

THE ADMINISTRATIVE AND SOCIAL REFORMS OF RUSSIA'S MILITARY,
1861-1874: DMITRII MILIUTIN AGAINST THE ENSCONCED POWER ELITE

by

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“The Administrative and Social Reforms of Russia’s Military, 1861-1874: Dmitrii Miliutin against the Ensconced Power Elite,” a thesis prepared by Scott Patrick Anderson in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Arts degree in the Department of History. This thesis has been approved and accepted by:

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As a key figure in Imperial Russia's Great Reforms from 1861 to 1874, Count Dmitrii Alekseevich Miliutin has received a good deal of attention by historians and scholars; however, his recently published memoirs have yet to be used extensively as the foundation for any study. Having them readily at one's fingertips would be a boon by itself, but to examine them using a different methodology could potentially provide a totally unique perspective. The methodology in question was based on the assumption that war influenced societies and society affected how war was conducted. By reexamining Imperial Russia's military administrative and social reforms with the newly published memoirs and afore-mentioned methodology, Miliutin's logic in formulating the reforms became apparent, as did his intended results, which included a challenge to the privileged status of Russia's ensconced power elites.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
I. INTRODUCTION	1
a. The Framework for Examination	2
b. The Focus on Miliutin's Memoirs	5
c. The Secondary Source Materials	6
II. ADMINISTRATIVE REORGANIZATION	12
a. Identify the Problem to Fix the Problem.....	12
1. Miliutin Identifies the Problem.....	12
2. Miliutin Offers Solutions	15
b. Transforming the Army Order of Battle into Military Districts	17
1. Miliutin, Bariatinskii, and the Caucasus Model.....	17
2. Minister of War Miliutin Implements His Model across the Empire	20
3. Reactions to the Reform.....	24
c. General Staff to Main Staff.....	27
1. The General Staff under Nicholas I	27
2. Consolidation and Reorganization of the Staff.....	29
d. Conclusions.....	34
1. Political Resistance to the Military Districts	35
2. Resistance to the Main Staff	36

Chapter	Page
III. SOCIAL REFORMS – POLITICAL PROBLEMS.....	41
a. Liberalism and the Influence of Count P. D. Kiselev	42
1. Uncle Pavel Dmitrievich.....	42
2. Dmitrii in the Lion’s Den.....	44
b. The Universal Military Service Statute.....	46
1. Piecemeal Implementation of the Reform	48
2. Marching to a Better Education	51
3. Prussia Resurrects the Universal Service Debate	60
4. Special Commissions Debate the Statute.....	63
5. The Secret Conference of 1873.....	64
6. The Home Stretch	72
c. Conclusions	74
1. On the Topic of Liberalism.....	74
2. Educational Reform	75
3. The Universal Military Service Statute of 1874	78
IV. CONCLUSION.....	81
a. Miliutin’s Memoirs	82
b. The Dracobly Model Framework.....	84
c. This Study, Others, and the Bigger Picture.....	86
BIBLIOGRAPHY	88

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Page
1. Interactive model of the four dimensions of warfare as depicted by University of Oregon professor Alex Dracoby in his two-course series, “War in the Modern World.”	4

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Within the historiography of Russia, there have been numerous treatises examining Imperial Russia's Great Reforms from 1861 to 1874, with many of the works focusing on the Minister of War during that time, Count Dmitrii Alekseevich Miliutin. The purpose of this particular study is to contribute to the scholarly debate by using recently published materials previously available only in the archives, while framing the discussion using a methodology that is also relatively new to academic circles. The recently published materials used as the foundation for this study are Miliutin's memoirs; the methodology used to frame the discussion is based on a social history model that examines militarily-connected events with the assumption that war influences societies and society affects how war is conducted. By examining Russia's military reforms within these given parameters, it soon became apparent that several of Miliutin's proposed reforms had an implied or, more often than not, overt intent to challenge the privileged status of Russia's ensconced power elites. In using Miliutin's memoirs as the foundation for this study, this revelation was clarified through his recollections that explained his logic, thought process, and reasoning, as well as giving insight as to how he perceived the opposition against him.

a. The Framework for Examination

Notable and respected scholars and historians have scrutinized, analyzed, and debated the Great Reforms from political, economic, technological, military, and social frameworks of history. However, in the mid 1970s, a shift in preferred methodology began to favor the social framework more than the others, which meant that several historical events typically discussed within a different framework were being reexamined from a social aspect. In the case of military history, as it applies to this discussion, the social aspect had long been part of the discussion, being able to trace its modern roots back to the nineteenth century Prussian military philosopher, Carl von Clausewitz.

Clausewitz's book, *On War (Vom Kriege)*, has been a must-read for military strategists and historians alike ever since its posthumous publication in 1832.¹ In his book, Clausewitz described the various dimensions of warfare strategy as he perceived them, which included the social dimension. Learning from the history-changing French Revolution as a case in point, Clausewitz highlighted "the popular passions" of the people and "the social forces it expressed" as a factor one would have to consider in future wars.² Other dimensions that were part of his picture of warfare—the operational and political aspects—interacted with each other and the social dimension to create a

¹ Carl von Clausewitz, *Principles of War*, trans. Hans W. Gatzke (Harrisburg, PA: Military Service Publishing Company, 1942), 5.

² Michael Howard, "The Forgotten Dimensions of Strategy" in *The Causes of Wars and other essays*, 101-115 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1983), 103.

kind of ballet between factors that contributed greatly to the conduct and outcome of war.³

Thus, it is evident that the social aspect has long been part of the discussion of military history. The difference between then and now appears to be the context of the discussion. The concept that war influences societies and, reciprocally, society affects the conduct of war, is not new to the military minded; however, with the shift in focus more towards social history, the emphasis for this concept has changed from concern about the military outcome to the question of social impact. This, in turn, has caused a rebirth of sorts in the study of military history. Still based on the dimensions outlined by Clausewitz, a fourth one was added which was not a major factor when the Prussian general wrote down his theories in the 1820s—technology.⁴ The result was a schematic model of warfare that allowed historians to trace how, within the reciprocal concept of war and society, each dimension affected the others.

This model has been used in various incarnations by modern historians for numerous and wide-ranging scholarly discussions. For some social historians who are finding their place in the discussion, it may be a learning process.⁵ However, for other historians, the model allowed for a more tactile discussion of war and society, as illustrated by numerous courses now taught on the subject in universities and colleges.

³ Howard, 101-103.

⁴ Ibid., 105.

⁵ Rhodri Jeffreys-Jones, "The WORM and the Vietnam War," *Society for Historians of American Foreign Relations*, Newsletter (March 2001), www.shafr.org/newsletter/2001/mar/worm.htm#4. In his essay, the University of Edinburgh professor lays claim that he was one of the first to address the reciprocal concept of war and society in his book, *Peace Now! American Society and the Ending of the Vietnam War* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999).

One in particular that was used as the model for this study was found in the two-course series taught by University of Oregon professor Alex Dracobly, entitled “War in the Modern World” (see Figure 1 below).

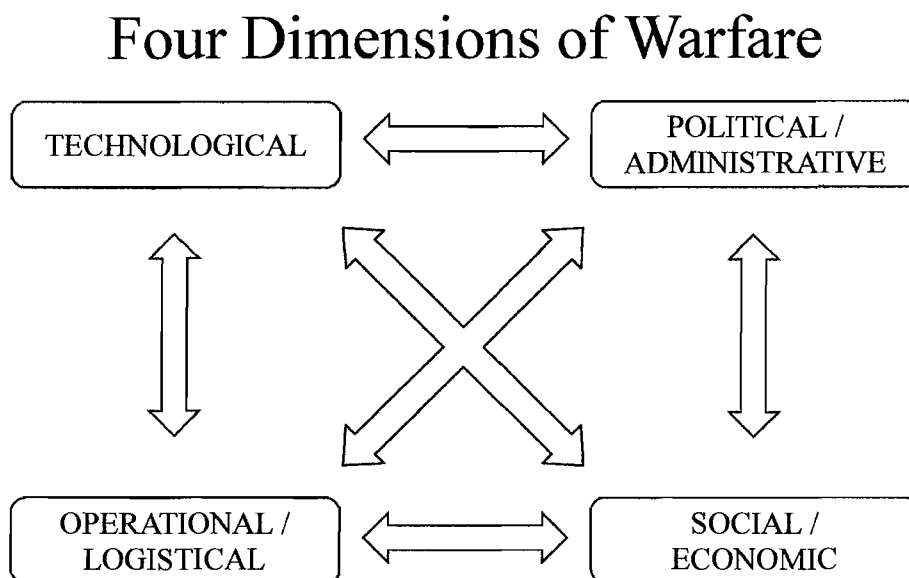


Figure 1. The interactive model of the four dimensions of warfare as depicted by University of Oregon professor Alex Dracobly in his two-course series, “War in the Modern World.” *(Slide from lecture reprinted with permission of Professor Dracobly.)*

Using Dracobly’s model to examine Imperial Russia’s military capabilities in the aftermath of the Crimean War debacle (1853-1856), it quickly became apparent that all four dimensions were in shambles and needed to be addressed. Through the Great Reforms enacted by Tsar Alexander II and Dmitrii Miliutin, all of those dimensions were addressed, and all of them have been repeatedly discussed in various historical forums. However, for the purpose of this study, only the reforms addressing administrative and

social dimensions were examined with a specific focus on their impact on the ensconced Russian power elite.

b. The Focus on Miliutin's Memoirs

Because most of the Great Reforms either directly or indirectly impacted Imperial Russia's military, Miliutin has been a central figure in a great many of the historical discussions on the matter. This, of course, meant that anything Miliutin wrote on the subject was invaluable to any historical examination of the period. The problem, however, was gaining access to the materials, which had only been available for viewing in Russia's archives. This changed, in part, in the early 1950s, when the preeminent Soviet scholar P. A. Zaionchkovskii compiled the personal diaries covering Miliutin's last ten years as War Minister (1873 – 1882) into four published volumes. This was hugely beneficial to all of the historians studying Miliutin and his reforms, but the boxes containing his memoirs (1816 – 1873) were still available only by visiting the archives.

This all recently changed when one of Zaionchkovskii's disciples, Larissa Zakharova, organized and compiled Miliutin's memoirs into seven volumes that were published between 1997 and 2006. Her endeavors drastically changed the landscape of requirements for researching Miliutin and his military reforms; instead of having to go to the archives to pour over Miliutin's thoughts, they were readily available through a library or bookstore. Because of their relative newness, there does not appear to have been any notable historical publication using the memoirs compiled and edited by Zakharova, yet. It was specifically with this fact in mind that Miliutin's memoirs were extensively used as the primary source materials for this study.

c. The Secondary Source Materials

As previously mentioned, the monumental topic of Dmitrii Miliutin's military reforms has been widely discussed and debated by a variety of historians and scholars. This, of course, meant there was no shortage of secondary source materials to examine and compare while researching for this project.

First on any list of scholarly contributions would be anything written by the Soviet historian, P. A. Zaionchkovskii. Besides his work compiling and editing Miliutin's diaries, he wrote several books on Russia's era of Great Reforms. His book *Voennye reformy 1860 – 1870 godov v Rossii*, published in 1952, is still considered the gold standard by historians when discussing Russia's military reforms. This is because he was not only meticulous in his research and careful in his conclusions, but also because he was granted access to certain restricted materials within the archives, which have not been available since. As a result, Zaionchkovskii and his works continue to be the most commonly cited by historians and scholars writing on the subject of Miliutin and his military reforms, which includes the other secondary sources to be mentioned here.

For his part, the historian Forrest A. Miller provided great insight into the travails of Miliutin in his efforts to pass his military reforms. In his book, *Dmitrii Miliutin and the Reform Era in Russia*, the author described numerous instances of Miliutin coming to loggerheads with the political machine in St. Petersburg, the politically-connected officers trying to maintain their places of power, and the gentry who wanted to keep the status-quo. Miller presented several examples of how Miliutin defended his proposed reforms from constant attack by those who perceived them to be a threat and how

compromise was sometimes the only way to see them through. The author also provided insight with the initial impressions Miliutin made on the elites of St. Petersburg politics. Citing quotes from the diaries of prominent Russians of the time, Miller argued that most of the opposition to Miliutin's reforms came because his "placing the overall good of his country over all else was often misunderstood by his contemporaries, who often professed to find in him a political radical."⁶

These insights were extremely helpful in putting together a more complete picture of what Miliutin went through during this period, but his book fell short as far as political clarity was concerned. Miller often used the terms "liberal" and "conservative" in his book to describe those who supported and opposed Miliutin, as well as to depict Miliutin as strictly a liberal. Although Miller implied these terms were meant in the classical-nineteenth century sense that a conservative was basically opposed to changes and a liberal was for them, the terms failed to accurately describe the situation in Imperial Russia at the time. A majority of the Russian gentry held beliefs that were neither totally conservative nor totally liberal. Rather, many were in the middle with a belief that some changes were needed and necessary, but within limitations and boundaries that varied according to personal interests and opinions. Thus, Miller's use of the terms "conservative" and "liberal" tended to generalize, even within the classical sense. As a result, these concepts were mentioned sparingly within this study and only within the context given by a primary source, or as explained in text.

⁶ Forrest A. Miller, *Dmitrii Miliutin and the Reform Era in Russia* (Charlotte, NC: Vanderbilt University Press, 1968), 7.

In *Bayonets before Bullets*, the author Bruce W. Menning explained Miliutin's belief in wide-sweeping reforms that went beyond tactics, training, organization, and equipment. Miliutin believed all of those changes required a new breed of officer that was better trained and educated.⁷ Additionally, Menning cited how Russian military observers witnessed the effect of the French Revolution on the armies and how it “unlocked the military potential of the masses.”⁸ But how does one unlock the potential of the masses? Menning pointed to Miliutin's belief that for this to happen, something had to be done about the issue of serfdom. In Miliutin's opinion, he argued, the inflexibility of serfdom “prevented Russia from tapping its vast manpower resources and discouraged the maintenance of a large trained reserve.”⁹ Once this vast resource was tapped, however, the problem would arise on how to unlock its military potential.

Historian John S. Bushnell added clarity and further insight to this subject in stating that Miliutin (and other reformers) believed that Russia needed their incoming soldiers to be literate. Literate soldiers “would understand their duties better, serve more conscientiously, and commit fewer disciplinary infractions.”¹⁰ If done properly, this

⁷ Bruce W. Menning, *Bayonets before Bullets: The Imperial Russian Army, 1861 – 1914* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992), 8.

⁸ Ibid. Menning cites *Opisanie russo-turetskoi voiny*, I, 139-40; and E. A. Prokov'ev, *Voennye vzgliady dekabristov* (M, 1953), 99-101.

⁹ Ibid., 9. Menning cites P. A. Zaionchkovskii, *Voennye reformy, 1860 – 1870 godov v Rossii* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo moskovskogo universiteta, 1952), 50; and Dmitrii Alekseevich Miliutin, *Dnevnik D. A. Miliutina, 1873-1975* (Moscow: Gosudarstvennaia Ordena Lenina Biblioteka SSSR, 1947), 20-21. The book by Miliutin will henceforward be referred to as *Dnevnik*, I.

¹⁰ John S. Bushnell, “Miliutin and the Balkan War,” in *Russia's Great Reforms, 1855—1881*, ed. Ben Eklof, John Bushnell, and Larissa Zakharova, 139-158 (Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1994), 149.

measure would help Miliutin succeed in recreating the Russian army as a “preponderant moral force” and martial spirit.

Robert F. Baumann confirmed the assertions of both Menning and Bushnell through his examination of Miliutin’s 1874 reform measure of Universal Military Service. Baumann noted that Miliutin’s last—and probably most notable—reform was an act of both military and social policy reform that addressed three critical areas. First was to greatly increase the number of annual conscripts while reducing the term of active service. This maintained an active duty army of acceptable size while expanding the reserve pool of trained and ready soldiers. Second was to elevate the educational standards of men throughout the ranks “so as to make the army a force of civil cohesion and moral progress as well as a superior combat organization.”¹¹ The first two areas, however, couldn’t be fulfilled without the third—“the creation of an equitable system of rules governing terms of service and exemptions that would enable the extension of a draft lottery to all social estates and the progressive incorporation into the regular army of the diverse subject nationalities of the empire.”¹² Because these areas of Miliutin’s reform measure were volatile and contentious in the minds of many within Russia’s powerful elite, it became the largest political battleground for debate and discussion of any of his military reforms.

These aforementioned authors and their works guided the research conducted for this study, although Miliutin’s memoirs served as the final word in drawing any

¹¹ Robert F. Baumann, “Universal Service Reform: Conception to Implementation, 1873–1883,” in *Reforming the Tsar’s Army*, ed. David Schimmelpenninck van der Oye and Bruce W. Menning (United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 12.

¹² *Ibid.*

conclusions. To be clear, however, this study is not a comprehensive and all-encompassing treatise on the subject of Miliutin's military reforms; its purpose is to examine certain reforms and how they threatened a specific portion of the powerful, privileged, and influential Russian gentry entrenched within the exclusive pinnacles of political and military circles, who will be referred to as the "ensconced power elite." It is also important to distinguish this group from the rest of those who may be considered "power elite" gentry or nobility of Imperial Russia—including Miliutin—because many of those power elite had come to the realization that social change was necessary for Russia to progress and survive, and, therefore, supported the general idea of reform.

This study also does not claim that no other historians have used Miliutin's memoirs in their historical discussions. In reading his works, it was clear that Zaionchkovskii definitely had access to Miliutin's memoirs, evident by the numerous citations and quotes in his discussions. The same can be said for most of the other authors, although a few of them relied on Zaionchkovskii's observations in lieu of archival access.

What this study does claim, however, is that the aforementioned authors did not readily have Miliutin's memoirs at their fingertips as they researched their works. Additionally, since the focus and goals of their research were different from those of this particular study, they may have ignored some of the recollections and observations found in the memoirs that were invaluable in this discussion. In short, there was strong evidence in the memoirs that Miliutin's administrative and social reforms actually did

take aim at certain members of Russian gentry, which has been touched upon in past discussions, but not really emphasized.

Lastly, this study is, in all likelihood, the only one to use Professor Dracobly's dimensional model as the framework for interpreting the memoirs. Granted, the scope was limited to only two of the four dimensions of warfare out of necessity, but the visual reference of how they all continually interacted and affected the others helped immeasurably in realizing the complex and intertwining machinations that were part and parcel of Miliutin's military reforms.

Thus armed with Dracobly's dimensional framework, secondary sources for reference, and Miliutin's recently-published memoirs, it was possible to reexamine the process of reforming Imperial Russia's military with a fresh eye focused on societal impact. By constantly referring to the framework's dimensional interaction, it soon became obvious that there was much more going on than met the eye: Miliutin had the goal of not only fixing Russia's military, but also fixing what he perceived as a social wrong: one's authority and preference being based on family heritage instead of merit.

CHAPTER II

ADMINISTRATIVE REORGANIZATION

a. Identify the Problem to Fix the Problem

As a student of Clausewitz and his dimensions of warfare, Dmitrii Miliutin knew that an efficient, well-organized administration was critical to the successful conduct of warfare.¹³ This included the leadership who determined military policy, force structure, doctrine, and procedural dictums. The problem, however, was Russia's military did not possess a well-organized administration; it had an ineffective, dysfunctional and bloated bureaucracy that contributed greatly to its disastrous defeat in the Crimean War. Through his military experience, Miliutin was eventually able to identify the problem, as well as offer reform solutions to fix Russia's serious administrative problems.

1. Miliutin Identifies the Problem

In his memoirs, Miliutin wrote that he first noticed these problems during his tour of duty in the Caucasian War from 1839 to 1840—more than sixteen years before Russia's defeat in the Crimea. Russian forces were fighting rebels in a region dominated by a Muslim population that resented Russian Imperial rule. The rebels' use of unconventional tactics and the area's mountainous terrain quickly exposed Russia's administrative problems:

¹³ D. A. Miliutin, *Vospominaniia general-fel'dmarshala grafa Dmitriia Alekseevicha Miliutina, 1816 – 1843* (Moskva: Rossiiskii arkhiv, 1997), 147. This will henceforward be referred to as *Vospominaniia*, I.

From the first days of the campaign, I was struck by the many weak facets of our method of operations [i.e., tactical support] against the mountaineers. What astounded me most of all were the disadvantageous conditions under which our Caucasian forces were obliged to carry on the struggle.¹⁴

Miliutin's observations highlighted the fact that Russian forces had to operate quite a distance from any support or supply point, and that the mountaineers took tactical advantage of that fact. Although this was observed within an operational context, Miliutin knew its roots were within an ineffective force structure mandated by outdated administrative policies.

Knowing the existence of a serious problem may have been the first step to fixing it, but coming up with a solution would take Miliutin a few more years. He found part of his solutions while recuperating from wounds he received in the Caucasian War. Miliutin spent a little over a year on recuperative leave touring Europe, where he got a firsthand look at the militaries of various Western European countries, with a particular focus on the Prussian and French armies.¹⁵ While in Hamburg in October 1840, Miliutin used a letter of introduction to get a personal tour from Herr Andre Matthiesen of the "whole city, its forces and national guard."¹⁶ In Berlin, he interviewed two Russian artillery officers assigned as military observers to the Prussian army. Over a period of six days,

¹⁴ Miliutin, *Vospominaniia*, I, 216.

¹⁵ Miller, 16.

¹⁶ Miliutin, *Vospominaniia*, I, 327.

the two officers, Nikolai Andreevich Kryzhanovskii and Nikolai Vasil'evich Lavrov, explained the command structure in detail that Prussia had been revising and perfecting.¹⁷

Six months later, Miliutin was in Paris visiting with his uncle Nikolai Kiselev when he met Colonel Boris Glinka-Mavrin of the General Staff. The colonel, who was assigned to Paris as a military attaché, arranged for Miliutin to observe some of France's new firing battalions in training.¹⁸ Miliutin was impressed with the performance of the French soldiers during the exercise, observing how those "clever" French soldiers differed little from the ordinary line infantry in form, bearing, and weaponry; however, once the order was given to commence the exercise, those same soldiers performed with precision and accuracy.¹⁹ This was more than just a matter of proficiency; this was also a matter of efficiency and organization, which included management and administration.

If ever there had been doubts that there needed to be a reform of Russia's military administrative functions, what he saw in Prussia and France removed them. Miliutin had become educated in both the strengths and weaknesses of Europe's best armies and, more importantly, he saw the glaring problems within Russia's military more clearly.

Miliutin was finally put into a position to better express his observations when he was posted to the Nicholas Military Academy as a teaching faculty member and

¹⁷ Miliutin, *Vospominaniia*, I, 328.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 366.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 371-372.

researcher in October 1845.²⁰ As a researcher, his keen ability to pinpoint problems and express them in thoughtful reports quickly brought him to the forefront of reform discussions. In 1853, one of his fellow professors at the academy, A. Ia. Panaev, noted one of Miliutin's critical outbursts:

On paper we are completely prepared [for the impending outbreak of war]! But awesome shortcomings in everything will be revealed at our first battle movements.... They [the government] will have to buy saltpeter for the weight of gold soon, and they do not even consider stockpiling it [now], and when the war begins they will not even be able to get it abroad. The medical branch also is in a sorry state: there are few surgical instruments, and those are of poor quality; doctors will end up amputating the wounded with dull knives. The Commissariat is in such awful condition that even in peacetime it is a mess, and in wartime the troops will be without shoes, coats, and breadcrusts. Everything is just great for parades, and just terrible for war.²¹

Miliutin was not unique inasmuch that many of the Russian officers had also observed the problems caused by an inefficient military administration; however, he would soon distinguish himself from the others by offering what they could not: viable solutions.

2. Miliutin Offers Solutions

In September 1854, Miliutin's experiences in the Caucasus were called upon when General-Adjutant N. A. Read, commander of the cavalry forces at the Battle of Constantinople, requested that Miliutin put together a plan to pacify the Caucasus region as soon as the Crimean War was over. According to Miliutin, this could be achieved by

²⁰ D. A. Miliutin, *Vospominaniia general-fel'dmarshala grafa Dmitriia Alekseevicha Miliutina, 1843 – 1856*. (Moskva: Rossiiskii arkhiv, 2000). 115. This will henceforward be referred to as *Vospominaniia*, II. See also Menning, 9-10.

²¹ E. Willis Brooks, "Reforms in the Russian Army, 1856-1861," *Slavic Review*, 43, no. 1 (1984): 65.

utilizing the regular infantry divisions that had been sent to the region against the Turks for the Crimean War and by restructuring the forces to operate more efficiently.²²

The war continued on until 1856, so the report was put aside with little fanfare; however, it resurfaced again after Emperor Alexander II ended the Crimean War and asked a military panel to examine the report. One of those asked to read it was Field-Marshal Prince Aleksandr Ivanovich Bariatinskii, who had also served on the committee to which Miliutin had submitted his Memorandum of 1856. The prince was impressed with Miliutin's vision. Bariatinskii had already contrived a plan of his own on how to pacify the region, and, taking advantage of the discussion, presented it to the Emperor as a viable solution that would work in conjunction with Miliutin's proposal. After a heated debate that included then-Viceroy of the Caucasus Count N. N. Murav'ev-Karski, the Emperor approved the proposal and appointed Bariatinskii as the new Viceroy and Commander in Chief of the Caucasus.²³ Bariatinskii then asked Miliutin to become his new chief of staff in the Caucasus with the expressed task of pacifying the region while, at the same time, doing it cheaply and efficiently.²⁴

²² Miliutin, *Vospominaniia*, II, 301.

²³ Alfred J. Rieber, *The Politics of Autocracy: Letters of Alexander II to Prince A.I. Bariatinskii, 1857 – 1864* (Paris: Mouton and Company, 1966), 63-64.

²⁴ Miller, 24-25.

b. Transforming the Army Order of Battle into Military Districts

1. Miliutin, Bariatinskii, and the Caucasus Model

When Bariatinskii and Miliutin took on the Caucasus problem, the Russian army was still organized into several self-contained corps loosely based on the Napoleonic model. The corps were self-sufficient in that each contained all the elements that were needed to conduct war—infantry, cavalry, artillery, medical, engineering, and logistics—but were also crippled by a micro-managing and self-serving leadership that was normally located too far from a conflict to effectively communicate with their field units.²⁵ To rectify this, there were three basic principles to the two men's plans: establish a rational, streamlined chain of command; give greater control to local commanders based on geographic location; and introduce combat training to all units.²⁶

To accomplish this, they reorganized the Caucasian Corps into five military districts based on geographic location. This then became the Caucasian Army with its Commander in Chief retaining full authority over both civil and military affairs. The command staff was then totally reorganized to follow this new organizational design. Instead of administrative commanders from the various disciplines—infantry, cavalry, artillery, medical, engineering, and logistics—being part of the command staff, it fell to commanders of the five military districts. Each of those commanders was then given control of the various elements within their district, which were formed into subordinate battalions. To further delegate authority, power was also given to the district

²⁵ Zaionchkovskii, *Voennye reformy*, 36-37.

²⁶ Rieber, 66.

commanders to act on behalf of the Commander in Chief during emergencies and exercise control over the civilian population.²⁷

In addition, they established two new training schools for artillery and infantry, and totally restructured the curriculum for all training schools in the region. No longer was the emphasis on parade ground drill—a practice long detested by Miliutin—but rather on the knowledge and use of weapons. For the lower ranks, this included instruction on the manual of arms, musketry, grammar, and arithmetic. For the officers, it included lessons in infantry tactics and the ballistics of artillery. All ranks were to participate in a physical regimen that included gymnastics and fencing.²⁸

The results from these reforms were a resounding success. By decentralizing the administrative functions, they eliminated the overlapping authority of the previous command staff, as well as an exorbitant amount of administrative agencies and their accompanying bureaucratic paperwork. Operationally, the reforms provided the district commanders “full control over all the military resources necessary to exercise rapid and independent judgment on the basis of local conditions,”²⁹ all without the crippling levels of administration. Financially, this translated into a modest cut in expenditures by 500,000 rubles in 1858, which happened in spite of adding the two infantry divisions two years prior. More tangible results were realized in 1859 when the reorganized Caucasian

²⁷ D. A. Miliutin, *Vospominaniia general-fel'dmarshala grafa Dmitriia Alekseevicha Miliutina, 1856 – 1860* (Moskva: Rossiiskaia politicheskaia entsiklopediia, 2004), 45-54. This will henceforward be referred to as *Vospominaniia*, III. See also Rieber, 66-67.

²⁸ Rieber, 67.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

Army finally captured Shamil, the leader of the rebellious mountaineers, and the end of regional warfare was finally in sight after sixty years of continuous fighting.³⁰

Prince Bariatsinskii knew that Miliutin played a vital role in the successful execution of reforms in the Caucasus region, and made sure the Emperor knew about it. In early October 1857, Miliutin met with the Emperor in St. Petersburg to discuss progress in the Caucasus. Before Miliutin left for his meeting, Bariatsinskii gave him a letter to deliver to the Emperor, in which the Prince wrote:

The great work of reforming the Caucasus military administration has just been completed. Today I am sending [this letter] with General Miliutin for the War Minister [Sukhozanet], which must be presented to Your Highness for consideration. I dare to hope that Your Highness remains satisfied, in as much that these reforms are staying within budgets, at the same time putting the administration into good order, which, as You can see, is the cog wheel of the work in coordinating [the two]. I am convinced that You, Sire, will be pleased, so far as the conscientious execution of the work [is concerned] and, I would endlessly repeat, [with] the conscientious operational work of Miliutin, whom, if it pleases Your Highness, You could possibly reward with words of praise.³¹

Prince Bariatsinskii's support for Miliutin helped convince the Emperor that Miliutin was not just a man with insightful views of reforming the military, but a competent administrator as well. Thus, when Alexander decided in 1860 that it was time for a change in the War Ministry, it was with Bariatsinskii's recommendation that the Emperor appointed Miliutin as Deputy Minister of War, and "heir apparent" to the position of Minister itself.³²

³⁰ Miller, 31.

³¹ Miliutin, *Vospominaniia*, III, 137-138.

³² Miller, 25.

2. Minister of War Miliutin Implements His Model across the Empire

After serving as Deputy Minister for eleven months, Miliutin officially took over as the Minister of War on November 9, 1861, and was immediately tasked by the Emperor to come up with a comprehensive plan for reforming the entire army. The largest roadblock to military reform, as Miliutin described it in his 1856 memorandum, had already been removed when the Emperor freed the serfs with his Emancipation Manifesto on February 19, 1861.³³ This meant that it was now up to Miliutin to earn his position by repeating the money-saving and operation-enhancing reforms of the Caucasus on a much larger scale.

The Emperor had been rightly concerned that any sweeping military reforms had to include a reduction in costs. In the aftermath of the Crimean War, the military had been, and continued to be, a huge drain on Russia's economy. In 1858, the military budget was 93,497,086 rubles—almost a third of the Empire's annual budget. The Minister of War at that time, General N. O. Sukhozanet, was also under directives of the Emperor to do something about the military expenditures, and was able to make some modicum of headway. In 1858, the budget was reduced by 7,100,000 rubles and 5,800,000 rubles in 1859, but by 1860, he was only able to trim the monstrous budget by 1,879,260 rubles.³⁴ The military budget was helped out during this time as reserve forces were discharged in the aftermath of the Crimean and Caucasian Wars, and by 1862,

³³ Dates are according to the old Julian calendar used by Russia at the time, which differs from the modern Gregorian calendar by 12 or 13 days (depending on leap year). For this study, all dates mentioned in the text are according to the old calendar.

³⁴ Miller, 27-28. See also Bushnell, 146.

Russia was no longer running a budget deficit.³⁵ However, the Emperor still wanted Miliutin to make sure his military reforms would not break Russia's economy in the future.

If the administrative problems in the Caucasian Corps could be considered just a tentacle, then Miliutin was now dealing with the whole octopus. As stated previously, the military structure was based on the corps system. Each corps contained all the necessary elements to wage war, while the administrative headquarters were at the next higher level. In the western provinces, the corps were assigned to the First Army under the command of the Governor-General of Poland in Warsaw. The rest of the corps throughout Russia were directly subordinated to the Minister of War.³⁶ The headquarters staffs and administrative elements—which Miliutin considered one of the worst problems of the system—were over-centralized and extremely costly to maintain.³⁷

The operational problems with the corps model, as illustrated by Russia's poor showing in the Crimean War, were twofold. First, the corps was too large of a unit to be employed within the restrictive limits of theater war. Second, its transition from peacetime to war did not reflect the manner in which it was structured. Most of the corps were broken down into detachments during war, which necessitated the creation of headquarter staffs and administrations for each detachment. These would be hastily put

³⁵ John L. H. Keep, *Soldiers of the Tsar: Army and Society in Russia, 1462-1874* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 353.

³⁶ Miller, 38.

³⁷ D. A. Miliutin, *Vospominaniia general-fel'dmarshala grafa Dmitriia Alekseevicha Miliutina, 1860 – 1862* (Moskva: Rossiiskii arkhiv, 1999), 245-246. This will henceforward be referred to as *Vospominaniia*, IV. See also Miller, 33.

together from various sources that normally had no experience with the units to which they were assigned.³⁸

Miliutin proposed scrapping the corps model and replacing it with a territorial system that divided the Empire into fifteen military districts, as well as a few areas which would be administered separately. He took into consideration the “geographic and human diversity” of the Empire, which meant that they varied in size, population and resources.³⁹ The forces within each district would then be organized into divisions as the highest tactical level in peacetime.

Continuing with the district model from the Caucasus, the new system would also de-centralize most of the headquarter staffs and administrative functions, putting them under the control of the military district commanders, who would be in command of all military forces and installations in their area. This included the support staffs and units that were cobbled together during wartime, thus freeing up the lower-level tactical commanders to focus on training and deploying their troops. Through this restructuring, the district commanders would then, in principle, assume the combined functions of the corps commanders, chiefs of the Domestic Watch, and the military governor-generals. Miliutin added that, should the districts coincide with civil governor-generalships, “the military commanders could be relieved of all duties in the civil administration.”⁴⁰

³⁸ Miller, 34.

³⁹ Miliutin, *Vospominaniia*, IV, 265; Miller, 44. See also Miller, 44-45, for a complete breakdown of the districts and the areas over which they administered.

⁴⁰ Miliutin, *Vospominaniia*, IV, 266-268. See also Miller, 35.

The last change to this structure would be the role of the War Ministry. Since most of the executive powers were delegated to the district commanders in this system, Miliutin proposed that the War Ministry assume a general role of coordination and supervision. Thus, with the administrative functions and power to make decisions in the hands of the district commanders, it would greatly reduce both the number of administrative personnel and, consequently, the volume of paperwork and correspondence. Therein, Miliutin would satisfy the Emperor's desires not only by cutting the budget substantially, but also by greatly improving the army's efficiency.⁴¹

The plan was completed and, on January 15, 1862, he delivered his blueprint for reforming the military to Alexander. Although circumstances and debate necessarily changed some of the details of Miliutin's sweeping plan over the next ten years, it remained mostly intact. It was not for a lack of resistance, though, that the reform survived. Once the Emperor had given his approval to the plan, it was then read before a meeting of the Council of Ministers ten days later. Not leaving it open for debate amongst the ministers, Alexander instead turned it over to Miliutin to then draft it up as a statute and let the military experts study it further for recommendations and comment.⁴² Miliutin wrote in his memoirs that he believed the main reason for the Emperor bypassing the Council of Ministers was that many of them were new to their positions—Reitern, Zelenyi and Golovnin had just begun their tenures in office, while Valuev had been minister for only eight months—and they lacked the expertise to conduct a serious,

⁴¹ Miller, 35.

⁴² Petr Aleksandrovich Valuev, *Dnevnik P. A. Valueva: Ministra vnutrennikh del*, I (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo akademii nauk SSSR, 1961), 141.

unbiased discussion.⁴³ However, it was from the experts in the upper ranks of the military where Miliutin would see the most resistance to this reform.

3. Reactions to the Reform

Miliutin was able to complete a draft of the proposals by May, at which time it was printed and distributed to 211 high-level commanders and experts for review. Of that number, 134 responded with their comments and suggestions, which were mostly positive in nature. Fifty-five proposed minor changes—many of which were sensible and quickly incorporated—while ten respondents had serious concerns about the reform. Seven of that group of ten was outright opposed to any change to the old corps system; these were ensconced elites who saw the reform as a direct threat to their power and authority. Those that did not respond to the proposal were assumed to tacitly support the project in its entirety.⁴⁴

In his memoirs, Miliutin mentioned some of the more prominent individuals who either opposed or seriously questioned the reform. One example of opposition was when he received an “unofficial” letter from Duke Meklenberg-Strelitskii, the Chairman of the Weapons Department of the Artillery Directorate:

In this “unofficial” letter, he expressed his opinion [regarding] the irrational inclusion of firing companies in infantry regiments, in the understanding that, in general, all infantry must be considered their own specialty—the [artillery] firing matters, he concluded from that [logic], would necessitate establishing the rank of general-inspector [who would have] a special knowledge of [artillery] weapons.⁴⁵

⁴³ Miliutin, *Vospominaniia*, IV, 312-313.

⁴⁴ Miller, 42.

⁴⁵ Miliutin, *Vospominaniia*, IV, 468.

Miliutin replied to the duke that he totally agreed that artillery operating with the infantry must necessitate consideration, but that it was a rational inclusion for the sake of deploying forces under a unified command. The need for an inspector in artillery matters would be handled by one inspector responsible for all of the firing units in the forces. The duke was not satisfied with his response, which did not surprise Miliutin since the duke would lose his status and position through the reform.⁴⁶

Even as the debate was just getting under way, Miliutin was busy behind the scenes convincing the Emperor to agree to the proposal, starting with the First Army. Because of the growing crisis in Poland, Miliutin believed that reorganizing the First Army into military districts would yield results similar to the Caucasus. This was made apparent in a letter from Miliutin to Bariatinskii dated May 30, 1862, in which he informed his former commander of the action:

In the Polish matter a new era is beginning with the naming of the Grand Duke Constantine Nikolaevich as Governor and Wielopolsky as his Deputy for Civil Affairs. May God grant that this combination achieves happier results than has been the case up to now. With the arrival of the Grand Duke in Warsaw, the First Army and its headquarters are being liquidated and in their place are being formed new separate military administrations in Warsaw, Vilno, and Kiev, [which] are structured approximately on the principles of those ideas which were detailed in my project for a general reform of our military administration. A copy of this proposal is enclosed. The administration by [tactical] troop commanders established by Your Highness in the Caucasus served as the prototype for the new district administrations.⁴⁷

The emperor made it official by issuing a directive on July 6, 1862, which formally authorized the transformation and reorganization.

⁴⁶ Miliutin, *Vospominaniia*, IV, 468.

⁴⁷ Miller, 68; quoted from the 1890 biography of Bariatinskii by A. L. Zisserman.

Even with the Emperor's directive putting the reform into effect, some opponents still would not give up. In December 1863, Miliutin received a letter from Grand Duke Mikhail Nikolaevich, who had taken over as governor-general of the Caucasus in 1862. The Grand Duke had been told by General-Adjutant Kartsov of the General Staff that these changes would raise havoc on his organizational structure. When it came to royalty, Miliutin had to handle the issue more delicately:

In the letter to me from December 11, [1863], he [the Grand Duke] conveyed concerns about the general "breakage" (*lomki*) in the Caucasian military organization and administration, citing the exceptional conditions of the region. In reassuring His Highness in a letter on December 27, I explained that the application of the military district structure system in the Caucasus will not be breakage at all, but to the contrary it has existed as the military structure in that region since the time of Field Marshall Prince Bariatinskii and served, so to speak, as the prototype for organizing the military districts.⁴⁸

The Grand Duke was apparently satisfied with Miliutin's response since he supported the reform thereafter and there were no further grumblings from Kartsov.

Further debate on the matter soon halted because of the situation in Poland escalating into an all-out war; Minister of War Miliutin had to focus his attentions on seeing it through to its successful conclusion. Although the Polish Insurrection would continue in some form until 1867, Miliutin touted his district model as a success as early as 1864. In a report of the previous year's activity, Miliutin noted that the district commanders were able to react more quickly and efficiently to the ever-changing and fluid situations created by the insurgents, much more so than the commander of the old-style corps could ever have done. In his opinion, the new system prevented the Polish

⁴⁸ D. A. Miliutin, *Vospominaniia general-fel'dmarshala grafa Dmitriia Alekseevicha Miliutina, 1863 – 1864* (Moskva: Rossiiskii arkhiv, 2003), 562. This will henceforward be referred to as *Vospominaniia*, V.

War from becoming more serious than it did, and undoubtedly convinced the Emperor of his assertion. On August 6, 1864, the Emperor issued a directive to have the system of military districts implemented throughout the Empire.⁴⁹ Miliutin had won the battle to reorganize the army's Order of Battle structure, but the war of resistance by traditionalists would continue with his efforts to reform the General Staff.

c. General Staff to Main Staff

Miliutin's operational structure reform definitely relieved his office of the "administrative *minutiae*" that had prevented his predecessors from perceiving and dealing with the larger picture.⁵⁰ With that achieved, Miliutin then wanted his position as Minister of War to be the single voice of the War Ministry to the Emperor and Council of Ministers. To accomplish this goal, he needed to reshape the General Staff and reconstitute the Main Staff into one conglomerated staff, and place the newly formed staff under his control.

1. The General Staff under Nicholas I

The Russian General Staff originally came into being under Alexander I in answer to the introduction of mass armies and the Napoleonic wars. After ascending to the throne, Nicholas I split its functions into two separate structures—the Main Staff and the Department of the General Staff. The Main Staff was directly subordinate to the tsar and actually had authority over the War Ministry. It contained all of the main functional

⁴⁹ Miller, 68-69. See also Bushnell, 147-148.

⁵⁰ Miller, 81.

directorates, such as the Quartermaster Corps, Military Topographical Section, and the Main Inspectorate for Cavalry. The Department of the General Staff was subordinated to the Main Staff, and was mainly responsible for military-scientific activities, such as statistics and military history. The other functional departments that had been part of the General Staff were subsequently placed under the authority of the Main Staff Inspectorates. As a result of Nicholas' restructuring, neither staff was decentralized nor functionally efficient, which was contrary to the whole concept of having a General Staff.⁵¹

To make matters worse, Nicholas took his wartime responsibilities to an extreme and often put himself in a role reminiscent of a "warrior king," playing the part of both Commander in Chief and Chief of Staff on numerous occasions. During the Crimean War, Nicholas "chose the regiments he wished to mobilize from lists prepared by his adjutants, and he often communicated his orders directly to army commanders."⁵² The General Staff eventually became something of a joke to many elite officers, reinforced by the Emperor himself with his occasional jokes about the Staff.⁵³ Nicholas had essentially transformed the military staff formulated by his brother and predecessor, Alexander I, into a hierarchy of royal insiders who strategized on the basis of personal glory and past victories, while relegating analysts and historians of the General Staff to a secondary role

⁵¹ Matitiahu Mayzel, *Generals and Revolutionaries, The Russian General Staff During the Revolution: A Study in the Transformation of the Military Elite* (Osnabrück, Germany: Biblio Verlag, 1979), 15; See also David Alan Rich, *The Tsar's Colonels: Professionalism, Strategy, and Subversion in Late Imperial Russia* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998), 69.

⁵² Rich, 66.

⁵³ Bushnell, 148.

as unimportant “eggheads.” In essence, Nicholas I had created what became a great portion of the ensconced military power elite.

As Nicholas’ successor to the throne, Alexander II was not the aggressive micro-manager of military tactics and strategy his father was, so he needed to rely on the advice of military experts on such matters. Miliutin’s proposed reform was intended to provide the Emperor with a professional military staff that could do just that by eliminating Nicholas’ elitist hierarchy. There was, however, one major difference: the War Minister was to be the voice of the staff.

2. Consolidation and Reorganization of the Staff

Miliutin considered the transformation of Russia’s system of military management just as much of a priority as the reorganization of its force structure. He decentralized most of the administrative functions by putting them within the military districts;⁵⁴ the remaining staff-level functions would be logically consolidated to recombine what Nicholas I had divided. The key for Miliutin, however, would be the General Staff model on which he based his transformation.

The two European models examined and evaluated the most by Russian officers, including Miliutin, were the Prussian model and the French model. The key difference between the two models was who ultimately controlled the Staff: in the Prussian model, it was the Commander in Chief of the Staff; in the French model, it was the War Minister. To be the sole voice of the military to the Emperor, Miliutin chose the French model.⁵⁵

⁵⁴ Miliutin, *Vospominaniia*, IV, 265.

⁵⁵ Miliutin, *Vospominaniia*, IV, 461.

The first steps to reforming the General Staff began in 1862 by combining inspectorates from the Main Staff with their subordinate departments to create a series of directorates. For example, the Inspectorate of Engineers was combined with the Department of Engineers to create the Main Engineering Directorate, while the General-Feldzeugmeister was consolidated with the Department of Artillery to form the Main Artillery Directorate. During the next two years, more inspectorates from the Main Staff would be combined with like-departments in the General Staff to form consolidated Main Directorates (*Glavnye upravleniia*), all being directly subordinate to the War Ministry.⁵⁶ In these opening moves of staff reform, Miliutin had reversed roles with the Main Staff by dismantling it and making its functions answerable to the War Ministry.

One inspectorate, however, escaped incorporation and consolidation—the Main Inspectorate for Cavalry, commanded by the tsar’s brother, Grand Duke Nikolai Nikolaevich. This inspectorate had long been the Russian army’s most tradition-bound and aristocratic branch of arms, and, subsequently, was seen as the exclusive playground of grand dukes and Guards cavalrymen.⁵⁷ In early August 1864, the Emperor met with General-Adjutant Count Rzhevuskii, Commander of the Reserve Cavalry and member of the reform review committee. Speaking for the Grand Duke, Rzhevuskii requested that the Main Inspectorate for Cavalry be exempted from the restructuring and remain independent. Realizing that the Grand Duke was “exercising his rights of privilege,” Miliutin did not oppose the proposal, viewing any possible opposition as “an extremely

⁵⁶ Zaionchkovskii, *Voennye reformy*, 100.

⁵⁷ Rich, 69.

ticklish matter.” On August 15, 1864, Alexander signed an order summarily approving the inspectorate’s exemption from consolidation and incorporation.⁵⁸ In this matter, Miliutin apparently would not be the only military voice speaking to the Emperor; royalty had its privileges and the Grand Duke continued to have a direct channel to his brother’s ear.

As for the General Staff, Miliutin’s ultimate design was to both strengthen it and subordinate it to the War Ministry as another directorate. In 1863, he transferred all of the remaining administrative and clerical duties to the General Staff, as well as subordinating the Military Topographical Depot and Nikolaevskii Academy to it. This then became the Main Directorate of the General Staff (*Glavnoe upravlenie General’nogo shtaba—GUGsh*) and was subdivided into several functional sections under the control of the new head of the GUGsh, the Quartermaster-General.⁵⁹ This reorganization definitely strengthened the General Staff. It now controlled the academy for the General Staff—the Nikolaevskii Academy, which gave them oversight to ensure the end-product met their needs and demands. It also brought about the formation of a special Consultative Committee (*Soveshchatel’nyi komitet*) comprised of general officers, with the goal of providing the General Staff with a clearer focus of its military-scientific activities, which became more complex with the incorporation of the Topographical Depot.⁶⁰ One result of this new clarity in purpose was exactly what Miliutin wanted—the

⁵⁸ Miliutin, *Vospominaniia*, V, 560-561.

⁵⁹ Miller, 82-83. See also Rich, 69.

⁶⁰ Rich, 69.

officers of the General Staff became more attuned to the lower ranking officers in the front-line units, as well as the functional status of those units.⁶¹

In December 1865, Miliutin completed the basic reorganization by integrating the Inspectorate Department into the GUGsh. The Inspectorate Department had been a part of the War Ministry but not the General Staff, and was responsible for maintaining historical data on military personnel, order-of-battle, and troop deployment. The resultant combination of the two entities would become the new Main Staff (*Glavnyi shtab*), which Miliutin promptly placed under his direct control.⁶² Miliutin knew that this last move would come under fire from critics who would interpret it as usurping their prerogatives (which it did). To preempt the criticisms, Miliutin explained its “administrative soundness and practical necessity”:

The Department of the General Staff, restricted by its own specialties to such narrow limits, did not have any independence in peacetime; within it were drafted troop itineraries, disposition charts, etc. Therefore, since all general arrangements, especially any recommendations for changes, were concentrated within the Inspectorate Department, it was in effect the center for all the activity of the War Ministry. Besides this, there was another consideration. For a long time we had been hearing complaints about the one-sidedness of General Staff service, and we therefore sought the means to remove those deficiencies which were the consequence of over-concentration.⁶³

The basic organization of the new Main Staff completed what Miliutin started: the reorganization and consolidation of military management entities under his control. With

⁶¹ D. A. Miliutin, *Vospominaniia general-fel'dmarshala grafa Dmitriia Alekseevicha Miliutina, 1865 – 1867* (Moskva: Rossiiskaia politicheskaia entsiklopediia, 2005), 173-174. This will henceforward be referred to as *Vospominaniia*, VI.

⁶² Rich, 70.

⁶³ Miller, 84, quoted from an article written by Miliutin, “Voennye reformy Imperatora Aleksandra II,” *Vestnik evropy*, No. 1, 1882.

the notable exception of the Main Inspectorate for Cavalry, the War Minister had essentially accomplished his goal of removing deficiencies.

With the creation of the new Main Staff and consolidation of the remaining inspectorates into directorates, Miliutin had dismantled the last vestige of Nicholas' creation—His Highness' Main Staff, which Miliutin described as existing only on paper. Oddly enough, though, it also created a problem he hadn't thought of beforehand: the all-important seating order during meetings with the Emperor.

I did not see that, with the abolition of this fictitious [staff], there arose a delicate question: what location will take the place of conducting the general war departments' meetings in the "Emperor's Main Chancery." In previous times, "His Highness' Main Staff" discussed positions and statuses in front of the War Ministry within the Emperor's Main Chancery; the war minister occupied the first [chair] in the war meetings by virtue of his rank as commander of His Highness' Main Staff. What will be the sitting order now with His Highness' Main Staff abolished?⁶⁴

For Miliutin, this matter was extremely important. To be perceived as the single voice of the military, he should be sitting in the chair next to the Emperor for all meetings on military matters. But with all of the old Main Staff components reorganized, would the Emperor acknowledge his position, or would he defer that prized location to the ranking military staff member?

Miliutin considered various possibilities, to include holding all meetings at the ministry itself, but the problem was unexpectedly resolved by Alexander himself at an annual meeting to review the previous years' events for the old Inspectorate Department. Its commander, General Count A. V. Adlerberg, assumed he should take the seat next to

⁶⁴ Miliutin, *Vospominaniia*, VI, 174.

the Emperor because it was a review of his department business. The Emperor, however, requested that the War Minister take that seat. Miliutin noted that in reacting to the matter, Adlerberg displayed “such delicacy, maintaining the quality of a ‘gentleman,’ which he has always displayed.”⁶⁵ The best possible solution had unexpectedly fallen at Miliutin’s feet: The Emperor had openly endorsed him as the voice of the military.

In Miliutin’s mind, he could now view his administrative reforms a success. The military district model was proving itself, the convoluted and ineffectual staff functions were now logically reorganized, and, possibly of more import, Miliutin’s position of authority was solidified.

d. Conclusions

By reforming the Russian military’s operational structure and administrative management, Dmitrii Miliutin addressed the major problems within Russia’s administrative dimension of warfare. Through his experiences, he identified many of the problems well before they became exposed to the world in the aftermath of the Crimean War and, once in a position to better express his views, offered his solutions. In the end, Miliutin saw his vision put into effect with only minor modifications, in spite of stiff resistance from the ensconced power elite. In the context of Dracoby’s dimensions of warfare, much of the resistance came from the political dimension—the home of power and popular opinion where political opposition often covers for personal stakes.

⁶⁵ Miliutin, *Vospominaniia*, VI, 175-176.

1. Political Resistance to the Military Districts

In the matter of reorganizing the order-of-battle into military districts, Miliutin's main critics saw his reforms as a threat to their elite status or power, including the Commander of the Irregular Cavalry, General Baron I. P. Offenbergl; and the Governor-General of St. Petersburg, Prince A. A. Suvorov.⁶⁶ Both of these vocal opponents stood to lose the most by Miliutin's reform.

Offenberg's objection was that a division as the highest tactical level of organization was too small to effectively respond to concentrated, large-scale attacks on a specific area. Instead, Offenbergl proposed retaining the corps, but modeled after the Prussian-style territorial system. Although this counter-proposal was an obvious attempt by Offenbergl to retain his high level of power and prestige, the proposal was not totally without merit. Still, Miliutin was able to successfully argue that his model would not result in a "Crimean-style disaster" as Offenbergl claimed.⁶⁷

Prince Suvorov was more subtle in his criticisms of the proposal, initially complimenting Miliutin for conceiving a plan that was "one of the most remarkable efforts to reform the military administration, and the most comprehensive done by the War Ministry in over fifty years." But he then charged that decentralizing control of administrative decisions to the military commanders would encourage a trend of bureaucratization, which was a central target of the ministry's reform efforts.⁶⁸ As a

⁶⁶ Miller, 48.

⁶⁷ Zaionchkovskii, *Voennye reformy*, 89.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 89-90.

Governor-General, Suvorov's concern seemed logical in light of the student unrest within St. Petersburg at that time (1862). In his memoirs, Miliutin did not directly address Prince Suvorov's objections to the reorganization, but he did describe, in detail, the problems Suvorov faced that summer with the student unrest in St. Petersburg—rioting, arson, the closing of the Chess Club and Sunday schools, and political arrests.⁶⁹ Since it would have been counterintuitive for Miliutin to cavalierly accept anarchy as a price for his reforms, it was more likely that Suvorov simply did not understand that he himself would be the commander of the new military district and, thus, still in control.

To counter the various criticisms—some which claimed the War Minister was simply making a power-grab of his own—Miliutin used two of his supporters to plead his case through the press. General A. I. Lavrent'ev was editor of the military publications *Voennyi sbornik* and *Russkii invalid* at the time and used his position to answer military critics, such as Offenber.⁷⁰ To answer criticisms in the public press, General V. M. Anichkov, one of Miliutin's close friends and aides, took up the defense. Anichkov countered articles written in *Sovremennaia letopis'* with articles of his own, dispelling concerns about the administrative decentralization.⁷¹

2. Resistance to the Main Staff

The long-time internal debate over the French model (War Minister in charge) and the Prussian Model (Chief of Staff in charge) continued to the bitter end for Miliutin.

⁶⁹ Miliutin, *Vospominaniia*, IV, 352-368.

⁷⁰ Miller, 36-37.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 43-44.

Most of the Prussian-model supporters based their opinions on their admiration for its creator, Helmuth von Moltke, the model's Prussian efficiency, as well as Prussia's like-minded aristocratic roots. On the other hand, some simply saw it as logical that the army's operational planning and direction should be in the hands of "an autonomous and highly centralized general staff, the chief of which reported directly to the sovereign," thus relegating the war minister to the "position of an administrative figurehead."⁷² One person in particular, however, apparently had personal reasons for wanting the Prussian model; that person was Miliutin's old boss and supporter, Prince Bariatinskii.

As a professed student of Clausewitz, Bariatinskii believed that power was sovereignty. In the afterglow of his triumph in the Caucasus, he wanted to realize this axiom through Miliutin's appointment as War Minister. With his former Chief of Staff taking care of administrative matters in St. Petersburg, Bariatinskii saw his role as Viceroy of the Caucasus serving as a stepping stone to the position of Chief of the General Staff.⁷³ With the thought of a General Staff modeled in the Prussian style, combined with his long-time close association to Tsar Alexander II, Bariatinskii envisioned himself as the "master of Russia's military destiny,"⁷⁴ or, in Rieber's words, "the strong man behind the throne."⁷⁵ If events had gone the way Bariatinskii had desired, this very well might have been the case, especially given the old Russian axiom

⁷² Menning, 15.

⁷³ Zaionchkovskii, *Voennye reformy*, 289, 293.

⁷⁴ Menning, 15.

⁷⁵ Rieber, 69.

that “the Tsar’s throne rests on the tips of bayonets,” meaning that the military kept the tsars in power.

Miliutin, however, based his General Staff reform on the French model, which, needless to say, upset Bariatinskii greatly. During the years of General Staff reform, the Prince did not openly confront or oppose Miliutin on the chosen model, which was puzzling, given their previous relationship. However, Bariatinskii did become a vocal opponent to Miliutin’s reforms afterwards, culminating in the battle for Universal Military Service.⁷⁶ Still, the question remained regarding Bariatinskii’s silence during these critical years of staff reform. With his stature and *gravitas*, he could have swayed the other ministers and, possibly, the Emperor himself to oppose the direction of change proposed by the War Minister. In his memoirs, Miliutin may have provided part of the answer which, until now, had not been mentioned in other historical discussions.

Miliutin noted in his writings that for much of 1862, Bariatinskii had been battling poor health. After being laid up in Vil’no for months with his illness, the prince was finally able to return to Russia in late January 1863:

Thus, this shining favorite of the Tsar and pet of good fortune left the scene, combining in himself so much remarkable talent and so much weakness. Prince Bariatinskii not once spoke to me—not even during the time when I was with him as chief of staff and his attitudes towards me were most equable, almost friendly—that another official position (*sluzhebnogo polozeniia*) did not exist for him as was in the Caucasus; that in St. Petersburg, he felt out of place. When I objected that, as a close advisor to the Tsar, he can be a big influence on the general movement of national matters there, he replied: “No, right now in St. Petersburg everyone is being allowed on advisories, committees, and conferences in which high words are given; you already have [oratory] masters to speak there. [Thus], I am confident that the oratorical skill will be more developed than ours; I, as you know, cannot speak; I get confused in the smallest of meetings.” And

⁷⁶ This will be covered more in-depth in Chapter III, “Social Reforms – Political Problems.”

really, it often came as a surprise to me that a person so highly respected, a person with such authority—besides possessing such bravery and ease to entertain an entire ladies' salon with his conversation—became so completely embarrassed and flustered when he fell into some kind of business discussion, even though it be of the most modest composition. But besides this peculiar part of his character, there was a different, more important reason that Prince Aleksandr Ivanovich Bariatinskii perceived himself incapable of playing a visible role in common national affairs: He was not accustomed to business-like work, and regarded these matters too perfunctory; he conducted them like a spoiled dignitary, not going into detail and not keeping it on a realistic footing. That is why in serious debates he was considered unarmed and weak.⁷⁷

In Miliutin's description of this exchange with Bariatinskii, there were two factors that provided logical and probable reasons for Bariatinskii's silence. First were his health problems, which would have discouraged a vigorous campaign of opposition. Second and more importantly, it may have been that Bariatinskii simply was not a good public orator. A man with such a prominent aristocratic background and proud history of military victories would have found it totally unacceptable to be crushed and defeated in a battle of words. Therefore, in prudent military fashion, he picked the battles to fight openly and those to fight by proxy. A third possibility, reading between the lines, could also have been that Bariatinskii's behavior in meetings was nothing more than a reflection of his aristocratic background and, inasmuch, his behavior was a performance of being above such "mundane matters." This, then, could also be extended to include his excuse to Miliutin as nothing more than a bit of false modesty on his part.

Whatever the case, Bariatinskii and his supporters lost the battle for the Prussian model as Miliutin's French model was put into effect. The Prussian supporters would win a minor victory in 1870, however, when the directorates were made independent of

⁷⁷ Miliutin, *Vospominaniia*, IV, 423-424.

the War Ministry for the benefit of the royal family commanding them. This came on the heels of an impressive Prussian victory in the French war, which Miliutin's opponents claimed as proof of the model's superiority. In truth, it was more a convenient reason to give the Grand Dukes the ability to act independently of the ministry.⁷⁸

Miliutin, however, was still able to show proof that his administrative reforms worked. In his official end-of-year report to the Emperor in 1870, the statistics showed a 40 percent decline in inbound correspondence to the ministry, and a 35 percent decline in outbound. These facts alone translated into an obvious reduction to the bureaucracy, but when coupled with the resulting reduction of personnel by over 500 officers, this meant a great economic savings as well.⁷⁹ Miliutin had succeeded in fixing the administrative dimension of warfare. It came, however, at a price of compromising on leadership. A combination of direct and indirect pressure from the royal family, as well as a general lack of qualified officers, forced the War Minister to keep many unqualified individuals in top positions of authority. Miliutin hoped to address this, in large part, with a different proposal for reforming conscription and education: The Universal Military Service Statute. This proposal eventually proved to be not only a landmark social reform for Imperial Russia, but also Miliutin's strongest attack against the ensconced power elites of Russia's gentry.

⁷⁸ Rich, 72.

⁷⁹ Miller, 86.

CHAPTER III
SOCIAL REFORMS – POLITICAL PROBLEMS

The post-Crimean atmosphere prompted openly vigorous and diverse debates on the subject of social reform, with most criticisms focused on the multifaceted evils of serfdom. Not only did its critics see serfdom as a moral evil, but also as an institution that stifled Russia's economy and military capability.⁸⁰ In his own analysis of the Crimean defeat, Dmitrii Miliutin cited the "inflexibility of serfdom which prevented Russia from tapping its vast manpower resources and discouraged the maintenance of a large trained reserve."⁸¹ In essence, Miliutin saw the abolition of serfdom as a mandatory prerequisite to instituting his solution for the creation of a large, well-trained army at an acceptable cost to Russia's suffering treasury. The solution was, in fact, a mass conscription similar to the *levée en masse* of Revolutionary France.⁸² When Alexander II signed the Emancipation Manifesto on February 19, 1861, he not only freed the serfs, but also set the wheels in motion for Miliutin's conscription solution. Those metaphoric wheels would travel a rough road over the next thirteen years, however, paved by political opponents who perceived Miliutin as a radical reformer and his proposals a threat to the system of class (*soslovie*) privilege.

⁸⁰ Bushnell, 7.

⁸¹ Miliutin, *Vospominaniia*, IV, 444-446. See also Bushnell, 8-9.

⁸² Zaionchkovskii, *Voennye reformy*, 50.

a. Liberalism and the Influence of Count P. D. Kiselev

One aspect of Miliutin's personality that played a major part both in the formulation of his proposed reforms and in the political opposition to their enactment was his so-called "liberalism." To be clear, Miliutin's liberalism was, in the classic-nineteenth century sense, a call to change what he perceived as being outmoded, outdated, or just plain wrong. This characterization was reflected most strongly in his stance on the issues of serfdom and unearned privilege, which were constantly nurtured and reinforced throughout Miliutin's life by his rich and powerful uncle, Count Pavel Dmitrievich Kiselev.

1. Uncle Pavel Dmitrievich

As the brother of Miliutin's mother with no surviving sons of his own, Kiselev had an impressive résumé of state service. He served as a general during the Napoleonic Wars, fighting in at least twenty-five battles, including the Battle of Borodino. In 1821, he was named Chief of Staff of the Second Army at Tulchyn in the Ukraine, where he soon drew the ire of then-War Minister Count Aleksei Andreevich Arakcheev⁸³ for trying to institute judicial reforms on corporal punishment. Many of the Decembrists in the Southern Revolutionary League served under Kiselev and had his support. However, these "radical" viewpoints and associations did not seem to slow his career progression, even after the Decembrist Revolt in 1825. After successful service as administrator of

⁸³ Count Arakcheev served as War Minister under Emperor Alexander I and was considered a martinet by those who served under him. He was best known for instituting the infamous military colonies in 1810, which were finally abolished in 1857 by decree of Alexander II. One of the better discussions on Arakcheev was written by Michael Jenkins, *Arakcheev: Grand Vizier of the Russian Empire* (New York: The Dial Press, Inc., 1969).

the Danubian principalities, Kiselev was appointed Minister of State Domains under Tsar Nicholas I. In this capacity, he was tasked by the Emperor to investigate effective ways to emancipate the serfs.⁸⁴ Later, as the Russian ambassador to France, he was one of the main players in coordinating and executing the secret Franco-Russian Treaty of 1859.⁸⁵ All of these powerful connections put Kiselev in a good position to help the sons of his sister.

In his memoirs, Miliutin wrote extensively about the amount of time he and his brother, Nikolai, spent with the Kiselev family and, in particular, his uncle “Pavel Dmitrievich.” All throughout Miliutin’s youth, the doting uncle took his two nephews with him on family vacations all over Europe, let them attend official dinners with nobles and members of the ministry, and even looked after the Miliutin family during hard financial times.⁸⁶ More importantly, Kiselev also spent countless hours nourishing the minds of his nephews, ensuring they were well-versed in everything by means of personal conversations, countless books, and even a special tutor for young Dmitrii to teach him French, physics, and math.⁸⁷ Count Kiselev definitely sowed the seeds of nineteenth-century liberalism in Miliutin at an early age, and those seeds came to fruition in the form of Miliutin’s reform proposals.

⁸⁴ W. Bruce Lincoln, “The Ministers of Nicholas I: A Brief Inquiry into Their Backgrounds and Service Careers,” *Russian Review* 34, no. 3 (1975): 313, 315, 318.

⁸⁵ B. H. Sumner, “The Secret Franco-Russian Treaty of 3 March 1859,” *The English Historical Review* 48, no. 189 (1933): 65-83.

⁸⁶ Miliutin, *Vospominaniia*, I, 57-94.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 71.

2. Dmitrii in the Lions' Den⁸⁸

From all indications, Miliutin was not as openly liberal in his beliefs as his brother, Nikolai, but it never stopped the comparisons within the political insider circles in St. Petersburg. One such individual who drew that comparison was Minister of Internal Affairs, Count Petr Aleksandrovich Valuev, who first met Miliutin in January 1861:

I was with Miliutin, the Deputy Minister of War, with whom I was not previously acquainted. He has a pleasing personality, but as regards to the peasant question, he obviously is under the influence of his brother.⁸⁹

His opinion of the future War Minister did not improve when he met with him again a few days later:

Dmitrii Miliutin dropped in on me. He is almost “more red” or more galling than his brother. When I said to him that it is impossible to announce the emancipation at Shrovetide when everyone was drunk, he answered, “Just so, there would be greater profit to the treasury (*kazna*) and alcohol tax farmers (*otkupshchiki*)!”⁹⁰

Valuev's initial assessment of Miliutin seemingly placed them in ideological opposition, which was probably exacerbated by the possibility that Count Valuev—whom some historians considered to be pompous and without a sense of humor⁹¹—simply did not appreciate Miliutin's “lowbrow” soldier-style humor. A year later, Valuev may have modified his opinion of Miliutin slightly to the better, but he still did not

⁸⁸ This title is borrowed, in part, from Miller's chapter entitled, “Daniel in the Lions' Den,” in which the author discussed Miliutin's travails with the Russian Gentry.

⁸⁹ Valuev, *Dnevnik*, I, 60. Cited by Miller, 8.

⁹⁰ Valuev, *Dnevnik*, I, 61.

⁹¹ See Miller, 8, for example.

consider Miliutin to be on par with him politically, especially in regards to social issues.⁹²

Still, the important observation to be made from Valuev's comments was that Nikolai Miliutin's reputation as a reform-minded radical was well known to the political hierarchy in St. Petersburg, which obviously tainted their opinions of Dmitrii Miliutin.

There were similar anecdotal accounts of Miliutin written by other prominent Russians of that time;⁹³ however, it was apparent that none of them truly grasped the complexity of Miliutin's beliefs. His influential uncle indeed helped make Miliutin a reformist, but that was tempered and focused by his military experiences; it was, in truth, his unending concern for the military and its service to Mother Russia that overshadowed everything Miliutin did or said as War Minister.

This was not always clear to his critics, however, especially when it came to the topic of *soslovie* privileges. Just like his brother, Nikolai, and his uncle, P. D. Kiselev, Miliutin was a strong believer in the Slavophile view that class privilege was a concept foreign to the "Russian national experience."⁹⁴ He underscored its implications in his diary:

Reforms among us can be produced only by the supreme power... For us, there are two fundamental conditions, the *sine qua non*—without which the entire political theory as applied to Russia must be considered worthless. The first is the unity and integrity of the state; the second is the legal equality of all its members. For the first condition, a strong central power and resolute predominance of the Russian elements is necessary. For the second condition, it is essential to cast off all obsolete, outlived privileges, to dispense with, once and for all, the rights of

⁹² Valuev, *Dnevnik*, I, 162.

⁹³ See, for example, Aleksandr V. Nikitenko, *Diary of a Russian Censor*, ed. and trans. Helen Saltz Jacobson (University of Massachusetts Press, 1975). 275.

⁹⁴ Miller, 146.

one social group (*soslovie*) over another. Still, strong power does not exclude the personal liberty of the [citizen], nor his autonomy; the predominance of the Russian element does not mean oppression and destruction of the other Russian peoples. The removal of old privileges is a long way from leveling or socialism. Thus, he who sincerely wishes good for Russia and the Russian people, and who thinks more about their future than about their present egocentric interests, must then resolutely reject everything which may either shake the power of unity and indivisibility, or incite or plot the separation of the several parts, or support the concept of the ascendancy of one group (*soslovie*) over another.⁹⁵

Miliutin could not be any clearer that, although a strong and competent military was key to providing for the security of Russia's present and future, it was essential that his country do away with privileges based on social status. This went further than a simple matter of officers being in command because of family connections; this was a belief that Russia would fracture if the reign of the ensconced power elite was not brought to an end. He may not have espoused these views publicly or in meetings with other ministers, but it soon would make no difference. His proposal for universal military service quickly put everyone on notice that the War Minister had declared war on the privileged "good ol' boy" system.

b. The Universal Military Service Statute

Miliutin's idea for mass conscription took shape as a proposal for universal military service. Through this reform, Miliutin sought to accomplish three goals. The first goal was to address the size of Russia's army during wartime and peace. To do this, Miliutin wanted a peacetime standing army of about 794,000 men, with a decrease in their required term of service from ten years to six years. He also wanted to increase the

⁹⁵ Miliutin, *Dnevnik*, I, 32.

number of trained reservists to about 612,000 men, who would be activated and mobilized in times of war. To achieve these levels, the number of conscripts would be increased to 70,000 men per year, but with an initial levy of 95,000 men for the first few years. The mechanics of this plan was to train the conscripts and, after a short period of active service, furlough them into the reserves. Since the reservists would not be paid while on furlough, it would amount to a huge savings to Russia's economy.⁹⁶

The second goal was to raise the educational standards for everyone in the army, regardless of rank or social status. Although Miliutin could not put a numerical value to this goal, he nevertheless saw it as crucial for the future of the Empire. Not only would it increase the dismal literacy rate among the lower ranks, but it would also help the officers to better understand their job and perform at a higher level of competency, as well as train the men as a whole on how to better utilize the newer technologies.⁹⁷

The third goal was the heart of the reform, without which the other two goals could not be achieved. Miliutin planned to make everyone throughout the empire—regardless of class—liable to military conscription. Any possible exemption from service would be considered on the basis of one's life situation, and not social origin.⁹⁸ This last point could not be conceived as anything other than a blatant attack on the gentry's privileged status. Through his experiences and observations, Miliutin had concluded that the gentry were a large part of the problem. They basically weren't required to serve, but

⁹⁶ Miliutin, *Vospominaniia*, IV, 246-251.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 257-258.

⁹⁸ Miller, 182.

those who did serve only did so as officers. Even then, many of them only joined to achieve personal glory and status. Additionally, a great majority of the gentry viewed the officer corps as their private “country club,” and behaved as such. The best officer jobs were always reserved for the aristocratic elite, while the few officers who were of common background not only had to take the undesirable postings, they were also belittled and shunned by their gentry brethren.⁹⁹ Miliutin was convinced that being gentry did not automatically make one a great military leader, and he wanted the best people in command, no matter their background. Thus it was that Miliutin put the gentry in the crosshairs of his reform, and they would fight back until the bitter end.

1. Piecemeal Implementation of the Reform

On September 1, 1862, the Emperor issued a manifesto that established a special commission to review Miliutin’s proposal, and appointed State Secretary N.I. Bakhtin as the chairman. To handle the monumental task, Bakhtin broke the commission into four committees with separate responsibilities. One committee investigated contemporary recruiting practices in other countries; another reviewed the question of conscription exemption, a third one was tasked to create a procedure to allow for voluntary military service, while the last one was to explore possible limits on persons purchasing exemption from conscription.¹⁰⁰

The commission submitted its report to the Emperor on February 13, 1863, with mixed results for Miliutin. The report established administrative procedures for both

⁹⁹ P. A. Zaionchkovskii, *Samoderzhavie i russkaia armia na rubezhe XIX – XX stoletii* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo mysl', 1973), 311.

¹⁰⁰ Miliutin, *Vospominaniia*, V, 362-363. See also Miller, 187-188.

accepting volunteers into the service and implementing the proposed conscription of new recruits. One of the more notable changes approved was for conscription age limits. Miliutin had proposed that, in order to minimize disruption to families and family businesses, no one would be taken below the age of 21, except for the Russian peasants (*gosudarstvennye krest'iane*) who were limited to ages 23 to 27. The commission approved this change, as well as the number of annual conscripts to be levied.¹⁰¹ What was missing from the commission's report, however, was the adoption of Miliutin's proposal to eliminate the gentry's privilege of service exemption.

Resistance was obvious in the committee members' arguments against implementing such a change. They cited the right not to serve, granted in perpetuity by the crown, and that making any changes to that "would mean that the crown had gone back on its word."¹⁰² They also argued that, since the gentry were only five percent of the population, their absence would not make that much of a difference. Their final observation was that, in fact, they had not been avoiding service inasmuch that nearly 50,000 aristocrats currently served as officers in the military. Miliutin noted this in an 1864 article published in *Voennyi Sbornik* as a War Ministry editorial. It drew the inference that the gentry saw themselves to be very different from the other classes, and that for them to be conscripted into the normal conditions of army life would be a cruel

¹⁰¹ Miliutin, *Vospominaniia*, V, 363-365.

¹⁰² Miller, 188.

form of punishment. The editorial's unsympathetic reply to this was that military service was basically tough on everybody.¹⁰³

Opponents in the commission had effectively stalled this keystone to Miliutin's reform and, for the time being, Miliutin had to leave it for later. The situation in Poland had turned into a full-blown war, and it demanded first priority. However, in 1867, after the Polish Insurrection had ended, Miliutin received invaluable insight from an unlikely source, Count P. A. Valuev, on how the War Minister might get this invaluable reform passed—at least in part. Miliutin held the Minister of Internal Affairs in high esteem, referring to him as one of Russia's "most enlightened and educated of our conservatives," who always paid close attention to questions about the military.¹⁰⁴ Valuev occasionally shared his views on what he thought about the various reforms, but, in the case of the conscription issue, he wrote them down for Miliutin to consider:

You are doing much for the army and for ensuring the numbers of its reserves, therefore I believe that, with time, you can further shorten the term of active service; however, you are not ensuring the numbers of officers. Right now you have few officers; ever since a number of Polish in the ranks of the army organized, this shortage [has become] even more appreciable. I am almost convinced that, with the current tendencies of our young men, this shortage, in time, will increase and not decrease. To eliminate it there remains only one remedy—*compulsory short-term military service [but] without infringement on class privilege* for the sake of those classes who are not levied with recruit conscription. I know that this elicits rumors, but:

- 1) It is necessary;
- 2) It elicits fewer rumors if class privilege is given attention and the term of service is short (no higher than 3 years);

¹⁰³ Miller, 188.

¹⁰⁴ D. A. Miliutin, *Vospominaniia general-fel'dmarshala grafa Dmitriia Alekseevicha Miliutina, 1868 – nachalo 1873* (Moskva: Rossiiskaia politicheskaiia entsiklopediia, 2006), 309. This will henceforward be referred to as *Vospominaniia*, VII.

3) It is indirectly of greater use to the educated views from middle classes (the merchants and non-gentry intellectuals [*raznochinetsy*]) on such grounds and with such a perpetual need for discipline, which they currently do not possess;

4) It is a useful distraction from the foreign residence, although for a time, either from ineffective civil offices, or the idleness of the young people with money and education who, with time or good luck, could serve an entire military career or as reserve officers for the frontier departments in the case of war;

5) It may be easier to put forward at the present time in view of the Prussian-Austrian War and Königsberg;

6) It could have been prepared by the press, and *Moskovskie vedomosti*, for example, could have been even more useful in this matter instead of chronically pecking at several of your colleagues;

and 7) Finally, it is not only necessary, useful and possible, but also urgent and pressing.¹⁰⁵

Miliutin concluded from Valuev's "enlightening correspondence" that, in Valuev's opinion, to gain support of the noble class (*dvorianskoe soslovie*) for compulsory military service, he only had to let them keep their special privileges and exclusively be officers.¹⁰⁶ Seeing that not much had changed, Miliutin decided to file away the correspondence until later, and continued with minor adjustments to his administrative reforms. On the unaddressed matter of education reform, however, Miliutin had been working towards his goal through reforms within the ministry itself since he took office.

2. Marching to a Better Education

The efforts to improve the area of education for Russia's officers and soldiers actually began shortly after Alexander II ascended to the throne. In the summer of 1855, Adjutant General Count F. V. Ridiger submitted a series of memoranda to then-War Minister, Prince V. A. Dolgorukov, in which Ridiger outlined the major problems within

¹⁰⁵ Miliutin, *Vospominaniia*, VII, 309-310. Note: Emphasis in original.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 310.

the military—as he saw it—that led to disastrous efforts in the Crimea. One of these letters pointed an accusing finger at military leadership, with a bold assertion that too many incompetent officers occupied high positions at the command level. This, Ridiger asserted, was obvious to the whole army and adversely affected its morale. He went on to state that part of this incompetence was due to insufficient training and education, which translated into the officers' unpreparedness to handle their duties and responsibilities.¹⁰⁷ Another area Ridiger pointed out was the problem of illiterate peasant soldiers who were fine as “parade troops,” but totally unfit for war. This last point was echoed a few years later in a *Voennyi sbornik* article as being common knowledge among Russian officers.¹⁰⁸

The problems outlined by Count Ridiger went mostly unaddressed for several years. In part, the end of the Crimean War and Ridiger's death in 1856 brought any sense of urgency to a halt. Another factor was that the Inspectorate of Military-Educational Institutions (*Voенно-учебные заведения*—VUZs) was not under the jurisdiction of the War Ministry at that time. When Alexander ascended to the throne in 1855, the Engineer, Artillery and War Academies were under the administrative control of the War Ministry; however, the new Emperor quickly changed that by combining the three academies into the Imperial War Academy, and placed it under the administrative control of the Director of the VUZs, who was part of Nicholas I's Main Staff.¹⁰⁹ This meant that when Miliutin

¹⁰⁷ Miller, 91. See also Rieber, 24; and Bushnell, 148.

¹⁰⁸ Brooks, 70.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 71.

became Minister of War, the only educational institution under his control was the Nikolaevskii Academy of the General Staff.

The other part of the problem could be found in the personage of Miliutin's predecessor, Nikolai Onufrievich Sukhozhanet. When Alexander had originally appointed Sukhozhanet as War Minister on April 17, 1856, it came as a shock to everyone in the Russian military. Sukhozhanet had served exclusively as a line officer in the field, and therefore had no real administrative experience. He was also considered by his fellow officers as "half-literate and ignorant of military science."¹¹⁰ Miliutin echoed this sentiment in his memoirs, describing the elderly Minister as "a good person, but possessing very little formal education and almost illiterate. At this time (1861) he was 67 years old, but he had the look of a much older man: all white, frail, and half-blind."¹¹¹

The question asked, then, was why Alexander would appoint a man that was resoundingly unqualified to the position of Minister of War. The most accurate answer by historians of Imperial Russia was that Sukhozhanet fit the oft-repeated criterion of Alexander's father, Nicholas I, when he chose an aide: "I do not need learned minds; I need loyal men."¹¹² And Sukhozhanet was indeed loyal to Emperor Alexander, who literally dictated every military reform the Minister was to implement. Thus, Sukhozhanet never took the initiative to improve military education until the Emperor directed him to address it.

¹¹⁰ Brooks, 67.

¹¹¹ Miliutin, *Vospominaniia*, IV, 22.

¹¹² Brooks, 67.

So it was at the “urging” of the Emperor in 1860 that Sukhozanet finally enacted a token effort to improve the education of officers already serving by establishing special schools for *Junkers*.¹¹³ Subordinate to the corps and division staffs, only nine of the schools were actually opened; two of those closed their doors in 1862, and the rest followed suit shortly after.¹¹⁴ The only bright spot for Sukhozanet in addressing educational initiatives was in the creation of several schools for addressing illiteracy and teaching basic arithmetic to the lower-ranking soldiers assigned to tactical units. To help the non-commissioned officers and clerks, schools were set up at the regimental level to teach more advanced general and technical subjects. The results of these schools were moderately impressive, as the literacy rate of active duty soldiers grew from about twelve percent in 1860 to almost fifty percent by the end of the decade.¹¹⁵ Even in this, however, Sukhozanet cannot take full credit, for the genesis of these schools could be found in Miliutin’s models established in the Caucasus region during its reorganization.¹¹⁶

So, when Miliutin took over as War Minister and submitted his proposed reforms, changes were already taking place within the military education system. Now he wanted to move things toward more in-depth education reform, and one of the first areas Miliutin

¹¹³ A *Junker* was a hereditary noble who entered the army as a noncommissioned officer with the chance to become a commissioned officer after a term of service and an examination.

¹¹⁴ Brooks, 72.

¹¹⁵ Miller, 89-90. The fifty percent rate was based on the standard of soldiers possessing “some degree of literacy,” which meant they could recite the alphabet and sign their name.

¹¹⁶ See Chapter II on administrative reforms for details.

wanted to address spoke to the heart of better educating an officer—teaching him to think.

While he was travelling Western Europe in 1840, Miliutin had written in his travel diary about how pedantic and dull the training was for Russian officer candidates in comparison to their western counterparts:

Our officers are educated totally like parrots (*popugai*). Prior to commissioning they are kept in a cage and are constantly yelled at: “Polly (*popka*), Left turn!” and Polly repeats: “Left turn!” “Polly, present arms!” and Polly repeats it. . . When Polly gets to the point he remembers all of these words, besides learning to be held by one claw . . . they give him epaulettes, open the cage, and he joyfully leaves it with hate towards it and his former teachers. . . ¹¹⁷

This was the very thing Miliutin set out to change with his first proposals in education reform.

Since most of the officer corps came from *Junker* schools, he recommended a special committee be formed to come up with a comprehensive program that would fix what Sukhozanet half-heartedly instituted and improve the other better established schools. As the model to use, he pointed to the *Junker* school in Helsinki, Finland, which was the only school in the Empire that combined training of the cadet corps with the *Junkers*. By combining the two schools, he sought to eliminate the relatively expensive cadet corps, whose graduates did not necessarily enter military service and often required additional training. A small number of cadet corps graduates went into civil service, which Miliutin saw as a waste of the military’s budget. Additionally, for the graduates who were assigned to one of the special branches—such as artillery or engineering—

¹¹⁷ Miliutin, *Dnevnik*, I, 26-27.

more training was required, which meant attending those specialized academies at an even higher cost to the state.¹¹⁸

One of the factors that certainly played a part in Miliutin's targeting of the cadet corps was that they were the schools for the children of privileged and rich aristocrats. In his comprehensive reform proposal of January 15, 1862, Miliutin argued that "Discipline is the foundation of military service; it inescapably must be the basis of military training."¹¹⁹ This was applicable to the cadet corps because of the sheltered life many of them lived before entering the military, and thus being unable to act appropriately or live within their means as officers. It was also part of a bigger point he was making about the early education of the younger students. The cadet corps had established several day schools that provided instructors and materials for home schooling of those too young for regular training. In Miliutin's opinion, this type of education should either be handled at home with private tutors or in civilian institutions, like *gimnaziia*,¹²⁰ not in military schools whose only reason for existence was to train young men for a life in the military. When the students had completed their lower-level schooling, they could then take an examination in general sciences for admission into a *Junker* school.¹²¹ In other words, Miliutin was recommending the same educational path he followed as a youngster.

¹¹⁸ Miller, 98-100.

¹¹⁹ Quoted by Miller, 102.

¹²⁰ The spelling of *gimnaziia* and *gimnazium* in this manner, instead of the commonly-used *gymnasia* and *gymnazium* found in works by historians like Miller, was for continuity of translation from Miliutin's memoirs.

¹²¹ Miller, 103.

The cost savings for his proposal was substantial. Not only would a change in curriculum to focus on both academic and pertinent military subjects reduce the need for follow-on attendance in a specialized academy, it also would alleviate the expensive burden of providing a general education for the sons of privileged families. Needless to say, Miliutin's broadside attack to dismantle the cadet corps brought out staunch defenders of what they considered a vested and hallowed institution. The biggest hurdle for Miliutin to overcome was that one of its defenders was the Emperor himself.¹²²

To Alexander's credit, he went forward with appointing a special committee to look into the matter, headed by Grand Duke Mikhail Nikolaevich. To help plead his case, Miliutin found sympathetic supporters in the personages of General-Adjutant Count S. G. Stroganov, and Minister of Public Instruction A. V. Golovnin. In the end, it was a compromise proposed by Golovnin that swayed the conservative committee. The compromise allowed for the cadet corps to remain as a training ground for officer candidates, but all of the lower-level classes in general instruction would be relegated to a military *gimnazium* as Miliutin had proposed.¹²³

Still, the Emperor was reluctant to sign off on the measure—that is, until a crisis of discipline arose in the First Moscow Cadet Corps in late 1862 that culminated in a mutiny against its Director, Major General V. N. Lermontov. The Emperor saw it as the last straw and reluctantly agreed to the committee's recommendations. On January 21, 1863, Miliutin issued a *prikaz* that brought the VUZs under the control of the War

¹²² Miller, 119.

¹²³ Ibid.

Ministry as the Main Institution of Military Instruction. The Emperor then signed the measure on May 14, 1863, which made everything official.¹²⁴ Miliutin had gotten most of what he wanted in the reform inasmuch that the military schools were no longer in the business of lower-level general education. Pressure from conservatives never ended for Miliutin, however, with debates about the curriculum taught in the military schools and battles over jurisdiction continuing throughout his tenure as War Minister.

The last major debate over curriculum in the *gimnaziia* came in early 1871 when the Minister of Public Education, Count D. A. Tolstoi, put forth three proposals to the State Council. In question was whether to continue with Miliutin's model of *Realschulen* in the military secondary schools (*gimnaziia*), or to go back to the civilian model of the classical *gimnaziia*.¹²⁵ The *Realschulen* were so-named because of their focus on modern languages—French and German, mathematics, and natural sciences. As its name implies, the focus of the classical *gimnaziia* was on the classical languages of Latin and Greek.¹²⁶ Supporting Tolstoi through scathing editorials and articles were the editors and publishers of *Moskovskie vedomosti* and *Russkii vestnik*, M. N. Katkov and P. M. Leont'ev, respectively, whom Miliutin viewed as “two ardent and one-sided admirers of ‘classical’ antiquity.”¹²⁷ Once again, Miliutin found himself in a battle with multiple and desperate opponents.

¹²⁴ Miller, 119-122.

¹²⁵ Miliutin, *Vospominaniia*, VII, 373.

¹²⁶ See Miller, 126, footnote 123.

¹²⁷ Miliutin, *Vospominaniia*, VII, 373.

With the help from several who generally opposed Miliutin and his reforms—most notably being the Chief of Gendarmes, Count P. A. Shuvalov—Tolstoi argued that Miliutin’s *Realschulen* would essentially lower standards to achieve a certificate (*attestat*) needed by students to apply to the universities.¹²⁸ Count Shuvalov voiced his belief that it would allow artisans and merchants to become too large a portion of the officer corps, thus diluting the “special position of the gentry,”¹²⁹ as well as being a hardship for young noblemen who would find conditions in rural soldiers’ quarters intolerable.¹³⁰ Citing data obviously given to him by Count Shuvalov, Tolstoi added that the secret police (*okhraniteli*) had their own concerns that the *Realschulen* would result in a massive influx of young proletariats (*unoshei-proletariev*) who would contaminate the officer corps and, subsequently, break down discipline and morale throughout the military.¹³¹

Miliutin knew that Alexander was also concerned about this since the Emperor received those same reports from the *okhraniteli*, which put Miliutin on the defensive for months to come. Eventually, the onslaught from both Tolstoi and his allies in the media won out. On July 2, 1871, the Emperor ruled that students wishing to apply to universities, including the Medical-Surgical Academy, would be required to have an *attestat* from a classical *gimnazium*. In his memoirs, Miliutin expressed some bitterness

¹²⁸ Miliutin, *Vospominaniia*, VII, 374.

¹²⁹ Miller, 219.

¹³⁰ Baumann, 21.

¹³¹ Miliutin, *Vospominaniia*, VII, 374-375. See also Miller, 219.

about this because the council members had recommended otherwise in May. In a vote of 29 to 19, the commission majority had put forth their support for Miliutin's *Realschulen*, citing testimonies from military commanders that students from those types of schools made outstanding officers. In this case, however, the Emperor's concerns over agitators in the universities trumped all, and the commission's recommendation was ignored.¹³²

3. Prussia Resurrects the Universal Service Debate

The outbreak of the Franco-Prussian War in July 1870, and the manner in which the Prussians manhandled the highly-touted French armies, quickly brought the issue of universal service back to the forefront of debate in St. Petersburg. Miliutin expressed a justified sense of frustration on the matter:

The Franco-Prussian war created strong impressions through all of Europe. On the minds (*umy*) of all Europeans were the enormous military forces, deployed by Prussia; their organization was perfect, inflicting damage on a powerful enemy with quick strikes. Then they [the Europeans] understood how ill-timed it was for us to worry solely about the economy, disregarding the development and improvement of our military forces. Worries about reductions and savings (regarding the frontier measure) were put aside temporarily on the back burner; they began to talk about whether our armed forces were sufficient for the defense and security of Russia in the event of some kind of new political disturbances in Europe.

This question was already put to me previously. In the all-encompassing report of January 1, 1869, about the status of War Ministry matters for the previous year of 1868, it amounted to an uncertainty of whether we could, in view of other colossally-armed European nations, contend with those forces [that were] established in the same period as our military establishment. That very same uncertainty was raised anew in the next all-encompassing report of January 1, 1870: pointing to the necessity of creating new military forces, *in addition to* the [current] active army, I stressed: "That question is so important and is related to so many national interests that require independent scrutiny, why would it not

¹³² Miliutin, *Vospominaniia*, VII, 376-381.

totally please His Imperial Majesty to enjoin that, on this topic, a particular memorandum was put forward which might convince all sides of the discussion in the committee to somehow view this the most advantageous to Your confidence in important governmental matters.” Opposite the place of the report’s status was the Emperor’s comment: “Concur.”¹³³

Now seeing his opportunity to move the question of universal service forward, his concern then moved towards the problem of strong opposition:

The problem was ticklish (*shchekotlivaia*). In the case of our classes’ privileges and diversity, conferred during different times, favored over other categories of the population, how can one establish the criteria in new legislative work for putting an end to it, to which then could be disseminated obligation of military service? How far will modern day concepts and thoughts of the time be allowed in regards to traditional privilege and favor, without fear of inciting shouts within the camps of our conservatives [sic]?¹³⁴

Miliutin’s concerns were answered when Count Valuev came to see him in August of 1870. Having just returned from a three-year assignment in Western Europe as a member of the State Council, Valuev had observed first-hand Prussia’s impressive victory over the French, and felt compelled to come see the War Minister right away. Just as he had done in 1867, Valuev was offering Miliutin a solution to the issue of conscription; however, this time it was with an endorsement of Miliutin’s proposal, not merely a possible compromise. After Valuev briefed the War Minister on what he had seen, he told Miliutin that he was fully supportive of him on the questions of developing Russia’s military forces, increasing the reserves, and compulsory military service. Miliutin asked him to write down his conclusions and the reasoning behind them, and

¹³³ Miliutin, *Vospominaniia*, VII, 307. Note: Emphasis in original.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, 308.

pass them on to the Emperor. A few days later, Valuev gave the Emperor his memorandum entitled, “Thoughts of a Civilian (*nevoennyi*) on Our Military Forces.”¹³⁵

The title of Valuev’s memorandum definitely and deliberately underscored the fact that his views on the matter came from someone outside the purview of the military, which allowed his comments to be perceived as more impartial on the matter. The end of Valuev’s memorandum—written in his typically verbose fashion—underscored to the Emperor that, given the current conditions throughout the Empire, the measure would never have passed without the Prussian military changing the dynamics of the situation. Miliutin followed up with a report of his own on October 5, 1870, and October 7, the Emperor ordered his War Minister to proceed with finalizing the reform as a statute.¹³⁶

On November 4, 1870, the Emperor made it official with a public announcement in the newspaper *Pravitel’svennyi vestnik*. Meanwhile, Miliutin and his staff had been busy putting together drafts of the proposal, which they divided into two parts. With much of the work done by Chief of the General Staff Count F. L. Geiden (Heiden), Lieutenant General G. V. Meshcherinov, and Major General N. N. Obruchev, Miliutin submitted drafts of the statute only three days after the Emperor made his announcement.¹³⁷ He was finally on the home stretch of bringing this monumental reform into reality, but the race was far from over.

¹³⁵ Miliutin, *Vospominaniia*, VII, 309-310.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, 311.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, 312-314.

4. *Special Commissions Debate the Statute*

Based on Miliutin's submitted drafts, the Emperor appointed two special commissions on November 17, 1870, to handle the divided statute. The first commission was assigned to work on the military conscription portion of the statute; the other was assigned the portion pertaining to the creation of reserve forces and any remaining problems from the 1862 reorganization. Overseeing both of the commissions as chairman was Miliutin's trusted Chief of the General Staff, Count Geiden. After a short and unavoidable delay, the two commissions started working in earnest on their portions of statute in early January 1871.¹³⁸

Because the issue of compulsory service affected the whole of Russia's society in so many ways, the commission dealing with that portion of the statute met with representatives of various classes, economic groups, and delegates from several provincial *zemstva*. With such a wide cross-section of Russia's society to cover, the commission divided itself into four subcommittees to handle the diversity, as well as to ensure no voice was suppressed or left unheard.¹³⁹

From the privileged classes, unsurprisingly, the main concern was the term of service for volunteering. Miliutin had wanted the best educated and qualified individuals to become officers, so he based the lengths of service on the level of their education and whether they were volunteers or conscripts. Using Miliutin's formula, this meant that anyone with a university degree who volunteered would only serve three months on

¹³⁸ Miliutin, *Vospominaniia*, VII, 315.

¹³⁹ Zaionchkovskii, *Voennye reformy*, 307.

active duty before going into the reserves; volunteers with only a primary education in a *progimnazium* served two years before going into the reserves. On the other hand, conscripts with a university degree served six months before going into the reserves, while those with a primary education *not* in a *progimnazium* served four years active service before going into the reserves.¹⁴⁰ After hearing all concerned sides on the various issues, the two commissions compiled their findings and deliberations, and submitted the preliminary reports to the State Council in late 1872.¹⁴¹ Meanwhile, the undercurrent of opposition to Miliutin continued to grow into a flooding cascade.

5. The Secret Conference of 1873

On January 17, 1873, Major General N. N. Obruchev submitted a special report to Miliutin, entitled “Thoughts on the Defense of Russia.” Obruchev was Miliutin’s replacement at the Nikolaevskii Academy and, inasmuch, was responsible for analyzing military trends and submitting his conclusions and recommendations to the War Ministry. In this report, Obruchev analyzed the various conflicts throughout Europe during the last ten years, as well as changes and advancements within European armies during that timeframe. Comparing those statistics to the changes and improvements within the Russian military, his conclusions were ominous. Most markedly, Obruchev stated that a future war to the west would likely be against a coalition of the newly unified Germany and Austria-Hungary, against which Russia already suffered a numerical disadvantage to each individually, even if one included its ill-trained reserves. To satisfactorily meet such

¹⁴⁰ Zaionchkovskii, *Voennye reformy*, 308-311.

¹⁴¹ Miller, 199.

a combined force, Obruchev concluded, it would take an additional 300 battalions of Russian troops deployed to the West European front. In the pages of his report, Obruchev had essentially pushed the panic button by inferring that the issue of reserve forces and compulsory service was moving forward too slowly.¹⁴²

For Miliutin, this report could not have come at a better time. During the summer of 1872, he had asked the Emperor to convene a special meeting to examine the military's capabilities more thoroughly than had been achieved by the special commissions. After touring the Caucasus region and meeting with all of the high ranking officials there, Alexander agreed.¹⁴³ In mid-January 1873, the Emperor called for a Secret Conference to discuss the matter the topic brought up by the War Minister. Miliutin saw this as the perfect opportunity to make a final push on the issues of reserve forces and compulsory service, with Obruchev's report serving as the *pièce d' rèsistance*.¹⁴⁴

Start of the conference was delayed until February 28 due to the death of Grand Duchess Elena Pavlovna, so Miliutin had a good month to plan the meeting's agenda with the Emperor. Several conference participants had arrived in St. Petersburg to attend the Grand Duchess' funeral between January 10 and 12, which meant Miliutin's opponents had the same amount of time to plan their own agenda.¹⁴⁵ In addition to

¹⁴² Menning, 19-21. See also Zaionchkovskii, *Voennye reformy*, 280-288.

¹⁴³ Menning, 21.

¹⁴⁴ Miliutin, *Vospominaniia*, VII, 574.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 574-576.

Miliutin and the Emperor, representatives included the Ministers of Navy, Foreign Affairs, and Finance. There were also several individuals who were openly hostile towards Miliutin and his reforms, most notably Prince Bariatinskii and Count Shuvalov. The ones that truly worried Miliutin, however, were the members of the Imperial family who were also in attendance. These were Crown Prince Alexander Aleksandrovich, and Grand Dukes Mikhail Nikolaevich and Nikolai Nikolaevich.¹⁴⁶ They were not open adversaries of Miliutin, but if they sided against him or his proposals, their sway with the Emperor could spell his doom.

Miliutin spent the month before the meeting talking with many of the representatives, listening to their views and trying to get a feel on how the conference might proceed. He first spoke to the two field marshals in attendance, Count G. G. Berg and Prince Bariatinskii. According to Miliutin, Count Berg showed little interest on the issues to be discussed, and only repeated that,

in his opinion, there was no necessity for any radical changes to currently established forces and administration, and the focus [should only be] to continue to improve what already existed; then he quickly turned the conversation to several personal questions, more interesting to him, such as, for example, a sendoff in the Khivinskaya office for the adoption of his nephew, etc.¹⁴⁷

From this response, Miliutin could definitely see that the Count could be swayed, but what was more interesting was his subsequent conversation with Bariatinskii.

¹⁴⁶ Miliutin, *Vospominaniia*, VII, 582-583.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 575.

Miliutin described his pre-conference meeting with Bariatinskii as “very short, ceremonial, and dry.” After several questions about the upcoming conference,

Bariatinskii asked Miliutin

whether it would be conducted within the narrow framework of a definite theme, or if members would be permitted to raise questions on their own initiative.

“Of course,” I said, “the conference program will be [within a framework], but in all probability, the Emperor is granting all of the participants to do [such] and your proposition in interest of general matters.”

“Well, for example,” he continued, “[what] if I raise a question about shortages in expenditures within a military department?”

“Undoubtedly,” I answered, “any indication of the possibility of expenditure shortages will be received with great interest; I personally would very much be interested to know, exactly in which goods to possibly expect shortages, so that all new questions being raised challenging, against that, increases in expenditures.”

“Yes, that example,” he said, “I intend to offer to abolish the military-educational institutions; why waste several millions on these institutions?”

I did not see the need to enter into a discussion about such an odd supposition, but stated only that, probably, he will change his opinion, if he allows himself to look hard at the necessary data. That put a stop to our discussion; I stood up; he accompanied me to the anterior, and after that I was not near him even once.¹⁴⁸

Bariatinskii’s words obviously indicated that the conference would not go smoothly, and Miliutin became wary; something was afoot. A few days later, his suspicions were elevated when he started hearing rumors that both field marshals and Grand Dukes Nikolai and Mikhail Nikolaevich were holding preliminary conferences of their own, in which they were calling for views contrary to Miliutin’s. This brought

¹⁴⁸ Miliutin, *Vospominaniia*, VII, 575.

Miliutin to the conclusion that there was apparently a secret plot against him.¹⁴⁹ If this were true, not only were his reforms in danger, but his ministerial position as well.

In his memoirs, Miliutin pondered about the Grand Dukes, because they could definitely wield death blows to his reforms and career. He had frequently met with the Grand Dukes, but they never mentioned their suppositions to him. A sudden recollection then truly shook Miliutin: Grand Duke Nikolai Nikolaevich had been overheard on two occasions discussing a “preliminary memorandum” in which he expressed that he was “taking the matter from a different conclusion and leading it to some kind of unexpected results . . .”¹⁵⁰ Was the Grand Duke planning to turn this conference into a referendum against Miliutin? From all appearances, this was the case; but why? Miliutin concluded that there was a previously unperceived “coldness” between himself and the Grand Dukes. Upon reflection, the only logical answer was that his reforms had so threatened their powerbase within the military as to draw their ire and resentment.¹⁵¹ This Secret Conference was, indeed, not going to go smoothly.

When the first session of the conference began on February 28, it started out without a hint of any trouble for Miliutin. The Emperor opened the conference with a declaration of his will that first, everyone was to maintain everything said as strictly secret and, second, to keep to the program agenda previously sealed and distributed to all of the conference representatives. In his memoirs, Miliutin was quick to point out that

¹⁴⁹ Miliutin, *Vospominaniia*, VII, 577.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 578.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 578-579.

the Emperor's first point was, for the most part, aimed at Prince Bariatinskii, who had a habit of talking official business while socializing in women's salons. On more than one occasion his views on such matters made their way to retired General R. A. Fadeev, a former Caucasus aide-turned journalist and toady of Bariatinskii, who used the information as fodder for his attacks on Miliutin's reforms in the newspaper *Russkii mir*.¹⁵²

Proceeding with the agenda put together by the Emperor and himself, Miliutin recounted the state of the military in the aftermath of the Crimean War and what had since been done to correct the problems, to include his reforms. Having set the stage with a quick history lesson, Miliutin then used Obruchev's report to spell out the current threat to the Empire, concluding that additional resources were truly required to ensure the Empire's security.¹⁵³ The fact that these were the same resources Miliutin had been calling for all along was not lost on any of the representatives.

The representatives began discussing what Miliutin had presented, but his opponents quickly turned it into choruses of accusations covering all aspects of his reforms. Prince Bariatinskii led the way with charges that Miliutin's reforms had bureaucratized the army, resulting in excessive waste and unnecessary expenditures.

¹⁵² Miliutin, *Vospominaniia*, VII, 583. Note: In a series of articles attacking the Universal Military Service statute, Fadeev not only went so far as to proclaim that Russia had enough educated men, but also that the gentry were meant to be the shepherds and the rest of the population the sheep. (See Miller, 204-205.)

¹⁵³ Zaionchkovskii, *Voennye reformy*, 294.

Minister of Finance M. Kh. Reiter then joined the fray by citing a report that additional military expenditures would endanger the fiscal survival of the state.¹⁵⁴

Miliutin vehemently countered with facts and figures of his own and was in the middle of refuting the financial report, when the Emperor suddenly halted him with the statement, "Excuse, me, but I am interrupting you." The emperor then stood up and walked around the conference chambers to scold the representatives. He loudly and angrily condemned the conduct of certain representatives whose attacks on all of the new departments controlled by the War Ministry were being "conducted through newspaper polemics," which, in his views, caused confidence in Russia's military forces to waver not only in the eyes of Europe, but in the eyes of their own army as well. Saying as much, the Emperor then sat down next to Prince Bariatinskii. Needless to say, this brought the tirade against Miliutin to an abrupt halt, and discussions for the rest of the day went fairly well. In the end, Miliutin saw this day as a victory for the War Ministry and a total fiasco for Bariatinskii.¹⁵⁵

Subsequent committee sessions went relatively smoothly, but Miliutin still found himself constantly having to defend his administrative reform of the military district system against those who called for a return to a corps-styled organization. In the end, however, his reforms not only remained intact, but the committee approved much of the increases to both active and reserve forces as well.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵⁴ Menning, 21.

¹⁵⁵ Miliutin, *Vospominaniia*, VII, 584-585.

¹⁵⁶ Zaionchkovskii, *Voennye reformy*, 335-336.

Meanwhile, the Emperor had not been quite ready to dismiss Bariatinskii. He had obviously chastised the Prince during the first session, but the Emperor also valued his friendship and council. So in an attempt to find a middle ground, Alexander appointed a special subcommittee to find a solution that would ease the financial burden without sacrificing national defense. Much to Miliutin's chagrin, the Emperor named Bariatinskii chairman of the subcommittee. The subcommittee met to find a solution during the whole month the full committee deliberated, but did not finish its work for several months. Progress was slow in coming due to Bariatinskii often being laid up with attacks of the gout, but the subcommittee finally produced a pamphlet of its results in June 1873. Unsurprisingly, it was a continued indictment of the War Minister by Bariatinskii and his supporters.¹⁵⁷

The subcommittee's conclusions amounted to four points: a demand to reduce and simplify official correspondence; a demand to reduce the number of administrative personnel; a suggestion to use the savings realized from the first two points to raise the salaries of remaining personnel; a demand for greater economy by improving the morality of the administrative personnel.¹⁵⁸ The commission was obviously claiming that Miliutin had not only created a bureaucratic nightmare, but that it also resulted in mass corruption and incompetence.

To Miliutin's benefit, however, it soon became evident that the committee's conclusions were faulty. In their desire to condemn the War Minister and his reforms,

¹⁵⁷ Miller, 214-216.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., 216.

they had cited incorrect statistics and misprinted reports—all of which Miliutin was easily able to refute. The Emperor questioned him carefully on each item from the report, to which he gave one satisfactory response after another.¹⁵⁹ When it was over, Miliutin stood exonerated, while Bariatinskii's influence in St. Petersburg took a quick downward spiral into marginalized ineffectiveness. A few years later, Valuev noted in his own diary that Bariatinskii had become a “zero” in the government and akin to a foreigner at Court.¹⁶⁰

6. *The Home Stretch*

The last challenge to making universal service a reality came from members of the State Council, who were convened in a special session in April 1873 to discuss administrative structuring and procedures for implementing conscription. With many of the same people from the Secret Conference also participating in the special session, it could have been another drawn out battle for Miliutin, but in the end, as Miliutin described it, the subject proved to be “too dry for our raging orators.”¹⁶¹ Count Shuvalov started the first serious assault by repeating previous claims of too many Jews and educated youths contaminating the minds of innocent soldiers. Miliutin was well-prepared for these same old arguments, and quickly brought the matters to a close. He won support for establishing a levy system for Jews and, as for the radical students, the

¹⁵⁹ Miller, 218.

¹⁶⁰ P. A. Valuev, *Dnevnik P. A. Valueva: Ministra vnutrennikh del*, II (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo akademii nauk SSSR, 1961), 71.

¹⁶¹ Miliutin, *Dnevnik*, I, 81.

military was already woefully short of educated personnel and could not afford to waste such a valuable resource.¹⁶²

The toughest opponent in this session was Count Tolstoi, who once again argued that education was the purview of his ministry and not the military; he also redressed the issue of class privileges. This time, Miliutin was ready for Tolstoi's arguments and read a prepared memorandum that reiterated his previous proposals and reasoning for graduated terms of service, which depended on an individual's level of education. The War Minister then took on Tolstoi personally with a scathing indictment of Russian education and its general failures under his administration. At the root of those failures, Miliutin pointed to a lack of schools, the poor condition of those that did exist, and the impractical curricula Tolstoi had so highly touted a few years earlier. The next day, Tolstoi tried to counter Miliutin's accusations, but, much to Miliutin's surprise, Grand Duke Konstantin Nikolaevich took up his cause and heatedly defended the War Minister and his views. After Konstantin's intervention, the debate essentially sputtered out. By the end of the month, all debates were exhausted and the work was referred to a regular session of the State Council.¹⁶³

When the State Council convened in the fall of 1873, it was for a final review of the universal service statute, and once again it appeared Miliutin would be facing the same conservative opponents using the same basic arguments. In his diaries, he acknowledged that Count Tolstoi was once again leading the way with his "peevisish,

¹⁶² Miller, 220-221.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*, 221-222.

jaundiced, obstinate disputes.”¹⁶⁴ With momentum on Miliutin’s side, Tolstoi’s objections were mostly ineffectual and the State Council moved forward to finalize their proceedings. On November 16, they signed the journal and, on November 28, the Imperial Manifesto was read before the State Council.¹⁶⁵

The statute was going to become reality, but it still didn’t stop some last-minute attempts by conservatives to derail it. Most notable was the effort by Count Shuvalov in mid December, who achieved some minor concessions based on prior agreements with the War Ministry concerning terms of service. A few other small but niggling details were argued about, to include the role of minorities, but Grand Duke Konstantin exercised his rights as chairman to quell the obvious efforts to stall. The lingering details were resolved or withdrawn, and the final version of the statute was read before the State Council on December 24, 1873. The Emperor made it official when he signed the decree on January 1, 1874.¹⁶⁶ Miliutin’s long battle for a social reform that was meaningful—both personally and professionally—had finally come to fruition.

c. Conclusions

1. On the Topic of Liberalism

Much has been said in scholarly discussions about Miliutin’s liberal and reformist beliefs, with a great deal of the credit—or blame, depending on the point of view—going

¹⁶⁴ Miliutin, *Dnevnik*, I, 105.

¹⁶⁵ Miller, 223.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 224-225.

to his uncle, Count P. D. Kiselev. Miliutin's memoirs contained numerous passages to support much of this discussion. The section that was most supportive was for the year 1871, in which Miliutin received a letter from Count Kiselev. In the quoted words of his letter, Kiselev congratulated his nephew on getting the issue of compulsory service back on track. He then continued by railing against the gentry and the serf issue as a whole. In his personal comments, Miliutin pointed out that Kiselev had felt that way his entire life.¹⁶⁷ The logical conclusion from this was that Miliutin had heard all about it as an impressionable youth, thus supporting the argument that Kiselev had passed on his social viewpoints to both of his nephews.

However, any depiction of Miliutin as an ideological carbon copy of his uncle would not be totally accurate, as his memoirs showed strong evidence that Miliutin's "liberalism" was tempered and modified by his personal military experiences. This became most evident in Miliutin's policies that put the needs of the military and State first, as illustrated in the issue of education reform.

2. Educational Reform

The topic of broader access to education during the nineteenth century had been as big a debate in Russia as it was for the rest of Europe. In Russia, however, the question of education was not just a matter of access beyond the aristocratic elites, but also a matter of what was being taught and by whom. The fear of student radicalization

¹⁶⁷ Miliutin, *Vospominaniia*, VII, 353.

was very real, as was evident in the 1862 student uprisings.¹⁶⁸ As one of the ministers dealing with the student situation, Miliutin was just as worried about radical influences, but as it pertained to affecting those within the officer corps.

In his memoirs, Miliutin discussed how he mistrusted many of the younger officers, including those who were Polish, because they had been radicalized by propaganda. He wrote about the problems with many young officers who had been exposed to a great deal of liberal theories while at school and the propaganda of revolution within some of the circles they associated with.

Many of these officers, who with cynicism rejected the fundamental principles of military duty and, wearing their military dress uniforms, contemptuously expressed their opinions regarding the military profession. Some of these [officers] promoted the propaganda of revolutionary ideas, even among the lower ranks.¹⁶⁹

Miliutin then described how a young lieutenant of the Izmailovskii Guard Regiment, Vladimir Aleksandrovich Obruchev, was the first to formally expose that kind of illegal activity within the Guards units in May 1862. He also highlighted other incidences within Guards units involving radicalized officers who were preaching revolutionary ideas to the lower ranks, and who then tried to destroy the incriminating literature stashed

¹⁶⁸ This topic is well described and discussed in Patrick L. Alston's *Education and the Tsarist State*, (Stanford University Press, 1969); Daniel R. Brower's *Training the Nihilists: education and radicalism in Tsarist Russia*, (Cornell University Press, 1975). Also, see Samuel D. Kassow, "The University Statute of 1863," in *Russia's Great Reforms, 1855 – 1881*, ed. John Bushnell, Ben Ekloff, and Larissa Zakharova, 247-263 (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994); and Alan Kimball's essay, "Student Interests and Student Politics: Kazan University Before the Crisis of 1862," *Acta slavica iaponica, tomus 6*, 1988. For State responses to the crisis, see Alan Kimball's essay, "The Tsarist State and the Origins of Revolutionary Opposition in the 1860s" (paper presented to the Northwest Scholars of Russian and Soviet History and Culture, Seattle, WA, November 7, 1998), University of Oregon, <http://www.uoregon.edu/~kimball/stt&pbl.htm>.

¹⁶⁹ Miliutin, *Vospominaniia*, IV, 361.

away in their barracks. For their actions, they were originally sentenced to death by firing squad, but had the sentence reduced to 12 years of hard labor after appealing to the Emperor.¹⁷⁰

At the same time, Russia was experiencing similar problems in Tsarist Poland in the case of five young soldiers—Arnol'd, Slivitskii, Rostkovskii, Kaplinskii, and Abramovich. These men were convicted of engaging in

. . . offensive speech against the personage of His Highness, of spreading false and insolent stories among the lower ranks about the personage of His Highness and the royal family, of subverting effective government on the peasant issue in regards to Tsarist Poland, and of inciting lower ranks to be openly insubordinate and even rebel.¹⁷¹

Three of the men—Lieutenant Arnol'd, Second Lieutenant Slivitskii, and Sergeant Rostkovskii—were publicly hanged at the Novogeorgievskii Fortress, while Lieutenant Kaplinskii was sentenced to six years of hard labor and Lieutenant Abramovich was given only three months.¹⁷²

As was discussed earlier in the chapter, Miliutin believed these cases of radicalization within the military could be addressed by reforming the military education system. This raised the question of whether Miliutin was contradicting himself in approaching the topic of education. In an essay discussing the general topic, Alan Kimball noted this apparent paradox of Miliutin's beliefs in that, on the one hand, the War Minister was calling for educational reform to better prepare the military members;

¹⁷⁰ Miliutin, *Vospominaniia*, IV, 361-362.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 362-363.

¹⁷² *Ibid.*, 363.

yet, on the other hand, he was part of the coalition of ministers in the early 1860s that tried to bring the student uprisings under control:

On 4 September 1861, he circulated a memorandum within the War Ministry on the great dangers of revolutionary propaganda. He recommended that precautionary measures be taken and recommended that military discipline be sharpened. "It is particularly necessary to strengthen the supervision of the young officers, the Junkers." [citation: ROGBL f. 169 (D. Miliutin), carton 13.4, p. 101 ob.]¹⁷³

If one were to juxtapose this discussion with Miller's portrayal of Miliutin's "liberal" beliefs, it should have been a surprise that Miliutin favored the measures taken to quell the students and their radical influence. Yet it wasn't, because Miliutin's expressed concerns were for the military and the security of the Empire, and not for any "social" sense of student development. Thus, any perceived paradox is nonexistent with the realization that Miliutin's primary focus was how these issues impacted the military and the overall good of the state.

3. The Universal Military Service Statute of 1874

In looking at the Great Reform of 1874, it was, unequivocally, the capstone of Miliutin's military reforms; it also served as the best example of how the ensconced power elites brought the battle to Miliutin in order to protect their way of life—even if doing so would have been detrimental to Russia's Imperial safety and security. This was no more evident than in the Secret Conference of 1873, and many scholars gave this event its due treatment; however, based on their portrayal of the event, none of the

¹⁷³ Alan Kimball essay. See also Miliutin, *Vospominaniia*, IV, 175-176.

sources found for this discussion had evidently looked seriously at Miliutin's recollections of the month prior to the conference.¹⁷⁴

The pre-conference discussions between Miliutin and the other representatives were critical in analyzing the tenor of the Secret Conference of 1873. When telling of that first day of the conference, the other source materials portrayed Miliutin as being caught by surprise with the conservatives' shift in agenda. However, from Miliutin's pre-conference discussions with the prominent representatives cited, it was quite obvious that he was aware they intended to shift the agenda into an anti-Miliutin referendum. Therefore, the concern for Miliutin was how the Grand Dukes would play their part, and the only surprise seemed to be the Emperor taking his side against Bariatinskii.

Additionally, Miliutin's account of the Secret Conference of 1873 was of great importance because the actual minutes of the meeting continue to be restricted within the Moscow Archives. The only other descriptions of what transpired were to be found in the diaries of Grand Duke Konstantin Nikolaevich and in the personal notes of Alexander II.¹⁷⁵ Even the preeminent authority on Miliutin and his military reforms, P. A. Zaionchkovskii, only had limited access to those restricted materials, which have since become totally unavailable. Thus, given the limited amount of information available, it may have been that most of the authors simply did not have the luxury of reading Miliutin's account, especially since it was only available through the Russian Archives at the time they wrote their discussions and conclusions. Yet, Zaionchkovskii did indeed

¹⁷⁴ Rich, 94-103. See also Miller, 213-218; and Menning, 19.

¹⁷⁵ Zaionchkovskii, *Voennye reformy*, 294.

write some about the pre-conference discussions; he simply did not stress them in his analysis, which may have deemphasized the magnitude of Miliutin's discussion with Bariatinskii and his recollection of the Grand Duke's overheard conversations.

Thus, the crowning achievement for Dmitrii Miliutin was, in retrospect, a combination of the War Minister knowing the minds of his opponents, as well as a few surprising supporters within the ranks of the power elites and Imperial family. He truly believed these social changes to education and *soslovie* privileges were needed to fix the military. Educational changes directly impacted Russia's ability to adjust to the changing technological needs, at the same time providing the lower class Russians a chance to improve their lot in life. The Universal Military Service Statute solved the huge problem of fielding an army of sufficient size and strength that could meet possible threats from the west while, at the same time, doing so without breaking the Empire's fragile budgetary problems. For Miliutin, the fact that all of this was accomplished while dealing a serious blow to the privileged status of the ensconced power elite must also have brought a measure of personal satisfaction.

And somewhere, Uncle Pavel Kiselev was smiling.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION

There was a truism during the days of Imperial Russia which said that the throne of the tsar rested on the tips of bayonets. The mental imagery provoked by this axiom has allowed it to be used in various incarnations by Russians even into modern times, but its concept was based on fact. The strength and might of the Imperial Russian military continually ensured the survival of the vast Russian Empire and its tsar since the days of Peter I. When Russia's autocratic ruler, Tsar Nicholas I, died of pneumonia on March 2, 1855, Russia was losing miserably in the Crimean War (1853 – 1856) and its touted military was exposed to the world as being vulnerable. After bringing the war to an end the following year, the new tsar, Alexander II, was faced with the daunting task of fixing a military that was shown to be a shadow of its former self. To institute the necessary reforms, he turned to the keen mind of Dmitrii Alekseevich Miliutin.

Alexander's choice of Miliutin to spearhead the military reforms was, by no means, rushed. Alexander read Miliutin's reform proposals and had them analyzed by his experts, he consulted with close friends and advisors about the qualifications and loyalty of the man, and personally met with him on several occasions. Only after all of that did the Emperor finally ask Miliutin to take over as Minister of War and implement his reforms. And all of these events were discussed in detail by Miliutin in his memoirs.

a. Miliutin's Memoirs

Miliutin's multitude of memories was an historical treasure trove of insight into his life and times and, in using them as the foundation for this study, there was no shortage of examples, explanations, and discussions of events. To the contrary, decisions had to be made on a regular basis as to what was most important, leaving out numerous entries and quotes that were germane but peripheral to the presentation. This was the kind of problem all historical researchers loved to be cursed with and, in the case of these seven volumes of memoirs, also underlined that there was much more to be found and discussed within these pages.

On the other hand, his memoirs were not all-inclusive and comprehensive, and did not always provide his perspective on events. There were instances when the secondary sources discussed negative reactions to Miliutin's reforms by the power elite and their supporters and how Miliutin responded to their attacks, but there was nothing in the memoirs about the events. A good example was shown in the conclusion of Chapter II, in which he never directly addressed the concerns of the Governor-General of St. Petersburg, Prince A. A. Suvorov, regarding the administrative reform to restructure the corps into military districts.¹⁷⁶ The fact that the secondary sources used other materials to discuss this point while Miliutin's memoirs were mute on the matter did not, however, mean that the memoirs had nothing to contribute to an understanding of the incident. As was shown, Miliutin discussed at length all of the problems Suvorov had to deal with in

¹⁷⁶ For reference, see Chapter II, 35-36.

St. Petersburg at that juncture in time, and, thus, the memoirs were still able to contribute somewhat to the discussion.

Another important aspect of Miliutin's memoirs that would be considered crucial to any discussion would be their reliability as a primary source material. As historians, we must keep in mind that memoirs are written after the fact, and are therefore often subject to the author's personal biases and desire to be seen historically in a positive light. In Miliutin's case, his memoirs proved to be very accurate. Some historians have postulated that he used official documents and records to provide the basis for his memoirs' accuracy. That, indeed, appeared to be the case, as was shown by Miliutin's style of talking about events and conversations in a manner that suggested he had the records in front of him. This was illustrated in a particular example in which he discussed the aftermath of the Crimean War and Nicholas I's micro-managing:

Our forces performed with marvelous bravery in that war; not begrudging their blood and lives . . . and it is lamentable their enormous sacrifice for us was fruitless. Thousands of people died in vain because of incompetent military leadership; because of the unsatisfactory preparedness of forces to wage war; because of their poor weaponry, imperfections in materiel and technical parts; because of a shortage in reserves. In all of these respects our forces remained distant from foreign armies; the war showed that our military capability was not at the same level as theirs. Such a surprise was so openly offensive to the majority of the public—that, until that time, was accustomed to being proud of our military might—knowing that the primary purpose of government (*pravitel'stvo*) had turned the military department, particularly during the reign of Emperor Nikolai Pavlovich, [into such] an excessive fascination with being personally involved in these areas of State (*gosudarstvennoe*) structure. The experience demonstrated that direct and complete management of such matters should not be controlled by an autocratic leader, even one with such an outstanding personality as Emperor Nikolai I, because it does not prevent failures and mistakes.¹⁷⁷

¹⁷⁷ Miliutin, *Vospominaniia*, II, 428-429.

Another common occurrence throughout his memoirs was Miliutin's use of letters of correspondence from family members, friends, and various Russian officials as the sounding board for his comments or proof of his personal assertions.

It was also evident that Miliutin used other published memoirs as a memory prompter, which was illustrated by his refutations of Prince Bariatsinskii's own recollections. In his discussions of military events in the Caucasus in 1859, Miliutin had three pointed subsections to his memoirs (*Zametka A, B, and V*) dedicated to correcting what he saw as gross inaccuracies stated in the memoirs compiled by Bariatsinskii's biographer, Colonel A. L. Zisserman.¹⁷⁸ In that regard, those entries not only gave credence that Miliutin was using multiple sources of his own to reconstruct the story, but also added flavorful insight to his personal feelings towards Bariatsinskii late in his own life. When considering all of these factors collectively, Miliutin's memoirs certainly passed the credibility test with high marks. This should, therefore, bring the full record of his memoirs into consideration for historical research, which had not been done until now.

b. The Dracobly Model Framework¹⁷⁹

A shortcoming of previous studies on this topic has been a fully-functioning interpretive framework with which to examine the historical evidence. Thus, examining the memoirs through the framework model borrowed from Professor Dracobly was

¹⁷⁸ Miliutin, *Vospominaniia*, III, 337-338; 368-371.

¹⁷⁹ For reference, see Chapter I, 4, figure 1.

extremely valuable. Using the model as a constant reference of how different aspects interacted and influenced actions and events, it became an easy mental exercise to consider the various arguments and descriptions of the secondary sources, turning them around mentally to examine their intricacies, and then placing them back within the complex historical puzzle of which they were a part.

For example, when looking at Miliutin's social reforms discussed here, the model clearly showed how the issue of compulsory service affected the operational, economic and political dimensions, as well as how those dimensional factors helped Miliutin justify the need for universal military service. When looking at his administrative reforms, the model showed how restructuring the staff functions affected the operational, economic and social dimensions. Additionally, the model showed that, within this argument, reorganizing the army's Order of Battle into military districts was more relevant administratively and could logically be discussed within that dimension, rather than within the operational dimension as an operational reform.

Lastly, the model helped demonstrate that all of the reforms discussed in this study affected both the political and social dimensions, and showed how Russia's power elite fought against the inevitable changes brought about by those reforms. It was thusly that the contributions of Miliutin's memoirs became truly evident, and that they had been an overlooked piece of the puzzle.

c. This Study, Others, and the Bigger Picture

As stated at the very beginning, this study was not intended to be a comprehensive treatise on the subject of Miliutin's military reforms in the 1860s and 1870s. Not only were there several other military reforms not mentioned here, but even the effectiveness of the reforms that were covered were left out as non-pertinent to the discussion. Instead, this was a study of selected military social and administrative reforms, how Miliutin perceived and analyzed the problems that brought about those reforms, why he chose his solutions, and the backlash from the power elite when he challenged the foundations of their privileged status.

Dracobly's model was indispensable, but the memoirs were even more so. Miliutin's words and descriptions allowed for these historical events to come alive with clarity and perspective. He offered evidence for conclusions that were previously inferred or hypothesized, as well as refutations to claims made by other authors and historians. He gave a modicum of insight into his thought processes regarding so many things, including how he perceived the world around him, how he felt about those who supported him and those that opposed him. In essence, he gave us the "who," "what," "where," "when," and "how" that are all so important to historical research, but, best of all, he often gave us the "why."

All of these gifts found in the memoirs of Dmitrii Alekseevich Miliutin, with the aid of Dracobly's model, helped this study paint a picture of the War Minister's efforts to bring administrative and social order to Russia and its military out of the chaos made evident in the aftermath of the Crimean War. Further studies and analysis may show that,

in the long run, his efforts in these matters only delayed the inevitable collapse of Imperial Russia and, in some respects, made no difference at all in the problems besieging Russia's military. However, there can be no doubt that, at that time, Miliutin's logic for addressing the military's administrative and social woes was sound. He based his decisions on what he knew at the time, and what he accomplished was dependent on how far he could push Russia's power elite.

With that in mind, Miliutin's place in history should realistically and appropriately be in the upper middle category of importance and success. He did not have all of the answers, but he was definitely the right man for that moment of Russia's need. The hypothetical question that will always go unanswered is what would have happened if he had been totally successful in his battles with the ensconced power elite. The implications and possibilities yet might be found within the pages of his memoirs, but that is for another day and another study.

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