identities would on several occasions clash.

### *The French Revolution and the Russian elite*

Among the Russian elite, reactions to the revolution ranged from surprise, cautious enthusiasm and aversion to withdrawal and sentimentalism. Nikolai Karamzin for example was rather ambiguous. He was a first-hand witness of revolutionary France during his 16-month trip through Europe in 1789–90 and initially seemed fairly enthusiastic about the events. The 1791 publication of his travelogue *Pis'ma russkogo puteshestvennika* (Letters of a Russian traveler) established his name as a Russian writer, yet it also contributed to the ambiguity of his views on the revolution in France. As years passed and newly edited versions of his *Letters of a Russian Traveler* appeared in print, his opinion became more evident – and increasingly conservative.[28]

Karamzin's evolution from cautious enthusiasm to disapprobation of the events in France is, given the course of events, by no means surprising, nor is it unique. Other contemporaries like Friedrich von Gentz initially expressed similar enthusiasm, but became increasingly critical as the revolution unravelled. Von Gentz' 1794 translation of Burke's *Reflections on the Revolution in France* set him on the path of historical and critical analysis of contemporary events, not unlike Karamzin himself. In 1801 he published an essay titled *Ursprung und Charakter des Krieges gegen die französischen Revolution*. In the decades that followed, Von Gentz became a conservative publicist who lent his pen to more than one European government and became one of Napoleon's most ardent (and eloquent) critics.[29]

Another first-hand witness was Count Pavel Stroganov, who famously participated in meetings of the Jacobin club with his governor Gilbert Romme, and was exiled to his family's country estate for this by Catherine II in 1790.[30] Stroganov and Romme's correspondence with the elder Count Stroganov in Russia illustrates that as months passed by, Romme's increasing enthusiasm for the revolutionary cause was not completely shared by Stroganov. In their collective letters to the elder Stroganov, Romme zealously reported about the events in France, whereas by January 1790, the young Pavel Stroganov expressed his concern about the international situation and the wars with Sweden and Turkey that Russia was involved in:

> I heard that there was a great revolt in Moscow, but that they quickly put it down, it would be a disaster if internal rebellions would be added to the two wars our Russia is already involved in …[31]

In March 1790 he writes to his father and repeats his concern about his motherland:

> I was very happy to read in your letter that I was misinformed about the rebellion in Moscow. It would be such a great misfortune that at a time when we have two wars on our hands [in Russia] there would also occur an internal revolt. They say here that there is an uprising in Poland and that the Poles are changing parts of their constitution. And in Germany, the death of the Emperor is causing a lot of uproar, and so there is unrest all over Europe and we here are at greatest peace.[32]

Apart from his sympathy for the French Revolution and constitutionalism, in 1790, Stroganov prioritized international peace and stability, the latter especially in Russia. In this context, he wrote to his father in November that he admired the revolution in France, but at the same time did not consider a similar revolution fitting for Russia.[33]

Even one of the most enlightened Russians was clear in his condemnation of the French Revolution. Prince Dmitrii Alekseevich Golitsyn was Russian ambassador in Paris (1763–5) and the Hague (1770–82), friend of Diderot and Voltaire, and one of the first Russian noblemen to advocate peasant liberation. His children were raised in the spirit of Rousseau's Emile

and Golitsyn was an admirer of Mirabeau le vieux and the *physiocrates*. Yet he made a clear distinction between the Enlightenment and the French Revolution. In 1796, he published *De l'Esprit des Economistes ou Les Economistes justifiés d'avoir posé par leurs principes les bases de la Révolution Française*, in which he defended the *physiocrates* from the criticism that it was, among others, their ideas that laid the basis for the French Revolution:

> Cette fatale Révolution a produit les plus sinistres effets dans toutes les parties de l'Univers: elle y a renversé toutes les idées, corrompu toutes les notions: c'est un torrent impétueux qui a emporté toutes les digues, qui a inondé et submerge des contrées immenses, et don't la violence s'est fait sentir à une distance incalculable, en jetant tous les esprits dans une confusion et une désorganisation, don't ou ne peut guères prévoir les suites et le terme.[34]

In his Treatise, he strongly denies a link between the Philosophes and the revolutionaries who 's'étoient envelopés du manteau de la Philosophie', and accused the latter of tarnishing the image of the former:

> Ainsi la science la plus importante et la plus utile à l'homme, celle qui lui enseigne la morale la plus pure, qui lui apprend les moyens de modérer les passions, de le posséder et de gouverner dans toutes les circonstances de la vie, qui ne lui recommande que l'humanité, l'indulgence, la douceur, la bienfaisance &c. est devenue l'objet de son exécration, uniquement parceque des bourreaux, au fond que des Jacobins, des Révolutionnaires, des Propogandistes (sic), des Démocrates, avoient eu l'audace d'usurper le tître honorable de Philosophes.[35]

Other members of the Russian elite looked more pragmatically upon the events in France and especially their effect on the European balance of power. Dispatched to Gatchina by Catherine the Great in 1792, Fedor Rostopchin was appointed Head of the College of Foreign Affairs by Tsar Paul in 1798, and became the architect of Russia's foreign policy and international strategy at the turn of the century. He 'advocated an independent Russian policy which inclined more and more toward accommodation with France against the continental ambitions of Austria and the imperial pretensions of England'.[36] This is worth noticing given his later track record as one of Russian's staunchest gallophobes. In the autumn of 1800, Tsar Paul asked Rostopchin for a reassessment of Russian foreign policy. The Count wrote and presented a memorandum on 12 October of that year[37], stressing that Russia held the key to the current European balance of power and that Napoleon's overtures towards Russia showed that Bonaparte realized this. Yet his pragmatism vis-à-vis France led to a significant cooling in relations with England, and made him 'bitterly detested' among British as well as Austrian diplomats.[38]

The French Revolution was a critical juncture that had little effect on the institutional framework of the Russian Empire. Nevertheless, for a part of the Russian nobility, the mental repercussions would have a long-term effect. For the 'Catherine' generation, the Revolution and the subsequent Jacobin dictatorship was a shock that influenced their later ideas. For Rostopchin, the events in Western Europe led him to choose more definitely a pragmatic Russia-first policy. The fact that he served as Head of the College of Foreign Affairs under Tsar Paul I, who was bent upon turning back the Enlightened, progressive ideas of his mother, only corroborated this.

The reactions of other members of the Russian elite, from Karamzin's sentimentalism to Shishkov's melancholy for Catherine's reign and Golitsyn's condemnation of the Jacobins, also show that the Westernized Russian nobility slowly started to reposition itself on the topic of European politics, with the events in France laying a base for a more nationalist stance. In this sense, the aftermath of the French Revolution was crucial for the older

segment of the Russian nobility. In the meantime, under Tsar Alexander I, political and cultural Westernization in Russia continued. It would take a Grande Armée entering Russian lands to effectuate a real critical juncture that resulted in a reversal of state policy and produce a lasting legacy of Russian conservatism.

## Reforms versus political reality 1801–12

Despite the French Revolution and the chaotic years that followed, many young Russian nobles still found inspiration in republicanism and constitutionalism. Ascending the throne after the murder of his reactionary father, Alexander I initiated several Western-oriented reforms and kept relying on his circle of friends, Count Pavel Stroganov, Nikolai Novosil'tsev, Count Victor Kochubei[39] and Prince Adam Czartoryski, who were known as the 'Unofficial Committee' (Neglasnyi Komitet, active 1801–3).[40] Alexander and his committee aimed to tackle the peasant question[41] and effectuate educational reforms.[42] The young tsar also founded a ministerial state system[43], and allowed the Senate – albeit briefly – the right of remonstrance (*pravo predstavleniia*).[44] Yet along with these reforms, conservative feelings arose both inside and outside the Russian court. On the one hand, several members of the Russian elite did not share Alexander's reform optimism and looked with concern to the events in the West. On the other hand, members of the Western European elite that had fled France and Napoleon's actions in Prussia looked toward Russia.

### *Rostopchin: from realpolitik to francophobia*

For several members of the by now 'older generation', the advent of a new, pro-Western monarch led to a certain degree of withdrawal. They saw few career prospects under Alexander. As a former favourite of Paul who had been dismissed just a week before his murder, Rostopchin was critical about the new regime, and even more so about Westernized Russian society at large.[45] In 1805, when the War of the Third Coalition broke out and Prussia was defeated in 1806, Rostopchin saw this as a reason for serious concern. Rostopchin feared that lest Russia suffer the same fate, action had to be taken. The lower classes might be influenced by revolutionary ideas, he warned Tsar Alexander, and this was a real reason for concern among the nobility, which in its turn was a peril to autocracy. The tsar was surprised by this 'warning' and ignored it, especially because Rostopchin's solution was rather radical: in order to prevent the lower classes being influenced by their subversive ideas, he proposed to expel all foreigners from Russia.[46]

Despite the fact that his advice was not heeded by the monarch, from then onwards Rostopchin became one of the main propagandists of Francophobia and xenophobia.[47] Even though this seems a U-turn in his position on France, it is clear that here also, Ropstopchin's actions served a pragmatic cause: by promoting Francophobia, he wanted to strengthen Russian patriotism and national identity. In this sense, his xenophobic propaganda was an instrument to preserve social coherence in the Russian Empire.[48]

### *The Russian correspondence of Friedrich von Gentz*

Not only Russian statesmen, but also foreigners opined on European affairs and appealed to the Russian government at that time. Friedrich von Gentz, sometimes called the 'German

Burke' but later more aptly labelled 'un Silésien d'éducation française et de sentiment anglais'[49], was one of them. An 1861 article about Gentz called him 'essential to the cause of European independence from 1797 to 1815, and eminently useful to the cause of enlightened conservatism till his death'.[50] This reputation was mainly due to his relentless attacks against Napoleon, who called Gentz 'ce publiciste dangereux'[51] and tried to discredit him by claiming he was a mercenary scribe.

Since 1802, von Gentz had been in Austrian service, but he left Vienna after the battle of Austerlitz. Between 1806 and his return to Vienna in 1809, he lived in Prague and often visited his friend Prince de Ligne in Teplice. During this time away from Vienna, von Gentz continued his anti-French rhetoric and was in correspondence with Adam Czartoryski, Russia's Minister of Foreign Affairs from 1804 until 1806.

Three remarks can be made about the series of letters he wrote to Czartoryski: first of all, in June 1806, von Gentz was very vocal in his anti-Napoleonic sentiment:

> J'ai lutté contre la révolution, autant que j'ai cru, qu'il existoit une chance quelconque de la vaincre; je n'ai jamais fait ma paix avec elle; mais dès que je me suis aperçu, qu'un danger plus réel et plus urgent, que celui de ses premières doctrines, le danger de la prépondérance monstrueuse, acquise par le Gouvernement François depuis l'élévation de Bonaparte, commençoit à menacer l'Europe, j'ai tourné mes efforts contre ce danger; je l'ai combattu de tous mes moyens.[52]

This is illustrative for many representatives of *ancien régime* Europe: in their perception, the evil Jacobin terror was replaced by an even bigger evil, who moreover encroached upon their territory: Napoleon Bonaparte.

Secondly, Gentz, who had earlier been writing anti-Napoleonic missives for the English government and a memorandum for Czartoryski in November 1805[53], right before the Battle of Austerlitz, expressed his intent to write another more elaborate essay on Russia's role for Europe.

> Je suis donc intimément persuadé, Mon Prince, que, pour me rendre tant – soit –peu digne de Votre bienveillance et de Votre approbation, je dois essayer, de développer l'ensemble de mes idées sur l'état actuel des affaires publiques. C'est-là le plan, auquel je me dévouerai sans délai; et, si tout ne me trompe, le tableau général que je me prépare à Vous offrir dans peu de tems d'ici, sera plus …[54]

A year later, in 1807, Gentz wrote in reply to Czartoryski that he wrote a missive on Russian foreign policy to Czartoryski's successor Andrei Budberg:

> J'avois rédigé à la fin du mois de Mars un mémoire 'sur l'objet de la guerre actuelle, et sur les mesures à prendre par la Russie, pour en amener le terme'. Comme alors je n'avois pas même la certitude, que mes lettres précédentes Vous fussent parvenues, que je ne savois pas, si j'osois continuer de Vous écrire, et que d'ailleurs il n'y avoit pas de tems à perdre, j'adressai ce mémoire à Son Excellence Monsieur le Baron de Budberg, ayant appris, qu'Il accompagneroit l'Empereur. Il Vous sera sans doute facile, Mon Prince, de demander la lecture de cette pièce, et je désire extrêmement qu'elle soit mise sous Vos yeux.[55]

Third and most interestingly, von Gentz writes to Czartoryski in 1806 that it is Russia, together with England, where the hope of Europe lies:

> La Russie et l'Angleterre sont maintenant les deux seuls pays, qui concentrent toutes les ressources et toutes les espérances de l'Europe, complètement aux -abois; c'est sur eux, que tout homme, digne de vivre, doit fixer ses yeux; c'est-là qu'il doit reconnoitre sa patrie; c'est pour eux qu'il doit méditer et travailler.[56]

He even considered moving to Russia, as he confided to his friend Ekaterina Dolgorukova [sic][57]:

> Il n'y aura donc d'asyle que la Russie. J'ai pressenti depuis long -tems la conjoncture, qui me fera porter mes yeux sur cet asyle, et je puis dire même, que je me le suis préparé en secret. Heureusement, et graces à mes nombreux amis et protecteurs, en -dépit de quelques vaines intrigues, on y a conservé sur mon compte une opinion assez favorable. J'en ai eu des preuves récentes; je sais que l'Empereur, et plusieurs des principaux personnages, me veulent beaucoup de bien. J'ai adressé, il y a quelque tems, un mémoire à Monsieur de Budberg 'sur les moyens à adopter par la Russie pour terminer la guerre actuelle'.[58]

Both in his earlier 1805 memorandum and his 1806 letter to Czartoryski, Gentz stresses that his hope lies with Russia and Tsar Alexander as the 'Savior of Europe'. This rhetoric is a recurring motive among the *ancien régime* representatives that resided outside France and looked (and travelled) towards Russia. Yet for Gentz, this rhetoric should mainly be interpreted in the framework of his anti-French rallying. In a letter to the then Prussian Minister of State Heinrich vom und zum Stein, he asserted the same about the Prussian king: 'J'ose assurer que si le Roi de Prusse prend ce parti, il *sauve l'Europe*, que dans le cas contraire il est perdu et toute l'Europe après lui.'[59] It would be easy to interpret the similar rhetoric about the Prussian king and Russian tsar as possible saviours of Europe as an example of Gentz' pragmatic, 'mercenary' writing. Although it is true that Gentz took money from different politicians and governments, especially at a time when he was in dire financial straits, his apologists and even his critics agreed that 'he never, either in writing or in speaking, belied his honest convictions'[60], which were consistently conservative and perceived Napoleon as a threat to European stability.

## *Joseph de Maistre in Russia*

Someone who effectively realized what Gentz considered, moving to Russia, was Joseph de Maistre.[61] De Maistre lived in Saint Petersburg as Sardinian ambassador to the Tsar from 1803 until 1817. There he befriended, among others, Count Rostopchin and Admiral Chichagov, and visited the meetings of Shishkov's Beseda circle. Under the influence of de Maistre, Rostopchin's wife and daughter even converted to Catholicism.[62] De Maistre had lived through periods of severe social unrest and 'social convulsion' in the post-revolutionary years[63], and his diplomatic position in Russia enabled him to observe and comment on the events in France from a distance. As a frequent guest of the Saint Petersburg salons, his overall influence should not be underestimated.

In his first years in Saint Petersburg, he was still strongly preoccupied with the events in Western Europe, and considered Russia the periphery of Europe, which did or could not truly influence the relations between Western Europe's great powers. In his *Mémoire à consulter sur l'état present de l'Europe* (1803), de Maistre analyzes in great detail the situation in France, England and Prussia, but not once mentions Russia in his views on the European balance of power.[64] Later on, however, he engaged more deeply in the discussion of Russian societal issues, and, like Gentz, gradually saw a role for Russia on the European political stage. By 1806, he mused 'la Russie est intacte […] voilà un bon russe: il est ni francisé, ni germanisé, il aime son Maître et son Patrie. Cette espèce devient rare.'[65] De Maistre also evolved in his opinion about Tsar Alexander. In 1805, he wrote still doubtfully that 'en Europe on s'est accoutumé en peu de temps à regarder l'Empéreur comme sauveur

d'Europe'.[66] But by October 1806, he too had set his hopes on the young Russian tsar and wrote:

> Il est certain que [l']opinion se tourne de tout côté vers l'Empereur de Russie et qu'elle le désigne comme le véritable protecteur de la liberté Européenne. […] *Nous mourons ici de chaleur, mais chacun compte sur un vent favorable du Nord*. […] Il est certain que toutes les nations ont placé leur confiance dans l'Empereur de Russie, qu'elles comptent infiniment sur l'élévation de son caractère […] Personne ne le craint, et tout le monde l'entendra avec confiance lorsqu'il voudra parler. Le moment est certainement venu de commencer les conversations.[67]

From 1811 onwards, de Maistre started participating in the conservative Beseda literary meetings led by Shishkov. That same year, de Maistre also engaged in a correspondence with the young Sergei Uvarov about his proposed educational reforms (1811–14).[68]

## *Sergei Uvarov in Vienna*

Just several years before, Uvarov himself had been, like de Maistre, a diplomat abroad. From 1806 until 1809, Uvarov resided as a young diplomat in Vienna. Here he met the by then 71-year-old Prince de Ligne, who had by then left his retrieved Belgian properties to his family, and divided his time between Vienna and Teplice. Uvarov struck up a friendship with the man he described as having 'un esprit si finement malicieux, si gaiement ironique'.[69] De Ligne was happy to share his many memories and anecdotes of *ancien régime* France with the young Uvarov, who was duly impressed:

> Ce fut en 1807 que j'eus occasion de voir à Vienne le prince de Ligne. Très jeune d'âge, mais par tradition et par gout passionnément épris de ce qu'on nommait l'ancien régime, je ne pus être présenté au vétéran de l'élégance, européenne sans éprouver une sorte d'entraînement. J'avais si souvent entendu citer son nom, je l'avais trouvé à toutes les pages du dixhuitième siècle, entre Voltaire, Louis XV, Catherine, Frédéric et l'empereur Joseph! […] L'on peut s'imaginer l'empressement avec lequel je me trouvais admis dans le nombre.[70]

Yet Uvarov not only befriended de Ligne in Vienna. He was a frequent visitor of Count Johann Ludwig Cobenzl, former Austrian Ambassador to Russia (1784–1800) and good friend and fellow traveller of Prince de Ligne during their trip with Catherine II to Crimea. As Austrian Minister of Foreign Affairs (1800–5), Cobenzl's ardent criticism of Napoleon eventually forced him to resign. Uvarov often visited Cobenzl and his sister, and it was there that he first met Madame de Staël. It is often forgotten how crucial his time in Vienna was for the young Uvarov. His 'Viennese' circle of friends was decidedly anti-Napoleonic: Count Cobenzl, Honorary Ambassador Razumovskii and Madame de Staël all harboured deep criticism of Napoleon's policies: the former two had to leave their posts after Austerlitz; the latter was forced into exile by Napoleon. In the winter of 1807–8, de Staël was welcomed with open arms to Vienna, 'where the hate for Napoleon was so deep that it contributed to the popularity of his victims.'[71]

Together with Madame de Staël, Prince de Ligne formed the ideas of this later conservative Minister of Education under Nicholas I.[72] Long before he became the father of Russia's conservative slogan 'orthodoxy, autocracy and nationality' (often labelled as the 'conscious counterpart to the Liberty, Equality and Fraternity troika of the French Revolution'[73]), Uvarov already called himself a passionate admirer of the *ancien régime* ('passionément épris de ce qu'on nommait l'ancien régime'), its politics and wise people. Both de Ligne and de Staël left a strong impression on the young Uvarov, who wrote profusely in his diaries

about his meetings with de Staël and his visits to de Ligne's house.[74] Towards the end of his life, Uvarov devoted a *mémoire* to Madame de Staël[75] and wrote a heartfelt tribute to his old friend Ligne, who had died during the Congress of Vienna in 1814, entitled 'Prince de Ligne. Souvenirs' (1842).[76] When he left Vienna, Uvarov considered revolution frightening, democracy dangerous and absolute monarchy essential. He called the Austrian monarchy 'an unquenchable source of affluence and productivity and its subjects easy to rule'.[77] Such Russian perception of absolute monarchy as the antithesis of chaos and anarchy that revolution has brought about gradually became a defining aspect of Russian conservatism. Madame de Staël, for example, who was an eyewitness of the French Revolution and experienced its effects from nearby, does not share this reading of the revolution leading to anarchy – in her accounts and later discussion of events she did not acknowledge that there was anarchy as a consequence of the French Revolution.[78]

Whereas de Ligne was staunchly anti-revolutionary, surrounded himself with Russian aristocrats (like Count Razumovskii and Princess Dolgorukova) and always warmly remembered his time with Tsarina Catherine II at the Russian court and in Crimea, de Staël was not so enthusiastic about Russia.[79] While in Vienna in 1808 she wrote a letter to her friend Fernand Christin: 's'enfoncant vers le Nord il me semble qu'on ne trouve rien que la culture française mais une culture qui ressemble aux figures de cire: il n'y a là ni originalité ni vie'.[80] It was only later, during her 1812 trip to Russia, that she would also come to see its countrymen and leader as the saviours of Europe, like Gentz and de Maistre did before her.

### ***The 'predkonservatizm' of Alexander Shishkov***

Apart from Rostopchin and the *ancien régime* emigrés, other members of the Russian elite opted to communicate their anti-French sentiment in the beginning of the nineteenth century outside the political sphere. An enthusiast of '*zabavnaia ėtimologiia*' and a member of the Russian Imperial Academy since 1796, Admiral Shishkov developed a love for linguistics aside from his naval career, which translated itself into a more cultural conservatism.[81] His initial enthusiasm about Alexander I as a new monarch had quickly evaporated when he learnt about the 1802 reforms. As Martin points out, Shishkov reckoned that 'the advisers' class and generation had been corrupted by their foreign education, to the point where humility, patriotism, God, common sense, and respect for one's elders and ancestors – the cement of Russian society – meant nothing to them.' At the same time, older men were 'forced to fall silent and yield to the new way of thinking, the new ideas, that had arisen from the chaos of the monstrous French Revolution'.[82]

Similar to Rostopchin, Shishkov started building his conservative case long before 1812. Yet unlike Rostopchin (and despite the fact that he was a state servant), he chose to stay away from politics[83] and opted instead to apply his conservative ideas on the literary-linguistic level. In 1803, Shishkov published his *Discourse on the Old and New Style of the Russian Language (Rassuzhdenie o starom i novom sloge Rossiiskogo Iazyka)*, in which he criticized the foreign influences in the 'new style' Russian language (*novyi slog*), that was 'contaminated with the incurable passion for the French language'.[84] Instead he proposed a purified, 'original' Russian language, devoid of gallicisms and full of Old-Church Slavonic expressions and idioms or even 'neoslavisms'.

In the subsequent discussion that unfolded about his linguistic views, Shishkov tried to point out that the widespread gallomania of Russian society had a negative influence on

Russia and especially on the development of a Russian national culture, which he deemed increasingly important in light of the unstable international situation. Shishkov considered it wrong that the representatives of the 'new style' promoted the literature and culture of a country that emanated an imminent war threat for Russia. In his *Rassuzhdenie*, and even more so in his later *Pribavlenie*[85] Shishkov's ideas mainly translated into linguistic archaism and gallophobia. In this sense, Shishkov's ideas can be seen rather as Mannheim's reading of traditionalism, holding on to a 'pure', old-Russian language, devoid of foreign influences. As we will see later on, Shishkov's traditionalism (or as Minakov calls it, '*predkonservatizm*'), later on evolved into and converged with a Russian conservatism that came into its own after 1812.[86]

Shishkov's double role as a writer-statesman illustrates that in Russia, politics and literature unavoidably mingle. Many statesmen expressed their ideas through literature or essays that were circulated in the salons, or formed literary circles with like-minded peers. Shishkov was one of them; from 1807 onwards he started meeting in Saint Petersburg with fellow author-statesmen Gavrila Derzhavin (poet and retired Minister of Justice), Ivan Zakharov (senator), Alexander Khvostov (diplomat and financier), Ivan Murav'ëv-Apostol (diplomat, senator) and others, organizing literary evenings and lectures. The timing (1807) was not incidental; after the humiliating peace of Tilsit, Shishkov noticed a general rise in patriotism and seized the opportunity. With these meetings Shishkov and Derzhavin wanted to give an impulse to the Russian character of the national literary oeuvre by encouraging young writers to write and recite patriotic poetry or prose.

## The pragmatism of Karamzin

Other contemporaries were again more pragmatic. Although he had written disapprovingly about the liberal ideas that had led to the horrors and cruelties of the French Revolution and Jacobinism in 1801, Karamzin initially encouraged the liberal course that the new monarch intended to follow. Experts are divided in their opinions on whether this was real enthusiasm about the reforms or mere flattery. According to the historian Dovnar-Zapol'skii, Karamzin had always been a conservative, despite a brief 'progressive' period in the eighteenth century, and that Karamzin's praise was rooted in pragmatism.[87] On 31 October 1803, Karamzin was appointed court 'historiographer' by Tsar Alexander and received a yearly stipend.[88] He started researching and writing his *Memoir* on ancient and modern Russia, (*Zapiska o drevnei i novoi Rossii,* 1811) and his 12-volume *History of the Russian State* (*Istoriia gosudarstva rossiiskago*, 1816).

## *The downfall of Speranskii*

By 1809, Tsar Alexander had not completely given up on his liberal ideas just yet. He leaned on one person in particular for a second round of reforms: Mikhail Speranskii. Influenced by Montesquieu's Esprit des Lois, Speranskii heralded the separation of powers of government.[89] In his *Introduction to the Code of State Laws*[90] (*Vvedenie k ulozheniiu gosudarstvennykh zakonov'*, 1809), Speranskii aimed for a constitutional system with a distribution of powers: legislative power to the state duma, judicial power to the Senate, and executive power to the ministries. This would be followed by the creation of an entirely new institution,

the *Gosudarstvennyi Sovet* or State Council, intended to act as a supreme state advisory body to the tsar, which would consist of members all directly appointed by the monarch.

Yet political reality caught up with Speranskii. The alliance Alexander had struck with Napoleon through the 1807 treaty of Tilsit was met with disbelief by the Russian nobility and army, who had refused to fraternize with the French at Tilsit.[91] Utterly displeased about the treaty, the conservative Moscow nobility was 'deeply hurt at the sight of the orthodox tsar friendly with the "usurper" and tyrant of Europe, whom the Russian church had recently anathemized'.[92] Instead of expressing their criticism openly to the monarch, Mikhail Speranskii's ill-timed, Western-inspired reforms proved to be the ideal excuse to blame the man for everything that went wrong in Russia.

Two conservatives took the lead in the campaign that led to the downfall of Speranskii. First, Joseph de Maistre published an anti-constitutional essay titled *Essai sur le principe générateur des constitutions politiques* (1809). In this essay, that was according to Jean Louis Darcel directly aimed at Alexander I[93], he denounced written constitutions, linking them directly to the Revolution, which he called 'the preface of a horrible book we have since been made to read'.[94] In 1811, Nikolai Karamzin published his *Zapiska o drevnei i novoi Rossii v ee politicheskom i grazhdanskom otnosheniiakh*, in which he was critical of liberal reforms in Russia. This volume would cement his reputation as a Russian conservative. With the support of the tsar's influential sister Ekaterina Pavlovna, they managed to influence both public opinion and Tsar Alexander, who eventually decided to dismiss Speranskii by exiling the reformer to Nizhnii Novgorod in March 1812. A month later, in April 1812, Alexander appointed Alexander Shishkov his new State Secretary. The fact that Shishkov received this post might illustrate that also taking the soft road via literary and linguistic nationalism instead of political pamphlets also was heard by the Russian court. On the other hand, due to the international political situation, the tsar had also become more receptive to anti-French sentiment. Two months later, Napoleon's Grande Armée invaded the Russian Empire.[95]

## The 1812 war: from Westernized rule to renewed patriotism

Logically, Napoleon's 1812 campaign invigorated patriotism among the Russian upper classes. Suddenly, it was not *bon ton* anymore to idolize French culture. This put the deeply Westernized Russian nobility in somewhat of a pickle. A significant part of Russian high society was imbued with French culture, literature and fashion. Even Tsar Alexander 'persisted in his friendship for France as late as 1811', not only for political reasons, but also because the tsar was 'emotionally francophile', which 'could also explain his resistance to all advice urging him to break with France'.[96]

Different segments of society reacted differently to this development. The sudden patriotic reflex of many Russians gave the representatives of the older generation discussed earlier a free hand to express their mostly conservative, anti-French views. This not only procured them the attention of the monarch, but eventually also reinvigorated their careers. Over the decades, the legacy of the French Revolution had continued to influence their views on which way Russia should develop. But how exactly did the 'new conservatives' translate their ideas into action? As described in the earlier section, conservatives like Shishkov and Rostopchin started to formulate their anti-French ideas as early as 1802. This allowed them in the years that followed to spread their ideas among the upper strata and gave them

credibility and a stable reputation of 'true patriots' by the time Russia was embroiled in full conflict with France again, in 1812.

At that moment, with Russian society taking a more conservative view of both politics and culture, these elderly statesmen (some of them ridiculed as 'archaists' by a young Pushkin and his friends) thus managed to expand their influence at court. The fact that Fedor Rostopchin had been critical of Russo-French relations in the beginning of Alexander's reign had made him look subversive then, but eventually contributed to his credibility as a true patriot. A 'politician to his fingertips'[97], Rostopchin's staunch criticism of the 'harmful' French influence on Russian culture and politics paid off: he was appointed military governor of Moscow by the tsar in May 1812.

As for Shishkov, his informal meetings that started in 1807 got a more official character in the form of a literary society named Beseda Liubitelei Russkogo Slova (Society of the Lovers of the Russian Word) between 1811 and 1817. The lectures turned into festive literary soirées with music and recitations of poetry, attended by the *fine fleur* of Saint Petersburg society. Membership lists of the Beseda circle show that the majority of the members were statesmen or elder writers and poets[98]; the literary evenings were where the establishment met to converse and repose. It was in this environment that Shishkov relaunched his career in December 1811 when he delivered a rousing speech titled 'On Love for the Fatherland' ('*Rassuzhdenie o Liubvi k Otechestvu*'). The success of this speech resonated all over the capital. A few weeks later, when war with France seemed unavoidable, Shishkov was invited to the Imperial Palace, where Tsar Alexander asked him to write a patriotic manifesto to rouse the public and levy recruits. Moreover, as pointed out earlier, in April 1812, Alexander appointed Shishkov as his new State Secretary after Speranskii's dismissal. So by mid-1812, Rostopchin and Shishkov both found themselves back in the entourage of a Russian ruler.

In the midst of their ardent patriotism and anti-French rhetoric, they certainly were not looking at the West for inspiration. Or were they? In the following section I will discuss the foreign influence on Russian conservatism in light of the second critical juncture (1812).

### *De Maistre, de Staël and the 'Sauveur d'Europe'*

Despite their bouts of 'strategic' xenophobia, also after 1812, several Russian conservatives kept in touch with Western outsiders who had left France after the Revolution and the rise of Napoleon. The views and experiences of these *ancien régime* émigrés contributed to shaping their later ideas about Russia's place and role on the European continent.

Joseph de Maistre had been instrumental in the downfall of Mikhail Speranskii, who he even accused of being in correspondence with Talleyrand and claimed that's where he got his 'idées modernes, et surtout le gout des lois constitutionelles'.[99] In the Spring of 1812, de Maistre found himself briefly in the 'inner circle of the tsar's counsellors', when Alexander I asked him to edit imperial papers and draft a manifesto announcing the restoration of Poland. As Edwards points out, the rapid advancement of Napoleon towards Russia led this scheme to collapse and Maistre lost his favoured position.[100]

Whereas de Maistre still believed in Russia's potential as an 'untouched' country, and maintained his belief in the political role Russia could play on the European continent, he became more critical of Tsar Alexander. In a letter that he wrote to Comte de Front in August 1812, he wrote:

> le veritable ennemi de la Russie, c'est le gouvernement, c'est l'Empereur lui-même, qui s'est laissé séduire pas les idées modernes, et surtout par la philosophie allemande, qui est le poison de la Russie. Il faillait l'admirer sans doute lorsqu'il consentait à se dépouiller d'une partie de son autorité pour donner plus de liberté à ses peuples; mais ses idées constitutionelles ne le conduisaient pas moins à sa perte, et j'espère enfin qu'on a fait parvenir assez de lumières jusqu'à lui pour qu'il ne tente plus rien dans ce genre, surtout depuis l'aventure de Spéransky [...][101]

Another emigré who travelled to Russia in that same year had quite the opposite opinion. While Madame de Staël was still critical about Russian society, upon meeting the tsar she did eventually acknowledge the idea of Alexander as 'sauveur d'Europe'. Germaine de Staël travelled through Russia from July until September 1812, on her way to Sweden, narrowly avoiding Napoleon's troops. In her *Dix Années d'Exil* she wrote about the Russian people that:

> Aucune nation civilisée tient autant des sauvages que le peuple russe; et quand les grands ont de l'énergie, ils se rapprochent aussi des défauts et des qualités de cette nature sans frein.[102]

De Staël first spent time in Moscow, where she met Count Rostopchin and is reported to have dined together with the Count and Nikolai Karamzin.[103] Rostopchin later ridiculed the fact that she went on incessantly about her fear about Napoleon drawing near, and made it sound like Bonaparte had personally sent the cavalry after her, continually repeating to Rostopchin that 'he had no idea what that man was capable of'. Since Napoleon was still 800 verst away from Moscow at that time, Rostopchin found de Stael's character too dramatic, and her presence in Moscow a nuisance.[104] She then travelled on to Saint Petersburg, where she was received in many salons and met, among others de Maistre, who, as was recounted by Emile Dupré de Saint Maure, fell asleep during a long discussion with her on religion.[105]

Although de Staël's 'liberal' ideas differed strongly from those of the monarchistic de Maistre (she found serfdom regrettable, he condoned it, she saw the lack of a middle class as a disadvantage, he considered it good for autocracy), her critical view of Russian society coincided to a certain extent with that of de Maistre. They made similar remarks about Russian civilization. De Staël wrote in her *Dix Années d'Exil* that 'leur nature n'est point changé par la civilisation rapide que Pierre le Ier leur a donnée; elle n'a, jusqu'au present, formé que leurs manières'.[106] De Maistre wrote in his *Du Pâpe* that few people speak favourably of the Russian people, and this despite the fact that they are 'éminemment brave, bienveillant, spiritual, hospitalier, entreprenant, *heureux imitateur,* parleur élégant et possesseur d'une langue magnifique'.[107] He blames both the old government and the 'false civilization' of the early eighteenth century for their flaws (*les taches qui déparent ce charactère*). Unlike de Staël, he links the lack of civilization in Russia with the lack of a strong role for the Church. The fact that Russian civilization had to develop 'sous les plus tristes auspices' at the outset of the eighteenth century, was due to the fact that when 'les germes refroidis de la civilization russes commencèrent à se rechauffer, les premières leçons que ce grand people entendit dans la nouvelle langue qui devint la sienne, fûrent des blasphèmes'.[108]

After Saint Petersburg, where she had read from her novel *Corinne* and her new work *De l'Allemagne* in the salons, to loud acclaim, de Staël left Russia and travelled on to Sweden. On 5 August 1812, she met Tsar Alexander, who was on his way to Abø to discuss a military pact with the Swedish General and Crown Prince Bernadotte. As the widow of the former Swedish Ambassador to France, de Staël was instrumental in securing Swedish support for this alliance against Napoleon. Interestingly, where she received much acclaim for her cultural conversational skills and literary oeuvre, some Russian conservatives and foreign

advisers to the tsar were not too enthusiastic about the political role she took on. In March 1813, Baron vom und zum Stein, then adviser on German Affairs to Tsar Alexander, wrote to Sergei Uvarov that de Staël had asked him in a letter to report her conversation with Crown Prince Bernadotte to the tsar. In his letter to Uvarov, he doubted the value of her information, adding: 'I'd rather have Madame de Staël limit herself to literature, and not interfere in politics. In any case, I have no interest at all to become mixed up in her politics.'[109]

Interestingly, her old Viennese friend Uvarov did not visit de Staël during her stay in Russia, despite the fact that he lived in Saint Petersburg at the time. She wrote him later on that she was upset about this, and had expected him.[110] He sent several books and articles to her chateau in Coppet, but very little correspondence between them has been found after 1812.[111] Nevertheless, the warm memories of de Staël that he wrote at the end of his life illustrate that he remained appreciative of her person. On the other hand, in 1812, Uvarov's initial admiration for Madame de Staël, so strong during her stay in Vienna in 1808, must have waned. After all, this was a time when Russian conservatism came into its own. Maybe, like Vom Stein, he appreciated de Staël's cultural Westernism more than her political views.

## *Uvarov, Beseda and Arzamas*

A classical scholar and lover of antiquity, Uvarov became president of the Russian Academy of Sciences from 1818 until his death in 1855. He was also honorary member[112] of Shishkov's conservative literary Beseda society (*Beseda Liubitelei Russkogo Slova)*. A '*galoman*' who wrote French prose and verse 'like a real Frenchman'[113], as his Russian contemporaries observed, Uvarov must have felt out of place at the Beseda meetings[114], where statesmen resorted to an artificial 'pure Russian', devoid of foreign influences, yet full of Old Church Slavonic expressions. Together with Zhukovskii[115], Uvarov eventually created Arzamas, a literary circle that ridiculed Beseda's conservative take on language, literature and society. Arzamas became known as a small literary circle with an initially light-hearted approach to the 'new style' of the Russian language and great writers and poets like Petr Viazemskii, Alexander Pushkin, Vasilii Zhukovskii, Dmitrii Bludov and Konstantin Batiushkov. They did not shun French influence for ideological purposes, but rather subscribed a pure *l'art pour l'art* approach, and took on the members of Beseda by means of poems and witty epigrams.[116]

This literary 'battle'[117] however did not necessarily imply a subversive attitude to autocracy. On the contrary, the careers of these young men did not differ so much from their older colleagues in Beseda. Like Shishkov for example, Zhukovskii was asked to work on propaganda and morale during the 1812 campaign. He served under Kutuzov, and later became the tutor of Tsar Nicholas I's son, the Tsarevich Alexander (later Tsar Alexander II). Petr Viazemskii fought in the 1812 campaign and had a long career as a state servant and diplomat, which he ended as deputy minister of education in charge of censorship in Russia. Dmitrii Bludov went on to become Minister of Interior, Minister of Justice, and was appointed to the supreme research commission that condemned the Decembrists to death.[118]

## *Russian conservatism*

This again illustrates the intrinsic duality of the Russian elite: culturally Westernized, yet politically conservative. Their love for the modern 'new style' did not necessarily imply political progressiveness, just as conservatism did not exclude cultural Westernization.

The staunchly anti-French Rostopchin for example often wrote in French, which was also the language of choice for his short but amusing memoirs. As Rjéoutski and Offord point out correctly, 'what stoked Rostopchin's animosity towards France was not antipathy to the French people and culture in their entirety but his horror at the overthrow of the French ancien régime and at the ensuing turmoil […] French might be used by Francophobes, even for the expression of Francophobia.'[119] Uvarov for example was a deeply Westernized intellectual who found sincere joy in classical poetry and befriended some of the most talented Western European writers, thinkers and *courtiers-émigrés*. Fellow *arzamasets* Alseksandr Turgenev (brother of the Decembrist Nikolai Turgenev) once joked that it was a pity that Uvarov only managed to write good verse in French.[120] But like most of his young friends, he was also a political patriot who not only never questioned the tsar's authority or state system, but even considered autocracy as one of three essential factors that constructs the Great–Russian imperial identity. Was this Russian identity then essentially conservative, as Putin now likes to stress again?

It might have been more reactionary than conservative, and more pan-European than purely Russian. However, reactionary in the sense of a reaction against 'chaos and darkness' which, in the eyes of Rostopchin, de Maistre, Shishkov and Uvarov had been the legacy of the French Revolution and the Terror in Western Europe. These Russian and émigré noblemen's reaction was to aim for restoring order, and for this, they looked at the *ancien régime*, so beloved and admired by Uvarov.

In this sense, de Maistre was closer to them than, for example, Edmund Burke. He experienced an evolution that was not so different to that of many enlightened Russians at the end of the eighteenth century (Shishkov, Rostopchin). Maistre was a 'philosophe in spite of himself, an eighteenth century man'.[121] He was 'raised, educated, and grew into middle age during the late Enlightenment'.[122] In the 1780s, de Maistre was a moderate conservative who even strongly admired Burke. But unlike Burke, who observed the events from a distance, de Maistre was forced to flee his home in 1792 when the French revolutionary army advanced into Savoye. Due to this personal suffering, de Maistre became increasingly pro-monarchistic and reactionary.

In this sense, as Greifer rightly points out, Maistre had to recast his earlier views 'as a result of the situation, since he had the reactionary task of restoring the old regime, and not merely the conservative task of defending it'.[123] For the Russian nobility, the Napoleonic invasion and the shock of having to flee Moscow increased gallophobia and led to a strong rise in Russian patriotism. Subsequently, when Alexander's Imperial Army prevailed over Napoleon's Grande Armée and chased them back to Paris, this increased the Russian elite's adherence to autocracy. In this sense, the 1812 critical juncture that directly affected the elite engendered a true, national, Russian conservatism. This Russian conservatism had gradually come into its own in the period 1809–12, as a reaction to an internal threat (Speranksii's constitutionalism) and external threat (Napoleon's Grande Armée). Interestingly, this national, Russian conservatism was fed by foreigners as well as the Russian elite. Not only Shishkov, Karamzin, Rostopchin and Uvarov, but also de Maistre, Von Gentz and de Staël were involved in the intellectual discussion on Russian autocracy and its role in European affairs.

## Conclusion: an Enlightened path toward conservatism

At the outset of this article I mentioned Putin's definition of conservatism as a means to avoid a return to 'chaos and darkness'. A similar rationale is what first sparked Shishkov's traditionalism and Rostopchin's gallophobia. The legacy of the critical junctures and influence of foreigners who reminded the Russian elite of pre-1789 *ancien régime* and told them of the effects of the post-1792 terror was absolutely crucial for the development of Russian conservatism. The 1812 war with France reinvigorated Russian patriotism, and further substantiated the views of the more conservative figures in Russian society.

This change in perception among the elite coincided with the evolution from traditionalism and linguistic purism (Shishkov's Rassuzhdenie in 1802) to ardent patriotism, conservatism and even xenophobia (1812). This evolution from what Minakov calls '*pred-konservatizm*' to '*konservatizm*' was complemented by foreigners like de Ligne, de Staël, Von Gentz and de Maistre who entered into dialogue with their Russian hosts, friends and officials about the *ancien régime* and the role of Russia in a Europe under the threat of Napoleon. As the Russian conservatism matured into a more national project after 1812, the political influence of *ancien régime* figures like de Staël and de Maistre gradually waned, although the cultural influence of de Staël's writings would last for a very long time. Her books[124] were a fixture in the libraries of the *Arzamastsy* Viazemskii, Pushkin, Turgenev, Batiushkov and Bludov, and many other young Russians.

As a final observation, one should not forget that this whole process of change took place within an autocratic state system. The societal discussion, although very crucial in its content, 'described the view from just below the summit of the autocracy'.[125] In the end, everything came down to access to the monarch. As David Christian points out, in a society where the importance of clientele groups and patronage networks transcended formal state institutions, the right to advise and influence the tsar was the main goal of every ambitious nobleman.[126] Not only the role of de Maistre, Karamzin and Rostopchin, but also what Maiofis described as the modernizing project of Arzamas (1815–18) can be seen in this light. Access to the monarch and the right to advise him implied influence. Those deprived of access to the monarch (the out-group) were much more critical about societal development in the Russian Empire than the close entourage of the tsar (the in-group). State servants like Rostopchin, and with them many members of the 'older' generation lost this right in the early nineteenth century with the advent of Tsar Alexander, who initially preferred the advice of his Unofficial Committee, some of whose members secured an official position in the years that followed.[127] As for Karamzin, his good contacts with the tsar's sister Ekaterina Pavlovna and his status as court historiographer show that Karamzin had much closer links to the tsar than the conservative 'outsiders' Shishkov and Rostopchin.

The European events and rise of Napoleon led to a change of course. Both Rostopchin and Shishkov regained access to the monarch based on the patriotic, gallophobic reputation that they developed as a legacy of the 1789 French Revolution. The Patriotic War of 1812 brought the views of the tsar on a par with their ideas. Shishkov ended his long career with the post of Minister of Education under Nicholas I (1824–8). A few years later, he was succeeded by Sergei Uvarov. As Minister of Education under Nicholas I, Uvarov became one of the faces of Nicholas' stricter policy. His tripartite slogan led to the public perception of Uvarov as the 'father of Russian conservatism', a perception that persists until this day.[128]

After the 1812 Moscow fire, for which he was held responsible, Rostopchin soon fell out of favour and was relieved of his duties as Moscow military governor. Devoid of any responsibilities and with his reputation damaged, he quit his role as the principled polemicist with the razor-sharp pen. Count Rostopchin retreated to … France, where he spent many years before finally returning to Russia in 1823.

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## Notes

1. V.V. Putin, "Poslanie Prezidenta Federal'nomu Sobraniiu" (Address of the President to the Federal Assembly) http://kremlin.ru/news/19825 (Accessed 13 October 2015).
2. V.V. Putin, "Poslanie Prezidenta Federal'nomu Sobraniiu" (Address of the President to the Federal Assembly) http://kremlin.ru/news/19825 (Accessed 13 October 2015).
3. Cannady and Kubicek, "Nationalism and Legitimation for Authoritarianism," 8.
4. Blank, "Putin's 'Glorified Version of Official Nationality'," *The Moscow Times*, 28 April 2014, http://www.themoscowtimes.com/opinion/article/putins-glorified-version-of-russian-nationality/499107.html (Accessed 17 November 2015).
5. Mannheim, "Das Konservative Denken," 68–142.
6. Loader, *The Intellectual Development of Karl Mannheim*, 79.
7. Minakov, *Russkii Konservatizm v Pervoi Chetverti XIX veka*, 7.
8. Minakov asserts that the emergence of Russian conservatism coincides with the reign of Alexander I, Khristoforov situates the first Russian conservatives between the late eighteenth century and 1825. In Minakov, *Russkii Konservatizm v Pervoi Chetverti XIX veka*, 4–5 and Khristoforov, "Nineteenth-Century Russian Conservatism," 58–9.
9. Minakov, *Russkii Konservatizm v Pervoi Chetverti XIX veka*, 8.
10. Collier and Collier assert that "the concept of a critical juncture contains three components: the claim that a significant change occurred within each case, the claim that this change took place in distinct ways in different cases, and the explanatory hypothesis about its consequences" – see Collier and Collier, "Critical Junctures and Historical Legacies," 30. Other authors who contributed to the literature about critical junctures are Paul Pierson (2000), Kathleen Thelen (1999), Theda Skocpol (2002) and James Mahoney (2000).
11. Collier and Collier, "Critical Junctures and Historical Legacies," 39.
12. Comparing the legacy to the antecedent system, and making a distinction between constant and historical causes, leads to an assessment of the impact of critical junctures in the context of comparative-historical analysis: Collier and Collier, "Critical Junctures and Historical Legacies," 39.
13. Kiselev and Mironenko, "Russia's Bureaucratic Elite," 151.

14. Offord, Ryazanova and Rjéoutski, *French and Russian in Imperial Russia*, and Ewington, *A Voltaire for Russia*, 54–5.
15. Argent, Offord and Rjéoutski, “French Language Acquisition in Imperial Russia,” 1.
16. Like the correspondence of Prince Mikhail Mikhailovich Shcherbatov, see RGADA, f. 1289, op. 1, d. 517, fols 12-13; 33-34; 174-74 v. and https://frinru.ilrt.bris.ac.uk/content/second-manscript (Accessed 28 April 2016).
17. Offord and Rjéoutski, “Family Correspondence in the Russian Nobility,” 1.
18. Joseph de Maistre, Lettre au Roi Victor-Emmanuel, SPB 1811 in De Maistre, *Oeuvres Complètes tôme 12*, 30–1.
19. Those in the West who dared doubt Russia’s level of Westernization received a spirited retort, even early on in her tenure, e.g. “Antidote, ou Examen du mauvais livre superbement imprimé intitulé Voyage en Sibérie” (1770, in response to the by-then deceased Chappe d’Auteroche’s criticism in his 1768 *Voyage en Sibérie*). See also Levitt, “An Antidote to Nervous Juice,” 49–63.
20. Dickinson, “Russia’s ‘First Orient’: Characterizing the Crimea in 1787,” 6.
21. Apart from the famous letters of Prince Charles-Joseph de Ligne to Mme de Coigny, this trip also gained international renown through the letters and memoirs of Comte de Ségur and Prince von Nassau-Siegen.
22. Dickinson, “Russia’s ‘First Orient’: Characterizing the Crimea in 1787”, 8.
23. According to Stroev (2013), Catherine saw Ligne as a worthy epistolary successor to Voltaire, who had died two years before Ligne and the Empress took up their “correspondance moins tudesque qui présenterait des projects politiques hardis sous forme de badinage littéraire” see de Ligne, *Correspondances Russes*, 30.
24. de Ligne, *Correspondances russes*, 42.
25. Bisschoff, “Madame Vigee Lebrun at the Court of Catherine the Great,” 33.
26. de Ligne, *Correspondances russes*, 239–40.
27. Martin, *Romantics, Reformers, Reactionaries*, 22.
28. Karamzin, *Pis’ma russkogo puteshestvennika*, SPB: 1791–1792.
29. From 1809 onwards, Von Gentz became a close confidant of Clemens von Metternich and secretary of several diplomatic conferences, among which was the 1815 Congress of Vienna.
30. Stroganov, a childhood friend of Catherine’s grandson Alexander, would later resurface in Russian politics as a member of Alexander’s Privy Committee, Minister of Interior and senator. See Rjéoutski and Chudinov, “Russkie Uchastniki Frantsuzskoi Revoliutsii,” 23.
31. Letter from P.A. Stroganov and Gilbert Romme to A.S. Stroganov, 14 January 1790 (translated from Russian by the author) from the collected correspondence in Chudinov, “Pis’ma P.A. Stroganova I Zh. Romma iz Frantsii 1788–1790,” 79.
32. Letter from P.A. Stroganov and Gilbert Romme to A.S. Stroganov, 12 March 1790 (translated from Russian by the author) in Rjéoutski and Chudinov, *Russkie Uchastniki Frantsuzskoi Revoliutsii*, 84.
33. Michailovich, *Ukaz. Soch. T.1*, 302 and Chudinov, “Pis’ma P.A. Stroganova I Zh. Romma iz Frantsii 1788–1790,” 23, 46–98.
34. Golitsyn, *De l’Esprit des Economistes,* 1–2.
35. Golitsyn, *De l’Esprit des Economistes,* 2–4.
36. Kennedy, “Lord Withworth and the Conspiracy against Tsar Paul I,” 211.
37. He “boldly blamed the Tsar for the fiasco of Russian participation in the Second Coalition”, and consequently proposed a partition project in which “Bulgaria, Rumania and Moldova were designated for Russia” Interestingly, his plan was “quite consonant with the more famous ‘Greek project’ of Catherine the Great” in Ragsdale, “The Origins of Bonaparte’s Russian Policy,” 88–9.
38. McGrew, “A Note on Some European Foreign Office Archives and Russian Domestic History,” 533. Despite Rostopchin’s swift ascent (from *General-Maior* in 1796 to *General–Leitenant* in 1798 and from *Tainyi Sovetnik* in 1798 to “*Pervoprisutstvuiushchii*” of the College of Foreign Affairs in 1799), he also eventually fell out of favour. On 20 February 1801, only a week before the tsar was murdered, Rostopchin was relieved of his duties, and sent off with the title of “*deistvitel’nii tainyi sovetnik*” as a parting gift.

39. Pavel Stroganov and Nikolai Novosil'tsev were distant cousins and longtime friends: it was Novosol'tsev who travelled to Paris in 1790 to pick up his uncle Stroganov senior's son and take him back to Russia. Viktor Kochubei also spent time abroad: from 1788 until 1792 he lived in England, France and Switzerland. See Roach, "The Origins of Alexander I's Unofficial Committee," 321.
40. Nikolai Novosil'tsev, "proposed dividing the labor in three stages: a review of the present situation; the reform of specific departments; and the preparation of a constitution to crown the transformed governmental edifice" in Saunders, *Russia in the Age of Reaction and Reform,* 19 and de Grunwald, *Alexandre Ier,* 63.
41. Decree of Free Cultivators of 1803, and Decree allowing merchants and artisans to buy land (1801).
42. They intended to create gymnasia and universities and divide the Russian Empire into six educational districts: Saint Petersburg, Moscow, Vilnius, Dorpat, Khar'kov and Kazan' (Statute of Schools) in Chapman, *Imperial Russia 1801–1905*, 17.
43. Manifesto "On the Creation of Ministries" (*"Ob Uchrezhdenii Ministerstv"*), 8 September 1802.
44. However, "the first time the senators invoked this right, Alexander berated them for their effrontery and abruptly withdrew it" in Freeze, *Russia: A History*, 71.
45. Rostopchin had many enemies in Russia's state circles. Upon ascending the throne, Alexander immediately appointed one of them, the Anglophile Count Panin, as Head of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Rostopchin withdrew from state service and retired to his Voronovo country estate, spending the winters in Moscow; see Ragsdale, "The Origins of Bonaparte's Russian Policy," 89.
46. Martin, "Fedor Vasil'evich Rostopchin – geroi 1812 goda ili predshestvennik chernykh soten?," 70–1.
47. Rostopchin struck a chord among the wider public. In 1807, the year of the Russian defeat in Friedland and the subsequent Treaty of Tilsit, he wrote the pamphlet *Mysli vslukh na krasnom kryltse* ("Thoughts Aloud on the Staircase of Honor"), written in the simple, colloquial Russian of its protagonist, a good Orthodox Russian who lamented the fact that the great Russian empire was being threatened by the revolutionary ideas of the detestable French merchants and tutors who had permeated Russian society. See Rostopchin, *Mysli vslukh na krasnom kryltse,* 171–2.
48. De La Fuye, *Rostopchine: Européen ou Slave?*, 344–5. Eventually, Rostopchin managed to re-establish himself at the Imperial court, aided by Princess Dashkova and Grand Duchess Ekaterina Pavlovna, Tsar Alexander's younger sister. He received the court function of Chief Chamberlain, (*Ober-Kamerger*) in 1810 but was told by the tsar not to put in too many appearances. See Lieven, *Russia against Napoleon*, 87.
49. Dumont-Wilden, "Compte-rendu critique sur Louis Wittmer's Ligne, Muller et Gentz en Autriche," 583.
50. Von Gentz, "The Diaries of Frederic von Gentz," 43–4.
51. Michaud, *Bibliographie Universelle Ancienne et Moderne*, tome 65 (Paris: 1838), 241.
52. *Letter by Friedrich Von Gentz to Prince Adam Jerzy Czartoryski*, Dresden, 22 June 1806. National Museum, Krakau. Czartoryski-Library, Manuscript Department, 5534 III, Bl. 5-19 1806.
53. Quarg, "Zar Alexander als erhoffter 'Retter' Europas, Memorandum von Friedrich Gentz, 19 November 1805," 92–102.
54. *Letter by Friedrich Von Gentz to Prince Adam Jerzy Czartoryski*, Dresden, 22 June 1806. National Museum, Krakau. Czartoryski-Library, Manuscript Department, 5534 III, Bl. 5-19 1806.
55. *Letter by Friedrich Von Gentz to Prince Adam Jerzy Czartoryski*, Teplitz, 4 June 1807. National Museum, Krakow. Czartoryski-Library, Manuscript Department, 5534 III, Bl. 85-107 1807.
56. *Letter by Friedrich Von Gentz to Prince Adam Jerzy Czartoryski*, Gentz; Czartoryski, Teplitz, 27–30 October 1806. National Museum, Krakow. Czartoryski-Library, Manuscript Department, 5534 III, Bl. 25-61 1806.

57. Princess Ekaterina Feodorovna Dolgorukaia, née Bariatinskaia (1769–1849), married to Prince Vasilii Dolgorukii, General in the Russian Imperial Army (+1812), lived in Vienna in 1806–7. Prince de Ligne was one of her close friends (and lover), at the time, as well as Von Gentz. Dolgorukaia bequeathed her letters of Prince de Ligne to Sergei Uvarov.
58. *Letter by Friedrich Von Gentz to Princess Ekaterina Feodorovna Dolgorukova*, Prague, 20 May 1807. Russian National Library, St Petersburg. Manuscript Department, F. 608 (Pomjalowski, J.W.) Invl. 1, N 5581, Bl. 13-16v 1807.
59. *Letter by Friedrich Von Gentz to Heinrich Friedrich Karl Freiherr vom und zum Stein,* Breslau 28 December 1805 National Museum, Krakow. Czartoryski-Library, Manuscript Department, 5534 III 1805.
60. Von Gentz, "The Diaries of Frederic von Gentz," 45.
61. Von Gentz even met de Maistre for the first and only time in 1803, when he dined in Vienna with the ambassador while he was on his way from Turin to Saint Petersburg. He noted in his diary about this meeting that he dined at Paget's (the British ambassador to Vienna) with the famous Count Maistre, although 20 years later, when re-writing his diary he added that he did not remember this meeting. Gentz, *Gesammelte Schriften*, 12:2, 373 . For more on Gentz, de Maistre and de Bonald, see Cahen, "The Correspondence of Frederick Von Gentz," 208.
62. Rostopchin himself however remained Orthodox, which he considered to be an essential component of his Russian patriotism. Schlafly and Dragon, "De Joseph de Maistre à la 'Bibliothèque Rose': le Catholicisme chez les Rostopchin," 94.
63. de Maistre, "Lettre à M.A. Vicomte de Bonald," 124–25.
64. He only mentions once the 1799 Italian campaign of Russia's "Generalissimo" Suvorov, which he wrongly spells "Souwarof" in De Maistre, "Mémoire à consulter sur l'état present de l'Europe," 139.
65. Lettre à M. Chevalier de Rossi, St Petersbourg 28 Mai 1806, in de Maistre, *Oeuvres Complètes tôme dix*, 121–2.
66. Mémoire 21 Décembre 1805, in De Maistre, *Oeuvres Complètes tôme dix*, 1.
67. Mémoire 12 Octobre 1806, in De Maistre, *Oeuvres Complètes tôme dix*, 219–22.
68. Stepanov, "Zhozef de Mestr v Rossii," 577–726.
69. De Ligne et Uvarov, "Correspondances russes," 561–2.
70. Uvarov, "Le Prince de Ligne. Souvenirs. 1842," 355–72.
71. Durylin, "Gospozha de Stael i ee russkie otnosheniia," 238.
72. Stroev and Vercruysse, *Prince Charles-Joseph de Ligne, Correspondances russes*, 53.
73. Cannady and Kubicek, "Nationalism and Legitimation for Authoritarianism: A Comparison of Nicholas I and Putin," 3. See also Zorin, *Kormia dvukhglavnogo orla*. Khristoforov ironically remarks that most of Uvarov's notes about the doctrine of official nationalism are in French, and were only subsequently translated in Russian. In Khristoforov, "Nineteenth-Century Russian Conservatism," 60.
74. Sergei Uvarov, *Tablettes d'un Voyageur russe, 1807–1809*, dans Sergueï Ouvarov, *Mélanges sur Vienne*, GIM, OPI, F. 17 (Ouvarov), *op.* 1, n° 6, ff. 13r°-91v°. in *Correspondances russes*, 577–9.
75. Uvarov, *Madame de Stael*.
76. Uvarov, "Le Prince de Ligne. Souvenirs. 1842," 355–72.
77. Sergei Uvarov, *Tablettes d'un Voyageur russe, 1807–1809*, dans Sergueï Ouvarov, *Mélanges sur Vienne*, GIM, OPI, F. 17 (Ouvarov), *op.* 1, n° 6, ff. 13r°-91v°. in *Correspondances russes*, 577–9 and Durylin, "Gospozha de Stael i ee russkie otnosheniia," 226.
78. Ibid., 234.
79. Although both representatives of the *ancien régime* in the eyes of Uvarov, they had divergent antecedents and views on the French Revolution. Yet "par un compromise réciproque de fort bon gout, jamais un mot sérieux sur 1789 ne fût échangé entre madame de Staël et le Prince de Ligne: là il y avait incompatibilité complète" in De Ligne et Uvarov, "Correspondances russes," 564.
80. Gretchanaïa, "Madame de Staël. Lettres inédites a Ferdinand Christin," 939.
81. Kochubinskii, *Nachal'nye gody russkago slavianovedeniia*, 3.

82. Shishkov, *Zapiski, Mneniia i Perepiska*, 81–6, and Martin, *Romantics, Reformers, Reactionaries*, 24.
83. A disagreement with the Minister of Maritime Affairs Chichagov led to Shishkov temporarily becoming a persona non grata at court. When the conflict was solved in 1805, Shishkov was reinstated as Head of the Educational Department of the Ministry of Maritime Affairs and received court invitations again, although the Tsar behaved rather coldly towards him see Minakov, *Russkii konservatizm v pervoi chetverti XIX veka,* 97.
84. Shishkov, *Rassuzhdenie*, 1. Many contemporaries read this as a direct jibe aimed at Karamzin and the many enthusiasts for his "*novyi slog*."
85. Shishkov, *Pribavlenie k sochineniiu, nazyvaemomu Rassuzhdenie o Starom i Novom Sloge Rossiiskogo Iazyka*, 5–6.
86. Which was called romantic nationalism by Alexander Martin in his *Romantics, Reformers and Reactionaries, 15*.
87. Dovnar-Zapol'skii, *Obzor Noveishei Russkoi Istorii*, 184.
88. Karamzin was however also known as the father of the "new style" of Russian (*novyi slog*), a more colloquial approach to the Russian language that was not hostile to foreign influences. This is why Khristoforov calls Karamzin's works "an apologia of autocracy and an empathic innovation in language and literature" in Khristoforov, "Nineteenth-Century Russian Conservatism," 59.
89. Zavitnevich, *Speranskii i Karamzin kak predstaviteli dvukh politicheskich techenii v tsartsve Imperatora Aleksandra Pervago*, 11.
90. Speranskii's 1809 *Vvedenie k ulozheniiu gosudarstvennykh zakonov* consisted of an ideological part outlining his theoretical views on reforms and a technical part on how to realize this new state system.
91. Torrance, "Some Russian Attitudes to France in the Period of the Napoleonic Wars as Revealed by Russian Memoirs (1807–14)," 291.
92. Raeff, *Speransky*, 173.
93. See Darcel's Postface in Miquel, *Joseph de Maistre. Un Philosophe à la Cour du Tsar*, 248.
94. "la Préface de l'épouvantable livre qu'on nous avait fait lire depuis", in de Maistre, *Essai sur le principe générateur des constitutions politiques,* 41. The 1809 essay was published by de Bonald in Paris in 1814 without the knowledge of de Maistre at the time. He only found out years later. See Armenteros, *The French Idea of History,* 232.
95. Christian, "The Political Ideals of Michael Speransky," 192.
96. Torrance, "Some Russian Attitudes to France," 292.
97. Lieven, *Russia against Napoleon*, 87.
98. See the membership lists in *Chtenie v Besede Liubitelei Russkago Slova*, IX–XII. Beseda's Board of Trustees existed of four high-ranked statesmen: Count Dmitriev was a Senator and member of the State Council; Count Petr Zavadovskii was Minister of Education between 1802 and 1810; Count Nikolai Mordvinov briefly served as Minister of Navy, and later headed the Economic Committee of the State Council, and Count Aleksei Razumovskii was Minister of Education between 1810 and 1816. Alexander Khvostov and Ivan Zakharov, who chaired different sections (*razriady*) of the Society were appointed Senator and Privy Councillor (*tainyi sovetnik*) became advisers to the State Loan bank.
99. Joseph de Maistre, Lettre au Roi Victor-Emmanuel, SPB 1811, in De Maistre, *Oeuvres Complètes tôme 12*, 39.
100. Edwards, "Joseph de Maistre and Russian Educational Policy," 61.
101. Joseph de Maistre, Lettre au Comte de Front, SPB 5 août 1812, in De Maistre, *Oeuvres Complètes tôme 12*, 196.
102. De Stael, *Dix Années d'Exil*, 303.
103. "de Stael left Moscow after a very short stay. Karamzin and his wife dined with her at the Rostopchins." Letter from P.A. Viazemskii to J.B. Galiffe, as quoted in Galiffe J.B., D'Un Siècle à l'autre, Genève: 1878, 312. See also Durylin, "Gospozha de Stael i ee russkie otnosheniia," 268.
104. Durylin, "Gospozha de Stael i ee russkie otnosheniia," 269.

105. Dupré de Saint Maure, *L'hermite en Russie*, 139.
106. De Stael, *Dix Années d'Exil*, 303.
107. De Maistre, *Du Pâpe*, 536–7.
108. De Maistre, *Du Pâpe*, 536–7.
109. Baron Vom und Zum Stein to Sergej Uvarov, Kalisz, 28 March 1813, Arkhiv S.S. Uvarova, GIM.
110. Letter of Madame de Staël to Sergej Uvarov, Stockholm, 2 May 1813, Arkhiv S.S. Uvarova, GIM.
111. She still wrote him a letter from Coppet in 1815 in which she discussed his political essays and remembered the "pauvre Prince de Ligne" who had passed away the year before during the Congress of Vienna. Letter from Madame de Staël to Sergei Uvarov, Coppet, 10 September 1815. Arkhiv S.S. Uvarova, GIM.
112. *Chtenie v Besede Liubitelei Russkago Slova*, IX–XII.
113. Vigel', *Zapiski*, 339.
114. The original Arzamas circle consisted of a talented young set of writers and poets like Zhukovskii, Viazemski, Pushkin, Vigel' and Uvarov himself see Vigel', *Zapiski*, 342–7.
115. Zhukovskii had just moved from Saint Petersburg to Moscow and had been publicly mocked by Prince Shakhovskoi, one of Beseda's most notable members.
116. As their Beseda opponent disappeared in 1817 and new young members joined Arzamas, the literary circle increasingly contributed to what Maiofis calls the modernizing project of imperial Russia in her 2008 book *Vozzvanie k Evrope: Literaturnoe obshchestvo "Arazamas" I rossiiskii modernizatsionnyi proekt 1815–1818 godov.*
117. Often referred to as "strashanaia vojna na Parnase", or "the terrible war on the Parnassus," see Orlov, *Epigramma i Satira*, 17.
118. Ironically, it was Admiral Shishkov who begged the tsar for a more lenient punishment of several Decembrists. See Bulgarin, "Zapiska ob Arzamase," 26–7.
119. Offord and Rjéoutski, "French in the Nineteenth Century Russian Salon," 10 and Argent, Offord and Rjéoutski, "The Functions and Value of Foreign Languages in 18th Century Russia," 15.
120. Similar observations can be found in Vigel, *Zapiski*, 339, who wrote a nice portrait of Uvarov in his memoirs, and Durylin, *Madame de Staël*, 226, who also mentions Turgenev's remarks.
121. Greifer, "Joseph de Maistre and the Reaction against the Eighteenth Century," 598.
122. De Maistre was nearly 40 years old when the French Revolution began. Garrard, "Joseph de Maistre's Civilization and its Discontents," 433.
123. Greifer, "Joseph de Maistre and the Reaction against the Eighteenth Century," 592–3 and 598.
124. Mostly *Corinne*, *Delphine* (that was mentioned in Pushkin's Evgeny Onegin), *De l'Allemagne*, and *Dix Années en Exil*.
125. Christian, "The Senatorial Party and the Theory of Collegial Government, 1801–1803," 321.
126. Ibidem.
127. Alexander's friend Count Viktor Kochubei became Minister of Foreign Affairs in 1801–2 and Minister of the Interior until 1812 and again from 1819–25; Adam Czartoryski became Minister of Foreign Affairs between 1804 and 1806.
128. Chamberlain, "Father of Russian Conservatism," 1.

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