

**RUSSIA ON  
INTERNATIONAL SCALE  
ON EARLY 19TH  
CENTURY**

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**HISTORY PROJECT:** 6.

# PROJECT PLAN

- > Introduction.
- > Mikhail Speranskii's Reforms.
- > Napoleon's Invasion.
- > After the War.
- > Questions.

# INTRODUCTION

- Although the reforming impulse at the Russian court did not die out after 1803, it had to give way for a time to the government's concern with international affairs.
- Peter the Great's conquests in the early 18th century had brought Russia into the European state system; the ensuing wars and alliances showed Russia to be an intimate partner in the balances and conflicts of the system.
- The country could not stand apart from the upheaval now being caused in the European state system by Napoleonic France's wideranging conquests, rearrangements of national borders, and dominance of continental policy.

# Mikhail Speranskii's Reforms

- Concern about the inadequacies of the Russian political order continued.
- **Alexander** seemed to see the problem as essentially one of personnel, a shortage of honest & **effective administrator**.
- Others, however, recognized the need as well for structural changes.
- One of these was Mikhail **Mikhail Speranskii**, a priest's son, who rose from humble origins to the **pinnacle** of Russian government.
- A brilliant seminary student and teacher, he became secretary to a highly placed **aristocrat**, served in the Ministry of Internal Affairs early in **Alexander's reign**, and by **1808** had risen to the position of State Secretary, the leading official for domestic affairs **Mikhail**.

# MIKHAIL SPERANSKII



# MORE ABOUT REFORMS

- **State council**, which was established in **1810** together with a reorganization of government ministries.
- By this time, the clouds of war were again gathering as **Napoleon** prepared the invasion of Russia.
- Whether or not **Alexander** was inclined to additional government reforms, this was not the time to launch a political experiment that could have compromised lines of authority.
- Moreover, **Sperranskii** was unpopular with the nobility because of his crackdown on incompetence and support of **financial policies** harmful to noble interests.

# Napoleon's Invasion

- Napoleon's Grande Armée entered Russia in June 1812.
- Its forces numbered nearly half a million, almost twice the strength of the Russian army.
- However, only half the invading army was French, the rest being composed of troops from countries conquered by Napoleon, which were less than reliable instruments for the pursuit of French aims.
- The size of Napoleon's army also presented grave problems of supply, especially after the Russian generals decided to withdraw deep into the country while stripping away supplies and housing in the path of Napoleon's advance.

# MAP





# After the War

- The postNapoleonic settlement for the European world associated with the name of the Congress of Vienna created a long period of general peace for the continent despite continuing stormy calls for democracy and national selfdetermination and the occasional limited conflicts they generated. The new state system, often mistakenly labelled a balance of power, was in reality a set of interlocking hegemonies exercised by Russia, Great Britain, and Austria.
- As long as the governments of these countries were able to maintain amicable relations, no major conflicts arose in Europe or its dependencies. Towards the end of Alexander's reign, the principles of the system—the legitimacy of established governments and territorial integrity of existing countries—were tested by the rebellion of Greeks within the Ottoman Empire.
- Many Russians were sympathetic to the Greek cause.

# QUESTIONS

- Impact of Alexander on Napoleon's expansion policies?
- What steps taken by Mikhail Sperranskii on his reform?
- How Napoleon's invasion affected Moscow?
- What problems did Napoleon's face in Russian invasion?