

Title: Pushkin's Educational Philosophy: A Reexamination of the Treatise "On National Education"

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Abstract:

Pushkin's 1826 "On National Education," written at the request of Tsar Nicholas I, has widely been read as a confession of his political ideas. While Pushkin did take advantage of the opportunity to both prove his loyalty to the Tsar and advocate for his friends facing the consequences of the Decembrist revolt, I hope to show that there are more layers to this work than have been previously explored. To do that, instead of looking at "On National Education" from a political perspective, I will consider it as part of a larger dialogue about education. After the Decembrist revolt, Nicholas was motivated to reform the education system and change the way Russian youth, especially nobility, were raised. He asked many leading cultural figures, including Buglarin, Perovskii, Arsenyev, and Witt, to put forward their analyses of the situation. Reading Pushkin's text side by side with these others allows us to better see its uniqueness and deviation from what Nicholas might have been expecting. In particular, this paper focuses on Pushkin's use of the term *narodnoe vospitanie*. This demands our attention because Nicholas' request, as conveyed by Benkendorf, was for a discussion of the upbringing of youth (*vospitanie iunoshstva*). It was Pushkin himself who introduced the highly nuanced term *narodnyi* to the discussion. Through a comparison of his understanding of the term in this article and its connotations in contemporary educational, literary, and political circles, we can gain deeper insight into Pushkin's thinking. By bringing this text into conversation with educational discourse of Pushkin's day, specifically the other responses to the Tsar's request, and by unpacking some of the complicated nuances of the term *narodnoe vospitanie*, this paper will draw attention to the educational message of Pushkin's article which has previously been dismissed.