Cahiers du
MONDE RUSSE

Cahiers du monde russe

Russie - Empire russe - Union soviétique et États
indépendants

43/1 | 2002
Varia

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Édition électronique

URL : <https://journals.openedition.org/monderusse/8478>

DOI : 10.4000/monderusse.8478

ISSN : 1777-5388

Éditeur

Éditions de l'EHESS

Édition imprimée

Date de publication : 1 janvier 2002

Pagination : 5-34

ISBN : 2-7132-1773-3

ISSN : 1252-6576

Référence électronique

John P. LeDonne, « Administrative regionalization in the Russian empire 1802-1826. », *Cahiers du monde russe* [En ligne], 43/1 | 2002, mis en ligne le 01 janvier 2007, consulté le 04 septembre 2022.
URL : <http://journals.openedition.org/monderusse/8478> ; DOI : <https://doi.org/10.4000/monderusse.8478>

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| Editions de l'EHESS | *Cahiers du monde russe*

2002/1 - Vol 43

ISSN 1252-6576 | ISBN 2713217733 | pages 5 à 34

Pour citer cet article :

—P. LEDONNE J., Administrative regionalization in the Russian empire 1802-1826, *Cahiers du monde russe* 2002/ 1, Vol 43, p. 5-34.

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JOHN P. LEDONNE

ADMINISTRATIVE REGIONALIZATION IN THE RUSSIAN EMPIRE 1802-1826

In a previous article¹ I traced the evolution of the post of governor general from the time of Catherine II's local government reforms to the end of Alexander I's reign and suggested that territorial, regional, management became incompatible with functional, ministerial, administration from the empire's capital. This issue requires further discussion. The defining event in the administrative history of Alexander's reign was the creation of ministries in September 1802, followed by the gradual establishment of direct hierarchical relations between them and provincial agencies responsible for the management of individual sectors. Any forms of concentrated² territorial management would involve the creation at the regional level of agencies combining various sectors under the authority of a delegate representing all the ministers, acting as their intermediary with the provincial agencies, and responsible to the emperor or a prime minister as the chief of a concentrated central government. The nature of government in the ruling elite — which saw the tsar-emperor as the final arbiter of its political rivalries but considered the management of a vast empire its exclusive preserve, apportioned among a number of ministers, each defending his turf with tenacious determination — precluded the creation of such a delegate empowered to interfere in the operations of individual ministries, and hindered the establishment of a concentrated form of government in Petersburg. The deconcentration of government at the central level following the opening of ministries was incompatible with the acceptance of concentrated management at the regional level.

However, it was not incompatible with the appointment *by individual ministries* of regional representatives to help manage their own sectorial responsibilities in a vast empire which extended — even if we keep Siberia out — over 3,000

1. J. P. LeDonne, "Russian governors general, 1775-1825. Territorial or functional administration?", *Cahiers du Monde russe*, 42, 1 (2001): 5-30.

2. For the meaning of the terms "concentration" and "deconcentration" see *ibid.*: 6.

kilometers from the Prusso-Polish border to the Urals, 2,200 kilometers from Petersburg to the Prut, and 2,700 kilometers to Tiflis. By the beginning of the nineteenth century and certainly after 1815, a regional fragmentation of the empire had become a necessity for imperial administrators. Even in Russia proper, the ecological distinction between the forest and forested steppe zones, the *de facto* existence of two capitals in Petersburg and Moscow, and the individuality of the Ural territory created a natural regional grid. More significant was the distinction between Russia and its frontier regions from Finland to the Caucasus via the Lithuanian and Ukrainian lands. And there was the simple fact that the increasing number of provinces made their consolidation into a small number of administrative regions a matter of convenience. Such administrative regionalization must be seen as part of a policy not of decentralization — a meaningless term here, because the small transfers of attributions between the ministry and the region remained within the overall sphere of responsibilities of that ministry and did not empower elected communities to take part in the management of the ministry's affairs — but one of vertical deconcentration for the purpose of facilitating the integration of the operations of provincial agencies into a uniform operational mode within that ministry. As an observer has noted, "souvent ce que l'État gagne en étendue, il le perd en autorité."³ As a result, administrative regionalism must be seen, paradoxically, as a major factor of administrative unification in an empire otherwise still held together by an imperial patronage network and an imperial army.

Nevertheless, the post of governor general as the regional delegate of the emperor and the entire imperial government never disappeared, and its attributions became an object of great interest after 1815, when the decision was made to appoint governors general everywhere in the empire, a decision which harked back to Catherine II's reforms. Why the new policy eventually failed will be the focus of most of this article.

I

Of the eight ministries created in 1802, five (Interior, Finance, Commerce, Justice, and Education) were responsible for the internal administration of the empire. By 1811, there were four, following the closing of the Commerce Ministry, transformed into a Department of Foreign Trade in the Finance Ministry. On the other hand, two other central agencies gained ministerial status as Main Administrations: that of Roads and Waterways in 1809, and the Post Office ten years later. We are thus dealing with sectorial agencies which created regional networks either over the entire territory of the empire or in only parts of it. For example, there were postal boards (*kontory*) in each province, operating under the overall supervision of regional post offices (*pochtamty*) in Petersburg and Moscow,

3. B. Apert, *Le régionalisme administratif* (Paris, 1938): 226.

but in January 1800, seven postal regions were created encompassing 32 provinces. By 1830, there were eleven regions (six in Russia, five in the peripheral regions), encompassing 53 provinces, the Don Territory, and Transcaucasia. Each region was headed by a regional Postal Inspector, responsible to the service chief (*glavnonachal'stviushchii*) in the capital. The administration of waterways, which in the eighteenth century had been based in Novgorod and Tver, was moved to Petersburg in 1816. The empire's river basins were apportioned in 1809 among ten regions which did not coincide with provincial boundaries but cut across them to combine sections of rivers and the canals connecting them, each under a "regional chief" (*okruzhnoi nachal'nik*) subordinated to the Administrator in Chief (*glavnoupravliaushchii*).⁴

In the meantime, in 1803, the Education Ministry had divided the empire west of the Urals into six regions to accommodate the six universities already created or about to be, in Moscow, Petersburg, Derpt, Vilno, Kharkov, and Kazan. Each university was run by a rector elected by the faculty for a oneyear term, but under the supervision of curators (*popechiteli*).⁵ Two years later, the Justice Ministry created its own regions, but these were of a special kind. In the eighteenth century, the procurator general had carried out the responsibilities of three ministries (Interior, Justice, and Finance) with the help of the Senate of which he was the *de facto* chairman. The Senate was divided in 1763 into six departments, four in Petersburg, the other two in Moscow, but their jurisdiction was not so much territorial (except for the Third Department) as functional, each for a number of sectors. Departments had a senior procurator (*ober-prokuror*), responsible to the procurator general. In 1802, with the creation of the Justice Ministry, its minister retained the title of procurator general, but with a sharply curtailed jurisdiction now restricted to the management of the judiciary. In 1805, the number of departments was raised to eight, three of them in Moscow, each with an appellate jurisdiction over a number of provinces. Five departments took up civil appeals, two reviewed criminal sentences sent up from the criminal chambers, and the First Department retained its sectorial jurisdiction over personnel and financial affairs. The territorial jurisdiction of these departments was very large: 27 provinces for the Sixth (criminal) Department, up to 14 for the Third (civil) Department. Except for the Third Department, these "judicial regions" combined both Russian and non-

4. *Polnoe Sobranie Zakonov Rossiiskoi Imperii (PSZ)*, 1st series 1649-1830 (Petersburg, 1830), 45 vol., here vol. 27, 1802, N. 20406; vol. 31, 1811, N. 24686, 24688, and 24938, and vol. 30, 1809, N. 23996. In 1814, the "Chief Director of Communications" became a member of the Committee of Ministers: *PSZ*, vol. 32, 1812, N. 25653. The exact name of the postal agency was Postal Department: vol. 36, 1819, N. 27970. For the postal regions see vol. 26, 1800, N. 17255 and 2nd series, 1825-1881, vol. 5, 1830, N. 4019. For the regions of roads and waterways, vol. 30, 1809, N. 23996 and vol. 33, 1815, N. 26265. The term for region was usually "okrug."

5. The regions were created in 1803: *PSZ*, vol. 27, 1803, N. 20598; see also vol. 34, 1817, N. 27106. The statute (*ustav*) of Moscow University which became a model for the others is in vol. 28, 1804, N. 21498. For Derpt University see N. 21220; Kharkov, N. 21499, Kazan, N. 21500. For Vilno, vol. 27, 1803, N. 20701. Petersburg's Pedagogical Institute was reorganized into a university in 1819: vol. 36, 1819, N. 27675.

Russian provinces. Each remained under a senior procurator as regional head, but with this difference that he resided in the capital or in Moscow, not in a regional capital.⁶

The Finance Ministry was the most powerful of the new ministries. Its only rival being the Interior Ministry which was conspicuous for a seeming inability or unwillingness to build a network of regional agencies. However, we shall see there was more than met the eye. After 1811, the Finance Ministry managed not only tax collection but also state domains (including state peasants and forests), mining, the mint, banks, and foreign trade. In 1802, state forests were separated from privately-owned ones and placed under a Forestry Department, incorporated into the Department of State Domains in 1811. To carry out the reform in nine Russian provinces and the eight acquired as a result of the partitions of the Polish empire, two “inspections” were created in 1805-1806, managed by inspectors who were also members of the Forestry Department. They were abolished in 1815, when forest management was left to provincial agencies, but in 1817, the forests reserved for Navy use in shipbuilding (*korabel'nye lesa*) were carved out of the state forests and divided among three regions under “administrators” based in Arkhangelsk (to supply the shipyards), Kazan (to supply the Caspian flotilla), and Kiev (for the needs of the Black Sea fleet).⁷ Six years earlier, the customs administration had created its own eleven regions, each under a chief (*okruzhnoi nachal'nik*) based in the most important customs houses.⁸ By 1817, the empire had been divided among five regional networks — six if we include the Senate Departments — each containing from three to eleven regions, with major regional headquarters in Petersburg, Moscow, and Kazan in Russia, Riga, Vilno, Kiev, Tiflis, Orenburg, and Omsk in the borderlands. All but Kazan also happened to be major regional military headquarters.

The authority and powers of the “regional delegate” varied from one ministry to another. In some cases, he merely inspected provincial agencies and supervised their operations; in others, he was a regional manager to whom the ministry granted some powers. Nevertheless, we need to draw a composite portrait of these regional delegates to gain an understanding of what the ministries considered the role of the region to be.

6. PSZ, vol. 28, 1805, N. 21605. To trace subsequent changes see vol. 30, 1809, N. 23436, 23815; vol. 39, 1824, N. 29725. For the Senate in general and its departments in particular see *Istoriia Pravitel'stvuiushchogo Senata za dvesti let, 1711-1911*, 5 vol. (Petersburg, 1911), here 3: 256-264, 278-308. The procurator general was the object of a major study: A. Gradvskii, “Vysshiaia administratsiia Rossii XVIII st. i general-prokurory,” in *Sobranie sochinenii* (Petersburg, 1899-1904), 9 vol., here 1: 236-239, 255-265. See also J. LeDonne, *Absolutism and ruling class. The formation of the Russian political order, 1700-1825* (Oxford, 1991): 89-90, 105-106.

7. The ministry's statute is in PSZ, vol. 31, 1811, N. 24688. The forest inspections are in vol. 26, 1805, N. 21644 and vol. 29, 1806, N. 22008. The 1817 statute is in vol. 34, 1817, N. 27023.

8. PSZ, vol. 31, 1811, N. 24684 (Statute on the European Trade) and vol. 34, 1817, N. 26894 (Statute on the Asiatic Trade). See also vol. 36, 1819, N. 28030.

As a rule, regional delegates were in grade four (real state councillor or major general), while ministers were in grade two. Thus, they stood no higher than a provincial governor. The ranking carried a message that the regional delegate was in fact no more than a provincial governor with larger territorial attributions, that the region, as a concept of public administration, did not in fact exist. The regional delegate was a creation of convenience for the purpose of carrying out certain duties facilitating the operations of the ministry along uniform lines, but did not constitute a separate level in the administrative hierarchy. He was appointed by the emperor like other officials down to grade six (colonel or college councillor), but on the recommendation of the minister to whom he owed his primary allegiance, and who recommended his dismissal if need be. He had no obligations outside the ministry and received his orders from the minister or the head of the relevant department, who acted as the service chief. By the same token, as member of a single ministerial hierarchy, he had no jurisdiction over local personnel belonging to other ministries. His role was confined to the activities of a single service.

Within that service, however, he possessed some authority and wielded some powers. He appointed and promoted clerks, but only recommended them for appointment to grade fourteen, the first grade in the Table of Ranks, and also required the consent of the service chief to appoint all other personnel. He granted leaves for up to four months to those he had appointed but for only eight days to the others. His authority over personnel varied from one service to another. He removed from the service (*otreshal*) only those he had appointed and brought them to trial in the provincial criminal chamber. Any action against the others required the consent of his service chief. Appeals went to the relevant Senate department which confirmed all but death sentences and expulsions from the nobility. The Administration of Roads and Waterways was a quasi-military organization, and its 145 engineers were tried by court martial. The regional delegate had the right of a brigade commander, less than those of a divisional commander, the equivalent of a governor. Court martial sentences required the confirmation of the service chief.

Relationships between the service chief and subordinate personnel in the region varied. The Administration of Roads and Waterways was the most centralized. All orders from the ministry were addressed to the regional delegate and no subordinate agent could bypass him and report directly to the ministry. On the other hand, the Postal Department sent orders directly to the provincial board and informed the regional inspector only if his assistance was required in enforcing their execution. In other words, the same ambivalence toward management and supervision which we noted in the evolution of the post of governor general was also found in different conceptions of the "sectorial region," which, as it is described here, was not a contradiction in terms. The difference rested in the nature of the service: the engineers, for example, had no provincial organization, and the regional authority had to manage a number of activities within a regional framework. This accounted for the fact that some regional delegates had financial powers while others did not. There was no question of allowing a regional budget, with the right to collect and disburse funds. Despite some attempts to return to an earlier situation, when

sectorial agencies collected and disbursed their own funds, revenue collection and disbursement had become concentrated in the Finance Ministry by the early nineteenth century: funds were allocated to individual ministers who used them to finance their operations.⁹ The only occasion when a regional delegate was allowed some discretion was in the negotiation and confirmation of contracts to build structures (buildings, sluices), transport goods and materials, and do field work (dig ditches and scour rivers). It is significant that this authority could not exceed 10,000 rubles, which was also the limit imposed on the provincial treasury chambers and governors. Legislation thus refused to recognize the region as an intermediate management level between the ministry and the province by giving it the commensurate authority in personnel appointments and financial operations.

What then was the purpose of appointing regional delegates? Their responsibilities were above all those of a roving inspector within a cluster of provinces.¹⁰ As such, they visited local agencies (postal boards, customs houses, forestry agencies, universities), inspected the books, questioned personnel if they suspected financial misdeeds, and determined if the laws and ministerial regulations were carried out. This insistence on the execution of the letter of the law was fundamental in the process of unifying an empire: ministers were too far away to check the performance of their subordinates. On the other hand, regional delegates were also allowed to recommend changes in the laws and regulations to accommodate local circumstances, especially in the frontier regions where customs often differed and local laws did not always mesh well with Russian legislation. In so doing, they contributed to empire-building, in the search for a viable compromise between the law imposing uniformity and circumstances claiming recognition in the disparate regions of a large empire. But they could do very little on their own beside helping strengthen the authority and effectiveness of their service chiefs. If they found personnel within the service guilty of criminal acts, they could only recommend their dismissal or other forms of punishment, leaving it to their service chiefs to have the last word. Only in exceptional circumstances could they take immediate action, but it would also require the eventual confirmation of their chief and perhaps entail a reprimand if they were found in error. As in the case of the governors general, the legislation and the administrative ethos continued to regard the regional agents as inspectors and not managers.

The regions just described belonged to civilian ministries. There were also military regions, although not in the full sense of the word: their boundaries did not coincide with those of provinces and, as such, resembled those of the Main Administration of Roads and Waterways more than those of, say, the Department of State Domains or the Education Ministry. Territorial “divisions” were created in 1763, later renamed “inspections” — there were fourteen in 1801 — for the

9. J. LeDonne, *Absolutism ...*, *op. cit.*: 289, 293.

10. These delegates resembled the “inspectors general” created by Napoleon to watch over the operations of the tax collection agencies and the behavior of the professors in provincial lycées: see J. Godechot, *Les institutions de la France sous la Révolution et l'Empire* (Paris, 1968): 642, 736.

peacetime deployment of the army.¹¹ In effect, they were the regions of the College of War, the predecessor of the War Ministry. But they ceased to exist in wartime, when units were combined to form flexible formations in accordance with the needs of the moment. With the return of peace in 1815, the greatly enlarged army which had fought Napoleon for three years marched back to the empire to be deployed in permanent quarters.

Two peacetime armies were created in 1815, each under a commander in chief based, one in Mogilev in Belorussia, the other in Tulchin in Podolia, facing the Ottoman frontier.¹² They consisted of army corps — the successors of the eighteenth-century inspections — five of them in the First Army, three in the Second, each under its own commander assisted, in some cases, by a commander of the artillery and one of the engineers. There was also a chief of supply (*general-intendant*) in each army, responsible for the supply and provisioning of the troops. In addition to these eight corps, there were five “separate corps” (*otdel'nye korpusy*): their commanders did not report to either commander in chief but directly to the Chief of His Majesty's Main Staff who, in 1815, assumed responsibilities for recruitment and staffing, military planning, and command functions, while supply was left at first with the War Ministry.¹³ Each separate corps commander was assisted by a general commanding the artillery and a chief of supply. The separate corps headquarters were in Helsingfors, Bialystok, Tiflis, Orenburg, and Omsk, and the corps commander was governor general of the territory. There was also a Polish Army in the newly restored Polish Kingdom, commanded by Grand Duke Constantine, who acted as *de facto* imperial viceroy in Warsaw. Four years earlier, in 1811, the garrisons and other local troops were combined to form the Internal Guard, constituted into a separate corps in 1816, whose commander was subordinated to the War Minister. This police force (used in emergencies and to convey prisoners and public funds) was originally deployed in eight regions, raised to twelve in 1818.¹⁴ Each consisted of two or more brigades and was commanded by a “regional general” (*okruzhnoi general*), usually a major general. There were, in addition, engineer regions created over time as the expansion of the empire kept adding new fortresses. These fortresses were combined to form ten regions in 1819, four of them in the Baltic basin, three in the Black Sea basin, two in the Caspian basin, and one in Siberia and the Altai mountains.¹⁵ The military establishment thus consisted of a number of “ministries,” often as bitter rivals among themselves as the civilian ministries: His Majesty's Main Staff with 13 regions, the engineers with ten under the Engineer Department

11. PSZ, vol. 43, part 1 (*shtaty po voennoi chasti*), 1796, N. 17591 and 1801, N. 19951.

12. The original order was issued in October 1814: PSZ, vol. 32, 1812, N. 25723. See E. Amburger, *Geschichte der Behördenorganisation Russlands von Peter dem Grossen bis 1917* (Leiden, 1966): 334-335.

13. The organization of the Main Staff and the War Ministry is in PSZ, vol. 33, 1815, N. 26021.

14. PSZ, vol. 31, 1811, N. 24704 and vol. 35, 1818, N. 27284.

15. PSZ, vol. 36, 1819, N. 27617.

and the inspector general — Grand Duke Nicholas, the future emperor — the artillery with its service chief — Grand Duke Mikhail¹⁶ — and the Internal Guard with twelve. In 1816, the supply and provisioning of the troops became the responsibility of the army commanders in chief and separate corps commanders, thus further cutting into the authority of the War Ministry.¹⁷

What place did the region occupy in the military hierarchy? The basic document regulating the management of the army was the statute of January 1812 for the so-called Grand Active Army in wartime, amended by the imperial order of December 1815 for peacetime conditions.¹⁸ A commander in chief — usually a field marshal — represented the person of the emperor and his orders were carried out as if they emanated from the emperor himself. Corps commanders — usually lieutenant generals — were appointed by the emperor on his recommendation. He was empowered to order a court martial on anyone and banish him from the army without distinction of rank. He confirmed sentences to death and degradation over all officers up to colonel included. He promoted non-commissioned officers to the first officer rank (grade fourteen) and decorated soldiers. He granted them leaves up to four months. Other personnel matters were referred to the Main Staff. His financial powers were extensive by civilian standards: for current expenses he had to remain within the limits imposed by budgetary allocations (*shtatnoe polozhenie*), but he confirmed contracts without limitation of value, although he was required to send the Senate's First Department a copy of those exceeding 10,000 rubles.¹⁹ The artillery and engineer generals were subordinated to him but also reported to their respective service chiefs who belonged to the Main Staff. Corps commanders within an army had few powers inherent to their position in the hierarchy, and the order of 1815 ignored them. They merely functioned as inspectors of their divisions (from two to four in each corps) and regiments (from eight to 22). In 1818, however, they were empowered to confirm all sentences to corporal punishment on non-commissioned officers and soldiers except expulsions from the army and banishment to hard labor.²⁰ The truly regional level — if by region we continue to mean the level between the imperial center and the basic operational unit — the province in the civilian realm and the division in the military — was that of the army and separate corps. A separate corps commander — usually a lieutenant or

16. The Engineer Department was headed by a director over whom an inspector general was placed in 1817. He was the emperor's brother: this gave the department some independence. The Artillery Department, which had a long tradition of independence, was headed by a chief (*General-Feldzeugmeister*). Grand Duke Mikhail was appointed to the post in 1798, the year of his birth. Until he reached his majority in 1819 it was managed by an inspector: E. Amburger, *op. cit.*: 315, 318. There were also artillery regions, but I have been unable to find them in the Collection of Laws (*PSZ*): it seems no list was published.

17. *PSZ*, vol. 33, 1815, N. 26026.

18. *PSZ*, vol. 32, 1812, N. 24975 and vol. 33, 1815, N. 26022.

19. *PSZ*, vol. 33, 1815, N. 26206, art. 59.

20. The imperial order of December 1818 was not published in the Collection of Laws; see *Svod voennykh postanovlenii*, 15 vol. (Petersburg, 1838-1839), vol. 5, part 2 (1838), art. 394.

full general — had lesser powers than a commander in chief. On the other hand, since four of the five separate corps commanders were also governors general, the civil administration of the region was subordinated to them, which was not the case for a commander in chief, except in wartime. In 1816, their power to grant leaves was reduced to 28 days.²¹ Their power to confirm contracts were those of a commander in chief. They appointed court martials over all officers up to the rank of colonel included and confirmed sentences, but those on colonels, death sentences and those to degradation had to be referred to the central judicial board (*General-Auditoriat*) for submission to the emperor. These judicial powers sharply distinguished the regional authority in the military from its equivalent in the civilian hierarchy, as they gave that authority full powers over the entire military personnel in the region.

There were thus major differences between civilian and military regions. The military establishment was a separate world consisting of four “ministries” rather than a single War Ministry, each with its regional network, coordinated at the level of the Main Staff which functioned like a “Committee of Military Ministers.” At the central level, military administration was concentrated in that Staff under the immediate command of the emperor, who showed much greater interest in it than in civilian administration, because the army was the foundation of his power — and a potential threat to his throne. At the regional level, the management of the army was likewise concentrated in the commanders in chief or separate corps commanders, to whom the technical (artillery and engineer) and supply (commissary and provisioning) services were subordinated. There, regional commanders were not so much inspectors, like most of their equivalents in the civilian administration, as true managers of an integrated military command, with appointive, police, judicial, and financial powers far exceeding those of the civilian regional delegates. Indeed, command, inspection, and management functions had been combined since 1806 in the same military commanders,²² and regional administration resembled that of the governors general of the 1780s, when a concentrated imperial government created its own concentrated regional authority, before the governors general were gradually transformed into regional inspectors of the activities of a provincial administration concentrated in the hands of the provincial governor.

II

The proliferation of ministerial regions during Alexander’s reign and the creation of military regions after 1815 with concentrated, multi-sectorial, agencies of territorial administration within the military establishment, inevitably brought to

21. PSZ, vol. 33, 1815, N. 26415a.

22. PSZ, vol. 29, 1806, N. 22161. For a short survey of the legislation on military inspections see Menzenkamp, “Obzor sistem inspektirovaniia russkoi armii s 1711 goda,” *Voennyi Sbornik*, 12 (Dec. 1862): 399-426, here 400-401.

the fore the question of creating a similar type of administration in the civilian sphere in the person of new governors general. The emperor would thus be able to govern his empire with the help of about two dozen regional delegates responsible to him through the intermediary of the chief of his Main Staff, General Petr Volkonskii (later Hans Diebitsch) and the chief of his personal chancery, who increasingly resembled the eighteenth-century procurator general, General Alexei Arakcheev.

And indeed, the emperor ordered in 1816 a member of his entourage who has remained anonymous to draw up a project to divide the empire into regions (*namestnichestva*) and restore the post of governor general with suitable authority and powers.²³ Whoever the author was, he was certainly close to the Interior Ministry (or the Police Ministry which took away most of its responsibilities between 1810 and 1819). His proposal in 94 paragraphs divided the empire into 12 regions, of which four capitals were in Russia, the other eight in the peripheral territories.²⁴ The new governor general, called viceroy (*imperatorskii namestnik*), was presented from the beginning as an agent of supervision (*nadzor*) over the execution of the laws and ministerial regulations. He was the keeper (*bliustitel'*) of domestic security in the region, and civil governors were responsible to him (*v ego vedomstve*). His supervising authority extended to all services in the region except the army, but those services remained directly subordinated to their respective ministries, from which they received their instructions and orders. Only in emergencies were they authorized to turn to the governor general for an immediate authorization: in such cases he assumed the authority of a minister in accordance with the ministerial statute of 1811.²⁵ An important feature of his supervising authority was the inspection tour every three years, at the end of which he sent his comments on individual agencies to their respective minister.

The police was the one sector in which he was also given managerial authority. This strongly suggests that the project saw the *namestnik* as the regional agent of the Interior Ministry. In this capacity as regional delegate of that ministry he operated through the provincial governors and the local police which was placed in his jurisdiction. At the time, the responsibilities of the police were extensive: to watch over the people's morality, to restrain excessive luxury; to build towns, encourage trade and industry, especially agriculture as the main source of national

23. Georges Vernadsky suggested that the author was Nikolai Novosiltsev, but this is unlikely. Novosiltsev did write a project in 1819 while he was in Poland, but it is so different from that of 1816 that it is difficult to believe they were written by the same person: G. Vernadsky, *La Charte constitutionnelle de l'empire russe de l'an 1820* (Paris, 1933): 38-42.

24. The text, entitled "Proekt uchrezhdeniia namestnichestv," is in *Materialy, sobrannye dlia Vysochaishe uchrezhdennoi Komissii o preobrazovanii gubernskikh i uездnykh uchrezhdenii. Otdel administrativnyi. Chast' 1. Materialy istoricheskie i zakonodatel'nye. Otdelenie 1-2* (Petersburg, 1870), here *otd.* 1: 2-45.

25. This meant he would report to the emperor directly and take forceful action including using the Internal Guard, dismissing provincial personnel and sending them to the criminal chamber for trial: see PSZ, vol. 31, 1811, N. 24686, par. 206, 210-211.

wealth; and to carry out judicial decisions and collect arrears.²⁶ In police emergencies such as fires, floods and peasant revolts, he assumed the authority of Interior Minister, and the regional commander of the Internal Guard was required to obey his orders unconditionally (*bezprekoslovno*). He had no judicial powers, received no appeals against provincial court decisions and no complaints against local agencies unless they had first been submitted to the relevant governor. He could then suspend the execution of sentences to death and "loss of honor." He protected injured parties by ordering investigations or prodding the provincial procurators to speed up the decision of criminal cases. Likewise, his financial powers were left undetermined: the amount up to which he could confirm contracts was left blank. His powers over personnel were limited. He suspended from office officials accused of criminal activities, but had no jurisdiction over governors, vice-governors, chairmen of chambers, procurators, heads of customs regions, and all officials appointed by imperial order, as well as military personnel; in all such cases he had to report to the emperor through the relevant minister. Here, his powers were much more restricted than those of a separate corps commander. More evidence that the project was drawn up by a police official was the fact that relations with elected personnel (the responsibility of the Interior Ministry) were listed at the beginning: noble and urban assemblies met with his permission and the representatives they elected required his confirmation. He used provincial marshals of the nobility to restrain landowners who oppressed their peasants, and was empowered to place their estates under trusteeship (*opeka*) if an investigation proved that they did.²⁷

The *namestnik* was of course the intermediary between central and provincial agencies. He received monthly reports from governors, vice-governors, and provincial procurators on the condition of their agencies, and they sent similar reports to their respective ministers directly. However, requests by governors for ministerial authorization to take specific action had to be routed through the *namestnik*'s office. However, if a governor objected to a decision by his *namestnik*, he was authorized to appeal over his head to the relevant minister. Ministers (and the Senate) sent their orders directly to the governors and provincial agencies, except in "urgent, important, and complex matters" requiring detailed supervision. No provision was made for sending the *namestnik* a copy, although such a provision was included in the ministerial statute. He did, however, receive from the Senate a copy of all new laws and regulations. He was given the substantial power to suspend Senate orders and ministerial regulations if he was convinced that their execution would be detrimental to the interests of the Treasury and the "people," or that they violated laws, statutes, and imperial orders. In such cases, he was empowered to appeal to the emperor directly while informing the Senate or the relevant minister. His contacts were chiefly with the Senate and the ministers. To

26. J. LeDonne, *Absolutism...*, *op. cit.*: 146-157.

27. "Proekt...", *art. cit.*: par. 8-12. Death sentences had to be sent to the Senate anyway. Loss of honor meant the loss of civil rights and civil status (for those who had any).

the emperor he sent monthly reports on his activities, and he was invited to the capital every three years to report to him in person on the condition of his region.²⁸

An original contribution of the project was the creation of a regional agency called the *namestnik's* council (*sovet*). It consisted of six members, one of them its administrative officer in charge of the staff. They were in grade four (major general and the usual rank of a provincial governor) and appointed by the emperor to represent the Interior, Finance, Justice, and Education ministries. The fact that three of the six members represented the Interior Ministry strengthens the suspicion that someone in the police establishment was the author.²⁹ Additional members were appointed at the *namestnik's* discretion from among "the most reliable and experienced nobles" in each of the region's provinces. The council's role was purely advisory, but if one of the regular members found one of the *namestnik's* decisions to be in violation of the law or not in accordance with the state's (fiscal) interest, he was required to add his opinion to the minutes to be included in the monthly report.

The project was circulated among some members of the elite, and the comments of Dmitrii Gurev were remarkable for their clarity and forthrightness. Gurev was one of the most important members of Alexander's government: Director of the Cabinet (1801-1825) responsible for the finances of the imperial family; Minister of Apanages (1806-1825), the properties of the family; deputy Finance Minister (1802-1810) and Minister from 1810 to 1823. He was married to a Saltykova, grandniece of Petr Saltykov of Seven Years' War fame and former governor general of Moscow, from a branch of the family which linked the two great family networks: the Naryshkin-Trubetskoi and the Saltykov. In his youth he had been a protégé of Pavel Skavronskii and Potemkin, and must be considered closer to the former network.

He submitted in December 1817 a number of editorial changes; a formal comment; and a private opinion for the emperor's benefit. His editorial comments were few but significant: he added a member to the council (the regional delegate of the Internal Guard); he allowed the *namestnik* to suspend the governors' confirmation of civil and criminal sentences handed down in the judicial chambers if he disagreed with them pending a review in the Senate. But, more importantly, Gurev interposed the Committee of Ministers between the emperor and the *namestnik*. The committee, despite its growing importance while the emperor was away beginning in 1812, never truly became a managerial body, and remained a coordinating agency in matters interesting more than one ministry, each minister retaining his right to report to the emperor in person.³⁰ Since, in Gurev's view, the

28. *Ibid.*: par. 38, 61.

29. *Ibid.*: par. 66-74: two members represented the "general police," a third was in charge of local contributions (*obshchestvennye povinnosti*) and the collection of arrears. If, as I believe, the *namestnik* was the regional delegate of the Interior Minister who also recommended the appointment of the administrative officer, four of the six in addition to the *namestnik* were representatives of the Interior Ministry: The Police Ministry is never mentioned. Was it a deliberate oversight based on a conviction the ministry would not last?

30. S. Seredonin, *Istoricheskii obzor deiatel'nosti komiteta ministrov*, 5 vol. (Petersburg, 1902-1903), here 1: 4-13, 25-30. See also S. Pokrovskii, *Ministerskaia vlast' v Rossii* (Iaroslavl, 1906): 88-91.

namestnik must not become a manager but must remain an inspector, the committee's new role would re-establish a certain symmetry between the ministerial establishment and the regional authority, between the chairman of the committee — who was no prime minister — and the *namestnik*, a symmetry which had been missing since Catherine's reforms.

This deceptive endorsement was in fact but an introduction to his private comments expressing strong reservations.³¹ He took the project very seriously, calling it a landmark in the history of Russian legislation which might very well affect the fate of the empire. In fact, it was so novel that it destroyed the existing system. There were two types of administration, wrote Gurev: one is territorial by a single individual responsible for the effective management of all services within a given territory; the other is functional, when high officials in the central government possess exclusive authority over separate services operating everywhere in the empire. Only in the Ottoman empire was territorial administration still in vogue: everywhere else it was disappearing, and nowhere more clearly than in Russia since the creation of the ministries. There must be no obstacle to the execution of ministerial orders anywhere in the empire, because ministers are the executive officers closest to the emperor, whose autocratic will is the linchpin of the entire system. But *namestniki* were not ministers, their authority was different and restricted to a single region. Since they, like ministers, enjoy the emperor's confidence and are given by the project both supervision and, Gurev claimed, actual management of several services, they are fated to become little autocrats (*obraz Derzhavnoi vlasti*) in their region.³² The empire will be governed by two incompatible principles, the territorial and the functional, with all the attendant confusion. Instead of unity on an imperial scale, there will be a morass of conflicting interests resulting in the creation of a federative state (*un état fédératif*).

Gurev then proceeded to pull apart the project piece by piece. It will be hard to find enough competent people to manage several services in the region. Each service required full attention, and the *namestnik* would either give it to one of the services and neglect the others, or leave them to his subordinates who will not have the authority to resist outside pressures. Gurev may have had in mind the governor general of Siberia, Ivan Pestel', whose corruption was notorious until he was dismissed in 1819.³³ He may have been unaware here that inspection and management functions had been combined in the army since 1806. He added that the empire was administered at the time in accordance with the local government statute

31. *Materialy*, op. cit.: 46-59.

32. *Ibid.*: 52. Here Gurev pointed out the danger of subordinating the *namestnik* directly to the emperor instead of to the ministers collectively in the Committee of Ministers. Martin Broszart in his study of the Nazi state was more explicit than Gurev could afford to be: Hitler's immediate regional delegates threatened to become regional princes (*Gaufürsten*), "hard-headed federalists." Direct subordination to Hitler meant freedom from any control whatsoever: M. Broszart, *Der Staat Hitlers* (Munich, 1969): 154, 166.

33. J. LeDonne, "Frontier governors general 1772-1825. III. The Eastern frontier," *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas*, 48(2000): 321-340, here 330-331.

of 1775 and the ministerial statute of 1811. He overlooked the fact that the two were incompatible: that of 1775 laid the foundations of territorial management at the regional level, that of 1811 of sectorial management from the center. The system was maturing, he wrote, and this was no time for changes. Ministries were creating uniformity in procedures and substantive law from one end of the empire to another with the help of their provincial agencies. Although these agencies were allowed to appeal to the Senate if they found ministerial regulations in violation of the law, they were unlikely to do so since the careers of their members depended on their service chief in Petersburg. The project sought to create a concentrated territorial administration (*soedinnnaia vlast'*), in which no longer a lowly provincial service official but the regional delegate of the emperor was empowered to challenge ministerial regulations, not only if they violated the law but if he found them inexpedient (*neudobny*) for the good of the region. Such a provision transformed the *namestnik* into a regional manager. It is obvious here that Gurev's insistence on giving the Committee of Ministers a role in filtering the *namestnik*'s objections before they reached the emperor aimed at giving the ministerial establishment the decisive role in settling the issue. Nowhere in his comments is Gurev willing to consider that while Russia was a unitary state the empire was not, and that imperial legislation continued to recognize territorial exceptions in the Baltic provinces, Ukraine, the Caucasus, and Siberia. His single remark that viceroys still existed in territories (*oblasti*) separated from the "state" by rights, religions, languages and customs or by the sea seems to refer to other lands beyond the empire.

What kind of *namestnik* did Gurev prefer? He must indeed be a local inspector general (*glavnyi inspektor*), because in a large empire the central government can never be sure of the true situation in the provinces, and ministers cannot always trust the reports of their provincial agents. He must be knowledgeable and impartial in order to justify the emperor's trust and earn the respect of the population, but must have no management responsibilities over individual services to avoid being drawn into correspondence detracting him from his primary function. His duties will take several forms. He did not have to reside permanently in any of his provincial capitals but could move from one to another as the performance of his office required. This, Gurev did not say, would delay if not altogether prevent the emergence of regional capitals. But he had to carry out every two years a full inspection of his region and every three years come to the capital to report to the emperor on the needs of his region, while discussing with various ministers the details with which they might not be familiar on account of the great distances separating them from their provincial agents. During his inspection tour, provincial agencies had to supply the information he requested. If he discovered abuses, he ordered the governor (*komu sleduet*) to investigate, dismiss, or hand over to the criminal chamber for trial officials and clerks appointed by the provincial agencies — all very subordinate personnel — but in other cases he only sent a recommendation to the relevant minister or, in important cases, the emperor. Only the police was subordinated to him directly because it held sway over all classes of the population and was able to give him "the most reliable means to find out what he needs." In sum, his duty was to make sure that all laws and ministerial regulations were carried out, with

special emphasis placed on matters brought to his attention by the emperor or individual ministers, or in complaints by private individuals. Thus the *namestnik* was for Gurev one of about a dozen regional delegates of the entire imperial government with the authority of an inspector general to help the ministers manage the empire.

To these formal comments, the Finance Minister added a separate opinion (*réflexions particulières*), in which he tried to place the issue of regionalization in a broader context.³⁴ He suspected that one of the reasons for contemplating the creation of such *namestniki* was the general slackening (*relâchement général*) that was becoming increasingly visible in the imperial administration after the long period of war. The old system introduced by the reform of 1775 was still in force in the province, with the governor exercising undue influence on the judiciary and the financial chambers, which were overloaded with paperwork and dependent on the governor's police to carry out their decisions. Here Gurev raised an issue which he had previously avoided in his formal comments: the statute of 1811 was indeed incompatible with that of 1775, and the governor had to be stripped of his position as provincial manager of the various services which must be made directly dependent on their chiefs in the capital. "Ce n'est plus dans notre siècle qu'on peut confondre toutes les parties d'une vaste administration," and appointing a regional manager standing above three to five provincial governors would not settle anything. He then made the very revealing statement that only the emperor can "tout réunir, tout embrasser." Gurev had claimed in his formal comments that it would be difficult to find individuals for the post of *namestnik* with enough knowledge, experience and stamina to manage a single region consisting of a few provinces, while the emperor possessed the necessary qualities to manage a large empire of some fifty provinces, in addition to his responsibilities as commander in chief and architect of the empire's foreign policy. But the contradiction was only apparent. Most likely without being aware of what was taken for granted, Gurev was saying that the emperor was not in fact the manager of a vast empire but only its grand inspector general (and grand patron in matters of patronage), who redressed private wrongs and cleared up obstacles in the execution of the laws following complaints received through various channels by instructing his ministers to take appropriate action. The real managers of the empire were the ministers, who all belonged to the ruling elite dominated by the two large patronage networks. The *namestniki* were the emperor's regional delegates; they too had to be mere inspectors who did not even need a regional council: a personal chancery would do. Gurev, whose position and long experience had made familiar with the operations of the government, unwittingly gives us a lesson on the nature of the emperor's "autocratic power." A *namestnik* with extensive management powers who, in effect, would represent primarily the Interior Ministry, was certain to give that ministry a *droit de regard* on the operations of other ministries and would invite the emperor to take an active part in the management of his empire: both prospects were inadmissible.

34. *Materialy*, op. cit.: 60-65.

Gurev also suspected that another reason for appointing *namestniki* was to find a means to integrate Finland and Poland into the imperial administration (*rattacher à l'administration générale*). He called these two territories “totally independent states.” If a governor general (he now dropped the term *namestnik*) will also be appointed there in accordance with the project, one of two things will happen: either they will remain what they are and continue to follow their own particular interests, and there will be no integration; or the two regions will become like the others, in violation of the Polish Charter on 1815 and the privileges of Finland confirmed in 1809. They might some day be merged with Russia, but meanwhile “le plus essentiel est que le corps principal de l'État [...] reste fort et vigoureux, ne formant qu'un seul tout indissoluble, n'offrant aucun principe de division morale, politique ou physique.”

Gurev's comments were shown to at least one other official who found the minister's fears exaggerated, but saw their real cause: the *namestnik* threatened his absolute control over his service (*edinonachalie*), but there was no reason to expect this would result in the end (*gibel'*) of Russia.³⁵ There had been different systems in the past and they always worked (*dela shli*); he could not think that Gurev really meant that the government intended to introduce the Polish or Finnish system into Russia; and he saw nothing harmful in having both ministries and *namestniki*. Obviously, he missed the larger point, but he also referred to other projects raising similar issues, suggesting that the debate over regionalization within the elite was substantial.

III

The creation of governors general did not remain only a topic of discussion: they were appointed everywhere after the war of 1812, and by 1825 there were eleven.³⁶ It is not clear, however, whether they were given specific powers. Most likely they were not, and were told instead to follow the statute of 1775 which, as it was subsequently applied, hopelessly confused the issue of the relationship between supervision and management. But before turning to the assessment of their post by some of these governors general, it is necessary to examine what was meant by “supervision” or “inspection” at the time. In the 1780s, while the local government reform was being introduced everywhere, the imperial government had sent teams of usually two senators to inspect the new agencies and report on the progress of the reform and its beneficial results. Their instructions were probably similar, and their basic guidelines became so standardized that at least on one occasion a governor general was ordered to inspect one of his provinces with the authority and powers

35. *Ibid.*: 66-67. Novosiltsev wrote a project in 1819 extending the Polish system to the empire as a whole. This will be discussed in a subsequent article.

36. See Table 2. A list of regions dated 1824 includes 13 regions: *PSZ*, vol. 40, 1825, N. 30516. Another list may have been annexed to the 1816 project: it contains only 12: *Sbornik imperatorskogo russkogo istoricheskogo obshchestva* (Petersburg, 1867-1916), 148 vol., here 90 (1894): 212-213.

of a senator on an inspection tour. But the first general instruction was not published until October 1799; it was revised in March 1819 to take into account the changes brought about by the creation of the ministries.³⁷

The inspecting senator called on the provincial board (chaired by the governor) to produce ledgers showing how many matters (*dela*) had been decided in the preceding three years; the number of persons in official positions in the entire province; and how many complaints had been made on abuses of police power, especially in the collection of arrears. Then he inspected agencies responsible for the management of separate services (forestry, factories, the salt and vodka monopoly), and sent a short report to the relevant minister on what he had found. Then he examined, both in the provincial capital and in selected district centers, complaints submitted by individuals against judicial abuses, and ordered the board to address them. He had to pay special attention to cases of unusually long detention of prisoners — a common complaint when preventive detention was the norm — to excessive paperwork (*volokita*) in civil litigation — a normal occurrence when written procedure created mountains of paper — and to the accumulation of arrears. The senator did not only report his findings to ministers, the Senate, and in important cases, the emperor in person: he could also take immediate action. If he found evidence of serious abuses and criminal acts, he was empowered to remove (*udalit'*) officials in the chambers, informing the relevant minister at the same time, replace them with others from the same province or nobles not serving in elective posts, and if necessary, hand them over for trial in the criminal chamber. But officials appointed by the emperor — the governor, vice-governor, and the chairmen of the chambers — remained in office until he decided their case. When his inspection was completed, he sent a general report to the emperor with his comments on what was needed to be done for “the state interest and the general good.”

In November 1819, the emperor appointed Alexander Balashev governor general of five provinces (Riazan, Tula, Orel, Voronezh, and Tambov). Balashev had been the only police minister from 1810 to 1819 after serving as police chief in Moscow and military governor in Petersburg, and he had accompanied the emperor during the campaigns of 1813-1814.³⁸ He was related to Petr Konovnitsyn, the War

37. PSZ, vol. 25, 1799, N. 19139 and 19212, and vol. 36, 1819, N. 27722; S. Seredonin, *Istoricheskii obzor...*, op. cit., 1: 439-452. The predecessor of those instructions was probably that of 1731 for military inspectors: PSZ, vol. 8, 1731, N. 5900.

38. Between 1812 and 1819 the operations of the Police Ministry were in the hands of Sergei Viazmitinov, the military commander in the capital, former War Minister, and military governor general of Petersburg from 1816 till his death in 1819. In 1819, the ministry was abolished and the central police was re-integrated into the Interior Ministry. Evil tongues were not kind to Balashev. Armand, marquis de Caulaincourt, the French ambassador, reported in August 1810 that “tout le monde (le) trouve *une bête*” and that someone told Alexander that “il n’a d’autre mérite que d’être un honnête homme,” to which the emperor answered: “c’est tout ici parce que c’est plus rare”: Nikolai Mikhailovich, ed., *Les relations diplomatiques de la Russie et de la France d’après les rapports des ambassadeurs d’Alexandre et de Napoléon 1802-1812*, 7 vol. (Petersburg, 1905-1914), here 6 (1908): 150. Vernadsky, however, describes him as one of the major statesmen of Alexander’s reign: G. Vernadsky, *La Charte constitutionnelle*, op. cit.: 47-50.

Minister from 1815 to 1819 and to the Ukrainian network on the Left Bank: he clearly belonged to the Naryshkin-Trubetskoi network. He took office in January 1820 with orders to proceed in accordance with the statute of 1775 and the instruction of 1819.³⁹ There was no reference to the 1816 project. In one of his subsequent reports, Balashev reminded the emperor that, at his accession in 1801, he had had a certain vision of how the empire must be administered: it was no longer possible to keep the central government concentrated (*sovokuplennoe*) in the person of the procurator general, because a single individual could not manage such a large and varied empire — unless he was willing to see his effective power “reduced to insignificance.”⁴⁰ Like Gurev, Balashev was raising the sensitive question of the nature of autocratic power: if the procurator general had become unable to manage the entire internal administration of the empire alongside a Minister of War and one of Foreign Affairs, how then could the ruler manage it without running the risk of becoming ineffective? As a result, the services once concentrated in the procurator general’s office were distributed among the ministries operating through their provincial agents created by the statute of 1775, which must remain the basic document (*korennoe postanovlenie*). Governors general became necessary to do what senators could not do on a permanent basis: to become day-to-day watchdogs (*ezheminutnye inspektory*) over all services in the region — but does not permanent inspection merge at some point with management? In other words, the governor general must be the regional delegate of the Senate in its capacity of watchdog over the execution of the laws and ministerial regulations, and Balashev did see himself as a senatorial *revizor*, the term that would be immortalized in Gogol’s *Inspector General*.

However, left to himself with only the promise of an instruction that never came, Balashev soon became disillusioned. His appointment to a sleepy provincial capital after spending seven years in the close proximity of the emperor, carried a whiff of disgrace. He found his provinces in deplorable condition, every service going its own way; the police inactive; highway robbery everywhere — this within a radius of from 200 to 500 kilometers from Moscow! The grain stores were empty; towns bore a look of neglect; millions of rubles were in arrears; there were no teachers in the schools; clerks were corrupt; everything was for sale. It was not proper (*prilichno*) for an adjutant general of the emperor to live in such conditions — but Alexander refused his request to be recalled.⁴¹

Balashev also understood why the provincial administration had become paralyzed: functional, sectorial, administration by separate ministries, idealized by Gurev, was not working. In an age of slow communications and conservative

39. *PSZ*, vol. 37, 1820, N. 28106.

40. *Materialy*, *op. cit.*: 113-115. Balashev, while recalling his conversations with the emperor, made no reference to the 1816 project. This certainly proves he was not the author. If he had, it would be reasonable to suspect that he was. But the author was certainly an official of the Police or Interior Ministry or one close to them.

41. N. Dubrovin, “Russkaia zhizn’ v nachale XIX veka,” *Russkaia starina*, IV (Oct.-Dec. 1903): 481-514, here 494-496.

government bent on preserving the status quo, distances deepened the isolation of the provinces. The quiet life of the rural world created no incentives to take the initiative, and the empty life of the provincial administrator found compensations in intrigue-mongering and filing a stream of obfuscating reports to the service chiefs in Petersburg. The radical emphasis placed on ministerial administration after 1811 worked to break up concentrated provincial administration created after 1775, to the point that even the governor had to be fitted into it to become the provincial agent of the Interior Ministry. The provincial administration had become headless. Balashev sought to reconcentrate it by creating provincial councils consisting of representatives from the various services, similar to the regional council anticipated by the 1816 project and to the councils existing in the central ministries, which consisted of the various departmental heads. But he stumbled against the intractable issue that concentrated territorial administration in the province was incompatible with deconcentrated management in the capital, unless the Committee of Ministers could be transformed into a truly managerial body with a powerful chairman — but such a reform was opposed by both the emperor and his ministers. To make the governor the true master (*khoziain*) of his province meant in the new circumstances placing the agent of the Interior Ministry above the other service agents: this was unacceptable, especially when Balashev wanted to subordinate his five provincial councils to his own chancery. As chief of police of the region, the governor general was certain to become, like he governor, not so much the agent of the Senate as that of the Interior Ministry, undermining the very foundations of general territorial administration. The region too would become headless.⁴²

Balashev faced another dilemma which struck at the heart of the conflict between supervision and management. Even if his “day-to-day supervision” was hardly feasible in five provinces, he had enough information at his disposal to determine the extent of the corruption and the neglect of his region’s well-being. He complained that he could not remain silent — despite the Finance Ministry’s attempts to ignore his supervisory activities — when state peasants were oppressed by the ministry’s policies; the vodka monopoly was riddled with abuse; the salt monopoly was falling apart; and forests were destroyed.⁴³ If he was to bring relief to the population exploited by a ruling class and a ruling elite of which he was a distinguished member, he would have to assume managerial responsibilities beyond filing useless reports, in concert with the five governors whom he considered the true managers of their respective provinces. But this would put him on a collision course with the powerful Finance Ministry, the ministerial establishment, and even the emperor who, despite his claim to “autocratic power,” was greatly dependent on the elite’s support and, in a crunch, was likely to turn against his governor general. Opposition was growing in Petersburg against Balashev’s attempts to solve his dilemma. When Senator Alexander Dolgorukii was sent in 1826 to find out why so many serfs were running away in Voronezh

42. *Materialy*, op. cit.: 116-145.

43. N. Dubrovin, “*Russkaia zhizn’*,” art. cit.: 506-508.

province, he was ordered to inspect informally the provincial administration — and Balashev's actions as well! He strongly attacked the provincial (and district) councils, claiming they created a connivance (*potvorstvo*) among the services in violation of the 1775 statute (?) and delays in collecting arrears, and that the subordination of the councils to the governor general allowed him to manage his region in arbitrary fashion.⁴⁴ By then, the entire experiment with regionalization was under attack, and Balashev was allowed to retire in 1828.

Balashev had been appointed to bring about changes in the provincial administration on an experimental basis and to coordinate them with the institution of governor general. Other governors general had no such mission, but some were no less uncomfortable in the role of permanent regional *revizory*. Admiral Alexei Klokachev, the governor general of Arkhangelsk, Vologda, and Olonets was, in addition to his civilian responsibilities, port commander in Arkhangelsk. Soon after his arrival in 1820, he was struck by the contradiction between the statutes of 1775 and 1811.⁴⁵ The former had created a territorial and concentrated administration under a single command (*edinonachalie*), the latter a collection of services no longer subordinated to the governor but to their chiefs in the ministries and forming a separate state (*osoboe vladychestvo*) within the provincial administration. Here, Klokachev was guilty of the same error as many of his contemporaries. The 1775 statute had provided for a governor general *in each province*, but practice had created governors general responsible for two or more provinces, transforming the post, in some regions at least, from a provincial manager into, first, a regional manager, then a regional inspector, while retaining the governor as the chief of a concentrated administration. In Arkhangelsk, Klokachev found eleven separate services,⁴⁶ most of them belonging to the Finance Ministry. No wonder that this ministry — like most finance ministries in general⁴⁷ — was the most determined opponent of regionalization. The governor general and the governors — both now shunted aside by the other services which saw them as agents of the Interior Ministry with unacceptable claims over them — had no powers over those services when they discovered abuses, short of reporting them to their chiefs in the ministries who usually took no action. The resulting embarrassment deterred them from sending more complaints. Ministers did not even send the governor general a

44. "Ob upravlenii Voronezhskoi gubernii general-gubernatora Balasheva," *Chteniia v imperatorskom obshchestve istorii i drevnostei Rossiiskikh pri Moskovskom Universitete*, 264 vol. (Moscow, 1846-1918), here 3 (July-Sept. 1863): 137-139.

45. "Zamechaniia otnositel'no dolzhnosti general-gubernatora (mnienie general-gubernatora Klokacheva, podannoe imperatoru 30 iulia 1821 goda)," *Sbornik istoricheskikh materialov*, 16 vol. (Petersburg, 1876-1917), here 7(1895): 197-207.

46. *Ibid.*: 198. They were: the customs house; the forest administration; the board of the northern region of forests reserved for Navy use; the branch of the Commercial Bank; the exchange (*promennaia*) board; the vodka administration; the salt agency; the administration of peasants of the imperial family; roads and waterways; the post office; the schools. Note that seven of the eleven belonged to the Finance Ministry.

47. Appert notes that "le ministre des finances est réfractaire au régionalisme": B. Appert, *Le régionalisme*, *op. cit.*: 77.

copy of their regulations, so that he did not even know what he was expected to supervise, and they sometimes worked at cross purposes: the Education Ministry sought to encourage morality, the Interior Ministry to maintain the peace, but the Finance Ministry encouraged the sale of vodka to increase the revenue, thereby undermining morality and upsetting the peace.

Klokachev claimed for the governor general the right to inspect all services; to audit the collection of revenue and the operations of the provincial branch of the Commercial Bank, and the customs houses; to defend injured parties and punish the violators of the law. Provincial agents would inform their service chiefs, so that both they and the governor general would operate under the supervision of the ministries. Therefore, it was in the interest of the ministries themselves to support the governor general's inspectorial activities. But the admiral was naive. A ruling elite professing to rule autocratically in its own selfish interest by hiding behind the emperor's autocracy — as Gurev had unconsciously hinted — was not interested in setting up a mechanism of self-control. The trend already manifest in the army to consolidate command and inspectorial responsibilities in field commanders had to be seen by the ministers as a threat and, as a result, did not augur well for the future of the institution of governor general. What is remarkable from Klokachev's comments is the extent to which the ministries, which had already neutralized early attempts to control their operations by the Senate,⁴⁸ were determined to checkmate the activities of the governor general as the Senate's regional delegate. The ministerial establishment, the core of the elite, did not even want any self-control — the Senate, after all, also belonged to the ruling elite — but wanted to be free to manage the empire as it saw fit under the "general supervision" of an autocrat whom everyone was trying to deceive.

While Balashev seemed to believe that in order to be effective supervision must eventually require the assumption of some managerial responsibilities, and Klokachev that it must include the auditing of the local agencies of the Finance Ministry, another governor general was simply convinced that governors general could not function satisfactorily as regional agents, whether as managers or inspectors. Louis Alexandre, comte de Langeron, had left France at the outbreak of the Revolution and emigrated to Russia, where he reached the rank of full general. In 1815, he succeeded his compatriot, Armand, duc de Richelieu, as governor general of Ekaterinoslav, Kherson, and Crimea⁴⁹ and commanding general of the Bug and Black Sea Cossacks. He remained in that post until 1823. The governor generalship of New Russia had always been a managerial position ever since the days of Grigorii Potemkin: the settlement of the steppe, the creation of Odessa (by Richelieu) and of an infrastructure of empire in a highly strategic region required

48. J. LeDonne, *Absolutism...*, *op. cit.*: 106-112.

49. The original title was military governor of Kherson (or Odessa) and "administrator in chief" (*glavnonachal'stviushchii*) of Kherson, Ekaterinoslav, and Tavrich (Crimea) provinces. The title of New Russia Governor General was introduced in 1822: *PSZ*, vol. 38, 1822, N. 29031.

much more than supervisory activity by the imperial representative. Langeron was thus well qualified to comment on the challenges of a difficult assignment.

In June 1827, he submitted his “*Réflexions sur la nécessité de concentrer l’administration*” and reduce the size of the provinces.⁵⁰ Russia, he wrote, is twenty times the size of France but has only 50 provinces while France has 80 *préfectures*. He knew that it was impossible to increase their number because it would cost too much and there would not be enough officials and clerks to fill the positions. It would also multiply the already unmanageable paperwork in the central ministries. He would not mention Siberia which is even “hors la loi qui n’y parvient qu’avec peine ou qui arrive souvent bien écornée,” and focused on Russia. Langeron described the extent of his responsibilities: the large territory of the Black Sea Cossacks between the Don and the Kuban; the Cossack settlements on the Bug; the outposts on the Kuban; a flotilla of boats to transport provisions to the fortresses of Mingrelia in present-day western Georgia; commissions to procure food for troops deployed in New Russia, Bessarabia and even Poland; regular troops including artillery and engineer units; six fortresses; Cossacks for policing customs and quarantine houses (the plague had come seven times during his tenure); schools; the mail; navigation; colonies from ten different “nations” with ten different religions; and the town of Odessa “which gives me as much trouble as all my other attributions.” He found it impossible to keep track of it all — Gurev had warned this would be impossible. The provinces of Ekaterinoslav and Crimea should be under a simple governor, and the governor general’s jurisdiction should be restricted to Kherson province and Odessa, its major port, perhaps on the model of Moscow city and its province. But this came close to saying that a simple governor would also do and that a governor general was superfluous — a conclusion reached toward the end of Catherine’s reign. Langeron was harking back to the principle of the 1775 reform that a governor general must be appointed in each province. The inspection tour was the only way by which he could exercise the active supervision his post called for. But it took months, as we learn from a description of Richelieu’s tour in 1805.⁵¹ He had toured his provinces twice a year, and each tour covered between 2,000 and 3,000 kilometers, not counting occasional trips to Petersburg, 2,000 kilometers from Odessa via Kiev and Moscow. Richelieu had left Odessa in March for Kherson, then Melitopol, an important Greek center, after visiting German and Old Believer colonies on the way. He stopped in Taganrog, the second most important Black Sea port after Odessa, and Nakhichevan on the Don, soon to become a major Armenian colony. After visiting the Black Sea Cossacks and stopping in Ekaterinodar on the Kuban, he returned to Odessa via the Strait of Kerch and the Crimea four months later. The trip, on horseback or in a coach on primitive roads, had been exhausting. Obviously, there could be no “permanent

50. *Materialy*, op. cit.: 73-77. It was also published in “Soobrazheniia gr. Lanzherona o neobkhdimosti umen’shit’ obshirnye prostranstva generalgubernatorstv,” *Russkaia starina*, I (Jan.-March 1904): 225-230.

51. E. de Waresquiel, *Le Duc de Richelieu 1766-1822* (Paris, 1990): 155-160.

inspection,” and these tours, marked by a succession of banquets and parades with occasional complaints filtering through the Cossack detail, could give the governor general only the information which his hosts wanted to hear.

Like Klokachev, Langeron complained about the fragmentation of the provincial administration and his own limited powers; and yet, as he put it, governors general were represented in Europe as absolute satraps. It was useless to give orders to the provincial service because if he did, their local agents would answer they could not take them: they depended on their chiefs in Petersburg. Even though “the great dignitaries” of the empire knew little about their distant provinces, to recommend changes would antagonize the ministers who are jealous of their power and not least the crawling mass (*la tourbe énorme*) of secretaries and clerks. The concentration of power in the ministries was a source of great abuse everywhere, inconvenient even in France, where one could get an answer from any point in the kingdom within a week. Perhaps for that reason, Langeron, who had enemies because of his independent mind and caustic wit, remained very shy about the kind of reforms he wanted. Certainly, the responsibilities and authority of a governor general could be increased without his becoming a “*petit tyran subalterne et pasha indépendant*” by empowering him to terminate matters requiring prompt decision without waiting for an answer from the Senate or the emperor. This was vague at best. By the time he submitted his “*réflexions*,” the government had decided to put an end to the regional experiment begun in after 1815.

The accession of Nicholas I in circumstances suggesting widespread dissatisfaction with his brother's reign was not conducive to a favorable examination of the experiment at the very time it was reaching completion. The arrested Decembrists gave extensive testimony about the breakdown of the imperial administration which the governors general had done nothing to correct.⁵² The very assertive new emperor — like his father, Paul I, who had abolished the post of governor general — believed in assuming directly the management of the empire, oblivious of the fact that he ran the risk of seeing his own effective power “reduced to insignificance.” The solution, as he saw it, was to concentrate the operations of the central government as his grandmother had done, but without the corresponding delegation of power to a War Minister and a procurator general. The result would be paralysis of government twenty-five years later.

In the meantime, a so-called Committee of December 6, 1826 — named after the date of its appointment — carried out a thorough examination of projects and proposals submitted by various individuals to Alexander I and kept in his civil chancery, including the 1816 project and Balashev's reports. Balashev himself was invited to discuss his reforms which do not seem to have gone beyond creating

52. V. Semevskii, *Politicheskie i obshchestvennye idei Dekabristov* (Petersburg, 1909) for a general survey. There is a brief mention of the governors general on 87.

provincial and district councils and appointing a chief of police in the province: the committee rejected them in May 1827. Turning to the general question whether the post of governor general should be retained, it resolved that the efficient management of the empire required that the provincial services must depend on the “central supreme (*verkhovnoe*) government” which alone could give them identical guidelines (*odinakovyie nachala*) and a “coordinating impulse” (*edinyim dvizheniem*). This required appropriate changes in the provincial administration, and governors general were not needed. Only in the Baltic provinces, New Russia, the Caucasus, the Orenburg Territory, and Siberia must they be retained because of the separate rights and privileges of their populations and their frontier location.⁵³

Passing such a summary death sentence on the post of governor general was easy, but it fudged the issue. The opposition was not so much to regionalization as such, because the ministries retained their regional operations; it was to the coordination of regional operations by a regional delegate beyond the reach of individual ministers, especially the Finance Minister, and even beyond the reach of the ministerial establishment, if that delegate should become the regional representative of the emperor, not just *de jure* but *de facto*. The prospect was even more dangerous if the emperor became actively engaged in the management of the empire, as Nicholas promised to be. There were other issues as well. There may have been some concern over the fact that the governors general were army generals and that the civil administration of the empire would pass under the command of “corps commanders,” as was already the case in the frontier regions — no exaggeration in view of the fact that a trend toward the militarization of government was already apparent. There was also a traditional obsession with keeping all but minor appointments and the disbursement of funds concentrated in the central agencies. But these concerns, which form the larger background of the issue of regionalization, pale in comparison with the fundamental dilemma raised at the beginning of our first article between territorial and functional administration — a dilemma which Vladimir Putin will have to solve if his regional experiment is to succeed. To give identical guidelines and a coordinating impulse assumed the existence of a truly concentrated government in the person of a strong prime minister reporting to the emperor and capable of overcoming the bitter resistance of individual ministries always eager to bring their selfish interests before the overworked emperor. Such a “united government” would not be possible until after 1905, and in fact would never materialize before the end of the imperial regime.⁵⁴ Without it, the provincial administration was bound to remain deconcentrated as well-pulled apart by the agents of various services recognizing

53. The committee consisted of Victor Kochubei, former Interior Minister; Alexander Golitsyn, former Education Minister; Hans Diebitsch, Chief of His Majesty's Main Staff; Petr Tolstoi, former Petersburg military governor and commander of the V Infantry Corps in Moscow; Illarion Vasilchikov, former commander of the Guard Corps; and Mikhail Speranskii, former governor general of Siberia: see *Materialy*, *op. cit.*: 227-235. See also S. Seredonin, *Istoricheskii obzor...*, *op. cit.*, 1: 103-104 and 2, part 1: 109-110 and 119.

54. D. McDonald, *United government and foreign policy in Russia 1900-1914* (Cambridge, MA, 1992): 5-8.

only one superior: their chief in Petersburg. And this determination to bring every type of administrative activity under the umbrella of central ministries destroyed the position of the governor as agent of integration — he became the provincial agent of the Interior Ministry. In such a climate, there was indeed no room for a governor general: both as manager and as inspector, he was anathema to the ministerial establishment surrounding the new emperor and cutting him off from reality, an isolation which even the Third Section could not remedy. And yet, curiously enough, it was under Nicholas I that an experiment with truly regional administration took place: in Poland and the Caucasus, where *namestniki* were appointed in 1832 and 1844 respectively, both high-ranking military commanders. In both cases, however, their appointment meant in effect the imposition of martial law and must be considered truly exceptional. Before we conclude this study of regionalization during Alexander I's reign, it is necessary to examine political regionalization: this will be the subject of a third article.

Davis Center for Russian Studies
Harvard University
1737 Cambridge Street
Cambridge
Massachusetts 02138

jledonne@fas.harvard.edu

Table 1. Regional headquarters

	Postal	Waterways	Forestry	Customs	Education	Army	Internal guard	Engineers
A. Russia								
Petersburg	*			*	*	*		*
Arkhangelsk	*		*	*			*	
Vytegra		*						
Novaia Ladoga		*						
Ustiuzhna		*						
Novgorod		*						
Tver							*	
Moscow	*				*	*		
Vladimir						*		
Kaluga						*		
Tula							*	
Kolomna		*						
Orel						*		
Kursk						*		
Voronezh	*					*		
Lebedian		*						
Tambov						*		
Nizhnii-Novgorod	*							
Kazan			*		*		*	
Perm	*							
B. Borderlands								
Willamstrand		*						
Helsingfors					*	*		
Sveaborg								*
Vyborg								*
Revel				*				
Riga		*		*			*	*
Derpt					*			
Mitava						*		
Libava				*				
Vitebsk							*	

	Postal	Waterways	Forestry	Customs	Education	Army	Internal guard	Engineers
Vilno/Slonim	*	*			*		*	
Grodno				*				
Bialystok						*		
Brest-Litovsk				*				
Kharkov					*			
Chernigov	*							
Kiev		*	*			*	*	*
Radzivillov				*				
Kamenets-Podolsk						*		
Dubossary				*				
Tiraspol						*		*
Voznesensk						*		
Kherson							*	*
Kremenchug						*		
Odessa	*			*				
Feodosiia				*				
Taganrog				*				
Stavropol	*							
Astrakhan				*				
Tiflis				*		*	*	*
Orenburg				*		*		*
Ufa							*	
Tobolsk	*							
Omsk						*	*	*
	11 ¹	10 ²	3 ³	15 ⁴	7 ⁵	19 ⁶	12 ⁷	10 ⁸

1. *PSZ*, vol. 5, 1830, N. 4019.

2. *PSZ*, vol. 30, 1809, N. 23996.

3. *PSZ*, vol. 34, 1817, N. 27023.

4. *PSZ*, vol. 31, 1811, N. 24684; vol. 34, 1817, N. 26984; vol. 36, 1819, N. 28030; vol. 40, 1825, N. 30467.

5. *PSZ*, vol. 28, 1804, N. 21499-21504. The Abo Academy (later moved to Helsingfors-Helsinki) had the status of a university.

6. Thirteen army corps, the Guard corps, and five separate corps.

7. *PSZ*, vol. 35, 1818, N. 27284.

8. *PSZ*, vol. 36, 1819, N. 27617.

Table 2. Governors General 1815-1825¹

Capitals	Provinces	Governors General
Russia		
1. Tver	Tver Iaroslavl Kostroma Novgorod Vladimir	— ²
2. Arkhangelsk	Arkhangelsk Olonets Vologda	Klokachev, A. 1820-1823 Minitskii, S. 1823-1830
3. Riazan	Riazan Orel Voronezh Tula Tambov	Balashev, A. 1820-1828
4. Kazan	Kazan Simbirsk Penza N.-Novgorod Saratov	Bakhmetev, A. 1825-1828
Borderlands		
5. Riga	Livland Estland Kurland Pskov ³	Paulucii, F. 1819-1829
6. Vitebsk	Vitebsk Mogilev Smolensk Kaluga	Khovanskii, N. 1823-1836
7. Vilno	Vilno Grodno Minsk Volhynia Podolia	Rimskii-Korsakov, A. ⁴ 1812-1830
8. Kiev	Kiev Poltava Chernigov Kharkov Kursk	Repnin-Volkonskii, N. ⁵ 1816-1834

1. Moscow and Petersburg not included; *PSZ*, vol. 39, 1824, N. 29865. The real appointments do not always correspond to the table.

2. Not appointed.

3. Pskov province added in 1823.

4. Vilno and Grodno; Minsk, Podolia and Volhynia provinces under civil governors only.

5. For Poltava and Chernigov; Kiev had a military and Kharkov a civil governor.

9. Odessa	Kherson Ekaterinoslav Crimea Bessarabia	Langeron, A. 1814-1823 Vorontsov, M. 1823-1844
10. Orenburg	Orenburg Perm Viatka	Essen, P. ⁶ 1817-1830
11. Tiflis	Gruzia Mingrelia Imeretia Astrakhan	Ermolov, A. 1816-1827
12. Omsk	Tobolsk Tomsk Irkutsk	Speranskii, M. ⁷ 1819-1821 Kapsevich, P. ⁸ 1822-1827 Lavinskii, P. ⁹ 1822-1833

6. Military Governor of Orenburg (which included Ufa as well). Perm and Viatka under civil governors.

7. Of entire Siberia.

8. Of Western Siberia in Omsk.

9. Of Eastern Siberia in Irkutsk.

Table 3. Population

Region	Males	Region	Males
1. Tver	2,198,413	7. Vilno	2,511,082
2. Arkhangelsk	502,034	8. Kiev	3,136,794
3. Riazan	1,546,664	9. Odessa	875,640*
4. Kazan	2,408,363	10. Orenburg	1,757,382
5. Riga	930,539	11. Tiflis	NA
6. Vitebsk	1,509,045	12. Omsk	871,352

* Bessarabia not included.

Source: E. Amburger, *Geschichte...*, op. cit.: 375; V. Kabuzan, *Izmeneniia v razmeshchenii naseleniia Rossii v 18 - pervoi polovine 19 v.* (Moscow, 1971): 131-139 (census of 1815).