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University of California Bancroft Library/Berkeley
Regional Oral History Office

George C. Guins

IMPRESSIONS OF THE RUSSIAN IMPERIAL GOVERNMENT

An Interview Conducted by
Richard A. Pierce

Copy Number __

George C. Guins in Petrograd
1914

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PREFACE

California-Russian Emigre Series

The following interview is one of a series of interviews with Russian emigres sponsored by the Center for Slavic and East European Studies and produced by the Regional Oral History Office of The Bancroft Library.

Although numerically a small proportion of the population, the Russian-Americans have for a long time been a conspicuous and picturesque element in the cosmopolitan make-up of the San Francisco Bay Area. Some came here prior to the Russian Revolution, but the majority were refugees from the Revolution of 1917 who came to California through Siberia and the Orient. Recognizing the historical value of preserving the reminiscences of these Russian refugees, in the spring of 1958 Dr. Richard A. Pierce, author of Russian Central Asia, 1867-1917, (U.C. Press, Spring 1960) then a research historian at the University working on the history of the Communist Party in Central Asia, made the following proposal to Professor Charles Jelavich, chairman of the Center for Slavic Studies:

> I would like to start on the Berkeley campus, under the auspices of the Center of Slavic Studies, an oral history project to collect and preserve the recollections of members of the Russian colony of the Bay Region. We have in this area the second largest community of Russian refugees in the U. S., some 30,000 in San Francisco alone. These represent an invaluable and up to now almost entirely neglected source of historical information concerning life in Russia before 1917, the February and October Revolutions, the Civil War of 1918-1921, the Allied intervention in Siberia, the Soviet period, of the exile communities of Harbin, Shanghai, Prague, Paris, San Francisco, etc., and of the phases in the integration of this minority into American life.

The proposed series of tape-recorded interviews, as a part of the Regional Oral History Office of the University of California Library, was begun in September 1958 under the direction of Professor Jelavich and with the assistance of Professor Nicholas V. Riasanovsky of the Department of History.

At that time Dr. Pierce conducted three interviews and arranged for a fourth. Each interview lasted several recording sessions, was transcribed and if necessary translated, edited by the interviewer and the interviewee, and then typed and bound. In addition he began assemblying papers to document

the California-Russian emigres. In 1959 Dr. Pierce left to become Assistant Professor of Slavic History at Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario, Canada, but returned in the summers to continue his research in recent Russian history.

In 1966 a second unit of the series was undertaken by Boris Raymond, who conducted three interviews, prepared a bibliography of Russian emigre materials in California, and arranged for the establishment of the California-Russian Emigre Collection in The Bancroft Library. He subsequently left to become Assistant Director of the University of Manitoba Libraries in Winnipeg, Canada, but returned in 1970 to conduct one more interview.

A third unit of the series was authorized in the spring of 1969 by Professor Gregory Grossman, chairman of the Center for Slavic and East European Studies, with Professor Nicholas Riasanovsky serving as chairman of the committee in charge of the series. The unit included three interviews conducted by Richard Pierce, one by Boris Raymond, and the continuing collection of papers for the California-Russian Emigre Collection. A listing of all interviews done under the series follows.

This series is part of the program of the Regional Oral History Office to tape record the autobiographies of persons who have contributed significantly to the development of California and the west. The Office is under the administrative supervision of James D. Hart, director of The Bancroft Library.

Willa K. Baum, Head
Regional Oral History Office

15 April 1971
Regional Oral History Office
486 The Bancroft Library
University of California at Berkeley

INTRODUCTION

Professor George C. Guins, a Russian emigre, came to the United States in 1941. Earlier, he had served as an official in the Imperial Russian government, in the government of Admiral Kolchak during the Russian Civil War, and in the administration of the Chinese Eastern Railway in Manchuria. The unusual fund of experience provided by this varied background, enriched by his subsequent scholarly research, has made him uniquely qualified to the various levels and functions of the Russian government of pre-Soviet times.

Professor Guins originally provided this series of interviews for my own use, but with his permission I have turned over these materials to the Oral History Project so that they may be referred to by other researchers.

The several interviews were given during August of 1964. I tape-recorded them in the study of Professor Guins' home in Berkeley.

The present series gave rise to another, on Professor Guins' life and on the Russian emigration as he observed it, carried out for the Oral History Project by Boris Raymond, in 1966.

Richard A. Pierce
Professor of History

March 1971
Queen's University
Kingston, Ontario
Canada

GEORGE C. GUINS

BRIEF BIOGRAPHY

Born April 15, (28) 1887, in the Russian fortress Novogeorgievsk, now Modlin, Poland. Father--Constantine Guins (Gins) was a commissioned officer; mother--Catherine, born Lamzaki, of Greek descent.

Father, due to his serious condition of health, was taken from Poland by his parents to Kiev, their domicile, where he died in 1891. Mother, with the four children, left for her former domicile, Kishinev, Bessarabia (now Moldavian S.S.R.)

1904: At the end of May completed classical gymnasium in Kishinev with a gold medal. In August enrolled in the St. Petersburg (since 1914 Petrograd) University.

February, 1908: Was awarded a silver medal by the St. Petersburg University for the essay on the problems of juridical persons.

May, 1909: Was assigned to Turkestan (Central Asia) on the recommendation of Professor V. M. Nechaev, who was simultaneously legal counsel of the Ministry of Justice, to study legal principles involved in the distribution of water for irrigation, in connection with the needs of the newly resettled peasants from the European regions.

On the way to Turkestan visited, on his own initiative, Tiflis, the administrative center of Transcaucasia, a region similar to Turkestan as regards conditions of climate and agricultural economy. Stopped in Tashkent to study related materials. Visited personally many settlements of native groups and Cossacks' stanitsas (villages) in the Semirechenskala Oblast, and its central city Vernyi (Alma-Ata at present).

Presented his findings in the form of the report later published in the Voprosy Kolonisatsii (Problems of Colonization).

December, 1909: Graduated from St. Petersburg University with the diploma of the first degree.

January 10, 1910: Married Emilia, born Prognitskaia. Has two sons: Vsevolod, born October, 1910; and Sergei, born February, 1915.

Joined the staff of the Resettlement Department (Pereselencheskoe Upravlenie) in January, 1910, and was promoted in 1913 to the position of Officer for Special Assignments attached to the Minister of Agriculture.

1916: Passed special examinations at Petrograd University for getting the right to teach at the imperial universities and became a lecturer (privat docent) of the Petrograd University.

April, 1917: Was appointed Chief Counsel of the Ministry of Food Supply founded after the February Revolution.

January, 1918: In connection with the post-October changes in both Ministry and University, left Petrograd for Asiatic Russia.

February, 1918: Joined in Omsk the Regional Organization of the Consumer Cooperatives as a member of its board. In April, was elected Professor of Civil and Commercial Law of the newly founded Omsk Polytechnical Institute's economic department.

May, 1918: After the overthrow of the Soviet regime in Omsk, joined the Siberian government as the chief of its office. Accompanied the chief of the government, P. V. Vologodskii, to Vladivostok to attempt the unification of the government in the whole of Siberia.

1919: Continued to work with the government of Admiral A. V. Kolchak until its fall in January of 1920. Afterwards emigrated to Harbin, Manchuria.

March, 1920: Became a professor at Harbin Law School (Juridicheskii Fakultet) with economic and Oriental sections. The school was founded by a group of professors, emigres, with the material assiatance of the Harbin intelligentsia and Russian entrepreneurs. It was later supported by the Chinese Eastern Railway. Kept this position through 1938.

January, 1921: Became Chief of the Office of the Board of Directors of the Chinese Eastern Railway, and later, until May, 1926, its Chief Controller.

September, 1928: Went to Paris via Hong Kong, Manila, Singapore, Colombo, Kair, Genoa, with a grant from the Harbin School of Law to study new legislation of the European countries. Visited Italy, London, Berlin, and Romania (Bessarabia).

April, 1929: Defended in Paris his dissertation "Water Law," and was awarded the degree of Magister of Civil Law by the Russian Academic group attached to the French Ministry of Education. Returned to Harbin, Manchuria, in May, 1929.

1930: Published a book, Na Putiakh k Gosudarstvu Budushchego (On the Way to the State of the Future), with the subtitle, "From Liberalism to Solidarism." (Harbin, 1930)

In addition to lecturing at the School of Law and at the Pedagogical Institute, was, in various periods, Chairman of the Committee of the Educational Institutions of the Chinese Eastern Railway, Chairman of the Council of Supervisors of the Harbin municipality, member of the Board of Directors of the Houseowners' Bank.

Practiced law as a consultant and at court. Contributed articles to newspapers and to the Harbin Law School publication (Izvestia Juridicheskogo Fakulteta).

Published the following works:

Sibir', Soiuzniki i Kolchak (Siberia, Allies, and Kolchak), two volumes, Peking, 1921.

Eticheskie Problemy Kitaia (Ethical Problems of China), Harbin, 1927.

Vodnoie Pravo i Predmety Obshchego Polsovania (Water Law and Objects of Public Use), 1928.

Novyie Idei v Prave i Osnovnye Problemy Sovremennosti (New Ideas in Law and the Problems of the Modern Time), two volumes, 1931-1932.

Sotsialnaia Psychologia (Social Psychology), 1936.

Pravo i Kultura (Law and Culture), The Origin and Development of Law, 1938.

Quo Vadis Europa? (Whither goes Europe?), Europe and Asia on the eve of the First World War, 1941.

Predprinimatel' (The Entrepreneur), in collaboration with Leo Zikman, 1941.

July, 1941: Left Manchuria for the U.S.A. In San Francisco in 1942-1944 edited Russian Life, a daily, in Russian.

December, 1944: Joined UNRRA staff in Washington D.C. until April, 1945.

September, 1945: Became a lecturer at the University of California, Berkeley Slavic Department, and since 1948 also in the Department of Political Science. Retired on July 1, 1954.

July-August, 1952: Attended International Congress of Jurists in West Berlin, where he presented his paper on Soviet Law.

1954: Published his work, Soviet Law and Soviet Society, The Hague, Martinus Nijhoff.

1956: Published Communism on the Decline, The Hague, Martinus Nijhoff.

1955-1964: Worked for the United States Information Agency (Voice of America).

July, 1964: Retired because of illness. Began in 1965 and currently continues to prepare a new work, History of Russia as a Multinational Empire, supported with a grant from the Slavic Center of the University of California, Berkeley.

Died September 1971.

San Francisco Chronicle
September 26, 1971

Obituaries SF Chronicle Sept 26, 1971

George C. Guins, Expert on Russia

Funeral services for George C. Guins, 84, author, editor and retired professor of Russian culture and Soviet law at the University of California at Berkeley, will be held at 11 a.m. Thursday in St. John the Baptist Russian Orthodox Church, Berkeley.

Mr. Guins, a native of Russia, died Thursday in Redwood City. He lived at 6406 Hillegass Ave., Oakland.

He was graduated from the Law School of the University of St. Petersburg, Russia, and subsequently served simultaneously as an associate professor of Polytechnic Institute, Omsk, Siberia, and a member of the Siberian Government.

He published numerous books and articles on legal and sociological subjects in Russia and the United States and was editor of Russian Life in San Francisco from 1941-44.

Mr. Guins was also a lecturer on political science and Slavic languages and after he retired from UC Berkeley in 1955 he became an editor for the Voice of America in Washington, D.C.

He was a member of a number of political science and language organizations and St. John the Baptist Russian Orthodox Church, Berkeley.

Survivors include two sons, V. G. Guins of Palo Alto and Sergie Guins of Okemos, Mich.; a niece, Tanya Anderson of Los Altos, and six grandchildren.

A memorial service will be held at 8:30 p.m. Wednesday at St. John's Church, Essex and Adeline streets, Berkeley.

Burial will be in Sunset View Cemetery, El Cerrito.

I GROWING REVOLUTIONARY FEELING, 1904-1905

Pierce: Professor Guins, a great deal has been written concerning the Russian revolutions of 1905 and 1917. It would be interesting if you, as a contemporary, could tell some of your impressions and experiences during each and in the period between the two revolutions. May I ask you to share your reminiscences of that time?

Guins: I will be glad to do so. I appreciate your interest in the period between the revolutionary movement of 1905-1906 and the revolution of 1917. It is hardly possible to understand the tragedy of 1917 and the civil war that followed unless one knows the events of the intervening period.

I do not pretend that my understanding and appreciation are absolutely right, but I hope that they may be of use for those who have no prejudice and are interested in various approaches, and in understanding the ominous events between the two revolutions.

Pro Domo Suo

Guins: I will start with the first years of my student life, with my first reactions as a young man without any political experience. I must, therefore, emphasize that I was politically rather naive when in August, 1904, I was enrolled as a student in St. Petersburg University. I was then only 17 years old, having grown up in a patriarchal family with only one man in the house, my grandfather, who was about 85 when I graduated from the

Guins: gymnasium (high school).

There had been no sharp political or social problems in Bessarabia, where I was reared, except anti-Semitic feeling. The latter was artificially inflated by the right-wing extremist Pavel Krushevan, the editor of the newspaper Bessarabets and later a member of the Second State Duma.

From some of my classmates I knew that there existed the so-called Kontra (political opposition) in the underground, and that there were some secret meetings. But there was no movement of any significance. I personally had no interest in such underground activity.

Students' Strike

Guins: After my arrival in St. Petersburg in August, 1904, I got into conditions quite different from those in Bessarabia. There were proclamations very cautiously distributed among students, and attempts to organize short propagandist meetings at the university. The unsuccessful Russo-Japanese War favored anti-government feelings. Yet the fall season of 1904 passed in a normal way.

Only in January and February of 1905 did anti-government propaganda and revolutionary moods become more obvious, in particular at the university. In February, students voted to declare a strike, and the university was closed by order of the government for the rest of the academic year. That meant that students could not pass examinations, and I returned only in August to register for my second academic year, 1905-1906.

During the first academic year, 1904-1905, we had only three and a half months of normal studies and visiting lecturers, during September-December of 1904, and for about one and a half months in January-February, 1905.

In September, 1905, the universities began the new academic year. But the political atmosphere in the capital and everywhere in the country was heated. There were no less than 40,000 students in the capital, and though less, still a large number in other university cities. The government decided to close the universities up to August, 1906. One more academic year was lost.

I used that intermission for self-instruction. During that period of the strike I read several textbooks and some supplementary works on economics, state law, and in particular, consti-

Guins: tutional law, recommended for additional reading. I read among other things one of the popular legal works by the famous German jurist Rudolph Von Ghering, Der Kampf Ums Recht, and also Zweck im Recht, as I knew already that German legal literature was very instructive and rich. It also inspired respect for law and legal order. Thus, I did not lose time in spite of this unexpected vacation.

Pierce: Do you remember any significant events of that period when you were in Bessarabia instead of studying at the university?

Guins: The most significant events were in Manchuria, in connection with the Russo-Japanese War and the peace negotiations at Portsmouth, New Hampshire. I did not know much about the revolutionary movement in European Russia and the preparation of the government to introduce a representative body. The provincial newspapers provided little information. Only after my return to St. Petersburg, at the end of August, 1905, was I informed about the Peterhof conference.

II GOVERNMENTAL REACTION TO THE REVOLUTIONARY MOOD

The Peterhof Conference

Guins: This conference was organized in July by the Emperor. He wanted to know the opinions of various respected men on whether it would be reasonable to establish a consultative or representative body--the State Duma--which would limit the prerogatives of the Emperor, or whether such a reform should be rejected.

The Emperor Nicholas II was surrounded mostly by ultra-conservative men. Among them was the very influential statesman K. P. Pobedonostsev (1827-1907), whom the Emperor Alexander III had recommended to his son and successor as a mentor.

There were certainly liberals among the relatives of the Emperor, even among the grand dukes, but they could hardly support constitutional moods. No doubt the Emperor himself could not but hesitate before taking such a decision. He had witnessed the hard-set policy of his father, Alexander III, and he could not forget that he had suppressed the constitutional trends which had become almost dominant during the last years of the reign of Alexander II.

He could not help recalling how the Great Reforms encouraged the revolutionary movement and terroristic acts. Alexander III had stopped this movement, and his reign was marked by peace and order. After his death the country again began to show symptoms of turmoil. Such was the philosophy of the conservatives, and the young Emperor could not help wavering between right and left in his policies.

Nicholas was a young boy when his grandfather Alexander II was mortally wounded and his lacerated body was brought to the Winter Palace. One can imagine what kind of impressions and recollections and what doubts would arise in the Emperor's mind every time he had to decide what policy he should follow, that of his strong father or of his submissive grandfather.

Guins: Strikes of workers and disorders in the universities began almost immediately after Alexander III's death. The Russo-Japanese War proved unsuccessful, as had the Crimean War in the middle of the previous century. Such conditions favored revolutionaries.

Was it possible to suppress disorders? In 1904, V. K. Plehve, Minister of the Interior, a strong man, was killed by a terrorist. In the provinces several governors were killed, and many other terrorist acts took place.

Pierce: The Emperor's hesitations are understandable. But who were the persons invited for consultation?

Guins: The Emperor wanted to know the opinion not only of his ministers but also of other experienced statesmen and representatives of the nobility. He invited a number of influential persons to a conference in his summer residence in Peterhof. Among the people invited there was the outstanding Russian historian, Kliuchevskii.

There were not a few people at the conference who had at that time the nickname "zubry" (bisons), or rare animals which were still living in "zapovedniks" (forests in which hunting was prohibited for the conservation of wildlife). People of that kind could not give any advice to the Emperor other than to be strong, not to concede, and to suppress any opposition.

The ministers of that time belonged mostly to the conservative though not reactionary groups. Yet the idea of the representation of public opinion in the form of a State Duma (Gosudarstvennaia Duma) as a "consultative" body did not meet decisive opposition in the highest administrative circles.

But what group of people should be represented in such a Duma? There was a prevalent consideration that the nobility was the most reliable group. The partisans of that opinion believed that the Emperor had to choose the nobility as a support of the throne, and that a majority of the members of the State Duma, if such an institution was necessary at all, should be noblemen.

Kliuchevskii's Appeal to History

Pierce: How could it be known who was of one or another opinion?

Guins: Again, I have to emphasize that some information was received only later. Our professors knew more than many others, but even they did not know all that I can relate at present.

Guins: Kliuchevskii objected. He said that it would be a mistake to rely on the nobility in any case and at any time. The nobility, he said, was not a homogeneous and immutable group of the population. Referring to Russian history, he reminded the conference how some noblemen had participated in conspiracies and supported anti-government movements.

He recalled the names of contemporaries: the princes Dolgorukii, Trubetskoi, Shakhovskoi, and other men of pure Russian blood and offspring of statesmen of the great past--men who were close to the throne and who nevertheless supported reforms. Many of the offspring of the ancient noble families, continued Kliuchevskii, were partisans of liberal reforms.

I heard all of that from one of our professors two or three years after the Peterhof meeting took place. Kliuchevskii informed Prince S. N. Trubetskoi and his colleagues at the Moscow University about the conference, and from the latter the information about the Peterhof conference of 1905 spread among the politicians.

There were some reactionaries at the conference who objected to any concessions. Yet the Emperor acknowledged the necessity of reforms and decided to issue a manifesto about the establishment of the consultative body representing various strata of the population.

Pierce: Were the proceedings of the conference published before 1917?

Guins: I have never heard of such publication in Russia. Nothing relating to the Emperor, his meetings, conversations, or policies could be published unless approved by the Ministry of the Imperial Court. But after the revolution of 1917, the minutes of that conference were published in a book.

The Problem of Access to the Tsar

Pierce: Insofar as there were liberals among the nobility, was it possible for some of them to have access to the Tsar?

Guins: I cannot answer that question because I had no connection with anyone who had access to the court at that time. Later, as an official for special assignments, I received some information while connected with the Ministry of Agriculture (earlier the Main Administration of Land Organization and Agriculture), but not very much. Even then, in 1913-1916, I had no intimate connections with people who were close to the court.

Guins: Some of the officials had special court titles, "Kamerger," "Gofmeister," "Shtalmeister," etc. My chief, I. Tkhorzhevskii, was Kamerger. Gondatti, at that time Governor-General of the Amur Region, was Shtalmeister. But even they had no free access and were invited to Tsarskoe Selo for special occasions only.

However, some information spread in the capital through unofficial channels. Although often mixed with gossip, such information contained nevertheless grains of truth.

Prince S. N. Trubetskoi's Warning

Guins: However, your question about visitors to Tsarskoe Selo reminds me of an historical event, when a real Russian nobleman of an old family visited the Emperor and had with him a sincere conversation about the necessity of reforms. This nobleman, whom I have just mentioned in connection with Kliuchevskii's declaration, was Prince Sergei N. Trubetskoi, Professor at Moscow University.

He was a member of a small delegation which was received by the Tsar, and he asked the Tsar to let him relate his opinion in the form of a private conversation. The Tsar agreed. And as it became known later, Trubetskoi, walking with Nicholas II along the long hall of the palace at Tsarskoe Selo, told the Tsar about the need to satisfy the people's expectations and to prevent a possible revolution.

"We noblemen," said Trubetskoi, "are closely connected with the Imperial family and Russian history, and we will share your fate, which I can foresee in case of revolution."

Information about Trubetskoi's conversation with the Tsar did not appear in the newspapers at once. Trubetskoi died suddenly soon afterwards. I attended his funeral in St. Petersburg and remember his face in his casket. I remember also that his conversation ceased to be a secret. Its content was probably published in connection with his death.

The Tsar's Decision

Pierce: What were the practical consequences of the Peterhof conference?

Guins: The Emperor's decision was realized in the form of the decree of

Guins: August 6, 1905, establishing the State Duma, called unofficially the "Bulygin Duma." Bulygin was at that time the Minister of Internal Affairs.

Pierce: If the Peterhof conference took place in July, how could the decree be ready so soon? Should it not first have received preliminary discussion and have been edited by a special commission?

Guins: The original project concerning the Duma was evidently prepared in the Ministry of Internal Affairs before the Peterhof conference. And the Emperor, to whom Bulygin presented his project, did not approve it at once, I suppose, and decided to have it discussed in a conference.

Disappointment Instigates the Revolutionary Movement

Pierce: How was the Emperor's decree received in Russia?

Guins: When I returned to St. Petersburg for the fall session of the university, it was already well known that the consultative nature of the representative body was considered unsatisfactory and that even moderate liberal circles of society were disappointed.

In the meantime, the revolutionary movement continued to develop and to become more and more dangerous. Even the moderate politicians insisted that the first Russian representative body must be a legislative one, and that it have also the right of inquiry. Meanwhile, the revolutionary movement was becoming stronger.

In Kharkov, as I recall, the first "soviet of workers" was organized, followed by similar bodies elsewhere. Meetings and strikes became commonplace. The war with Japan was ended by a treaty concluded in Portsmouth. The conditions of the peace did not seem to be humiliating, and Witte, who represented Russia during the peace negotiations, received the title of Count in recognition of his diplomatic success.

Reaction to Witte's Diplomacy

Pierce: What was the reaction in Russia toward the treaty?

Guins: I heard many times that in military circles the conclusion of peace was considered to be a wrong step, that the situation in Manchuria had improved by the time of the peace negotiations, and that it should have been possible to finish the war with more honor for Russia. The partisans of this view characterized the U. S. position as favorable for Japan, because the U. S. wanted to stop Russian domination in the Far East.

But the military circles criticizing the peace settlement ignored the revolutionary movement which had arisen in Russia. The revolutionaries exploited the unsuccessful developments of the loss of Port Arthur, the defeat of the squadron of Admiral Rozdestvenskii, and the defeats in the battles of Liaoyang and Mukden as consequences of the defects of the autocratic regime. And they succeeded in their anti-government propaganda. That was, I believe, the main reason for the hasty conclusion of peace with Japan.

Witte was sufficiently firm while Japan was already almost exhausted and wanted peace. Yet, a considerable part of the Russian concession in Manchuria, approximately one half of the whole railway strip, with the port of Dal'nyi (Dairen) and the southern part of the island of Sakhalin, were conceded to Japan.

The enemies of Witte called him the "Count of half Sakhalin" (Graf polusakhalinskii), and military leaders pretended that the peace was concluded just when the Russian army was prepared for an offensive.

Witte as Prime Minister

Guins: Anyhow, Witte returned to the capital with an auro of statesmanship. To the glory which he had acquired during the reign of Alexander III, who praised Witte as his Minister of Communication and later still more as Minister of Finance, was added the diplomatic success at Portsmouth.

Nicholas II appointed Witte to the post of Chairman of the Council of Ministers. It was a new post, an innovation in the Russian system of government. That change and Witte's appointment followed the new manifesto of Nicholas II, a new concession to the progressive mood of the Russian intelligentsia and to new explosions of the discontent of the working masses of the population.

The army returning from Manchuria after the conclusion of peace began to manifest on the way to European Russia its own

Guins: revolutionary mood. Propaganda obviously reached the most distant parts of the empire. Among the drafted soldiers there were certainly some agitators.

Trubetskoi's conversation with the Tsar took place, I believe, just at that time. It was urgently necessary to appease the nation, and Witte advised the Emperor to issue a new act, the manifesto of October 17, 1905, establishing the Duma as a legislative body. On December 11, a new electoral law was issued.

The October, 1905 Manifesto

Guins: In conformity with the October Manifesto, the fundamental laws of the Russian empire were issued on April 23, 1906, and the date of elections to the legislative body, the First Duma, was set. The country awaited the results. It was hardly possible to foresee the composition of the First State Duma. It depended not only on the electoral law, but also on how the constituency would be organized.

And only then for the first time did it become clear how the multi-national character of the Russian empire complicated that problem. Incorporation into Russia of so many national minorities of quite different cultural levels and different needs prevented the organization of the representative body on the same basis for all parts of the empire.

New Electoral Law and Fundamental Laws of 1906

Pierce: How would you characterize the electoral law according to which the First Duma was elected?

Guins: The principles of the electoral, which was published in February, 1906, seemed to be quite satisfactory from the point of view of moderate liberals. It was elaborated under the supervision of Witte as Prime Minister.

Some time later, on April 23, 1906, the fundamental law was issued establishing the new legislative power in Russia. The results of the elections seemed to be satisfactory, but not from the point of view of the left groups and of the extreme right ones. The Bolsheviks decided to boycott the elections.

Guins: The majority of the elected members belonged to the democratic liberals, the Ka-de (Constitutional-Democratic or Cadet) Party, and such a composition was considered to be a revolutionary one by the conservative strata.

The government then became more confident, and the reactionary groups surrounding the throne decided that the revolution was almost completely suppressed and that it was just the time to turn the helm to the right.

Pierce: Did the new fundamental law permit such a change?

Guins: I don't think so. However, I will first of all relate what I remember about the survival of the autocratic regime after the October Manifesto.

Witte Powerless as Prime Minister

Guins: I have mentioned already that simultaneously with the establishment of the State Duma as a legislative body, a new post of Chairman of the Council of Ministers was established. However, the rights of the Chairman were not determined, and Witte, the first Prime Minister, soon discovered that he had none of the power of the constitutional premier which he must certainly have supposed himself to be.

Not only the entire government, but every minister remained responsible directly to the Emperor, and certainly there was no responsibility to the Duma. The principle of parliamentary responsibility was not introduced by the fundamental law, nor was the leading role of the Prime Minister formulated.

This was known of course to Witte as well as to any other member of the government. Each minister remained responsible individually to the Tsar. He appointed, or at least could appoint them, without consulting with the Chairman.

Besides, several ministers, such as the Ministers of War, of Navy, of Foreign Affairs, remained independent of the Council of Ministers, because the Tsar was the head oftthe army and navy, and the leadership of foreign policy remained completely within his competence. So the government remained not unified.

Being appointed directly by the Emperor, every member of the Council of Ministers could report personally to the Emperor, without prior discussion of the subject of his report with the Chairman of the Council of Ministers. If a certain member of the

Guins: government had influence in the circles close to the Emperor in Tsarskoe Selo or Peterhof, the Tsar's winter and summer residences, respectively, he could prevent some decisions to which he was opposed.

Thus, the sovereign could be and probably was in fact incited against one or another act. If the Chairman insisted on his own opinion, he could spoil his personal relations with the Emperor.

All this is not a simple juridical interpretation of the new regime, but a generalization of the practice, with which I became familiar when afterwards I became attached to the Main Administration of Land Organization and Agriculture (later the Ministry of Agriculture).

III BETWEEN THE REVOLUTIONS: GOVERNMENTAL CHANGE AND ACTIVITY

The First Duma and the Survival of the "Old Regime"

Guins: The period of the first years of the existence of the State Duma could be characterized as a period of adaptation of the former organization of government to the new legal order. And in my view, it was an adaptation in favor of the survival of the old regime within the framework of the constitutional order.

In the First Duma the representatives of the Ka-de Party composed the most influential political group, or, using the established terminology, political faction. The other comparatively numerous one was the group of representatives of the peasants. Extremists and socialists were in the minority.

Among the members of the Ka-de Party there were outstanding professors, lawyers, and representatives of the other free professions. A professor of Moscow University, S. A. Muromtsev, was elected Chairman of the Duma. He was born for such a position. He impressed everybody with his dignified, firm, and authoritative manner.

On the other hand there were some peculiar members in the First Duma. A priest, Father Vasilii Guma, elected from Bessarabia, declared that the "land problem" was not worth discussions and disputes, as "all altitude, latitude, and profundity equally belong to everybody." Another member of the Duma, a peasant, came to the chairman and asked him to let him return home.

"What is the matter?" the amazed Chairman, Professor Muromtsev, asked him.

With tears in his eyes the peasant answered, "I cannot understand anything. They are speaking, speaking--first one,

Guins: then the other, then thou--and I do not know what I have to do."

In general the level of the membership of the First Duma was above average, corresponding to what the country expected from its representatives. Not the same was the attitude of the government. It was dissatisfied with the composition of the Duma, considering its majority as an opposition. The government hoped to have a more cooperative legislative body.

The government itself was soon even less disposed toward cooperation than it would have been while headed by Count Witte. He was dismissed almost on the eve of the opening of the First Duma, in April, 1906, and replaced by an old statesman, I. L. Goremykin, deprived of the capacity for leadership. As a typical bureaucrat he could not imagine how to cooperate with an organization consisting of people with conflicting interests, and with parties with different programs and principles, which they were bound to follow.

The government began from the first days of the opening of the Duma's meetings to ignore its existence. The Emperor received the members of the Duma in the Winter Palace and warned them not to undertake any radical approaches. No bills were presented to the Duma except two involving insignificant allotments. It looked as if the government intended to demonstrate its indifference toward the legislative body and to let the Duma show whether it could be loyal.

Meanwhile, the First Duma wanted to gain the confidence and support of the nation. It could not ignore the expectations of the majority of the population. The peasantry expected the redistribution of lands and was sure that this problem could not be solved other than by the compulsory expropriation of private estates.

However, the opposition to such a radical solution of the land problem was very strong. Landowners composed the most influential part of the conservative elements of the population and the most reliable support of the autocratic regime. Expropriation of private estates was considered by the government to be unacceptable, but for its part the government did not offer any other solution to the problem.

It had not its own program, and as soon as the Duma started to discuss the land problem the government, foreseeing a possibility of one or another radical solution from the Duma, decided to dissolve the Duma and presented a corresponding decree for the Emperor's signature.

Dissolution of the First Duma

Guins: As it became known later, Nicholas II agreed only reluctantly to dissolve the Duma. He had doubts that there were sufficient reasons for such a measure. Yet Goremykin succeeded in getting the Tsar's signature. Having noticed the Tsar's indecision and his doubts, Goremykin decided to take measures to promulgate the decree without delay. Simultaneously, he prevented the possibility of the annulment of the dissolution of the Duma.

Returning from Tsarskoe Selo, Goremykin ordered the Emperor's decree sent immediately to the Senate for promulgation, as all government acts came into force after promulgation by the Senate. The Emperor did not succeed in annulling his signature, and the Duma was dissolved. It had existed for only 72 days.

Pierce: Professor Guins, you emphasized previously that these were things of which you had heard. I believe anyone interested in your memoirs would like to know why the Emperor hesitated and could wish to annul the decree which he had already signed. You also did not relate how Goremykin managed to prevent the annulment.

It is clear that you could not have direct evidence of this, but it would nevertheless be of interest to know what you heard about it, or even what you yourself consider to be most probable.

Guins: Well, as regards the Emperor, I had the impression that he found that there was insufficient reason to dissolve the Duma. No acts of the First Duma could be characterized as having a revolutionary character, and no bill of a revolutionary character had been approved by the Duma.

Even if the Duma had approved an inacceptable project of law concerning land redistribution, the upper chamber, the State Council, could have blocked its adoption. Goremykin's report was therefore not well grounded.

I never heard that he had presented a report in written form to the Tsar. Probably he simply offered the Tsar a prepared text of the ukaz for the dissolution of the Duma. It is my impression that the Tsar was an honest man and that it would have been difficult for him to act against his own conscience.

As for the other part of your question, we heard that Goremykin, having noticed the Emperor's hesitation, ordered his telephone disconnected. When Nicholas II failed to reach him by telephone, he sent his officer for special assignments to order Goremykin not to publish the decree. But it was by then already

Guins: published and distributed. Such was the story that I heard and which seems to me quite probable.

Pierce: How would such an unusual maneuver become known?

Guins: Too many people were connected with the whole business: those in the printing plant who received the Tsar's decree dissolving the Duma and later received another order to stop publishing; those who had to disconnect the telephone; those who had orders not to awaken the tired Prime Minister, etc. Besides, Goremykin was discharged from his high post almost immediately after the dissolution.

Pierce: How did the country take the dissolution of the First Duma? Did it provoke any excitement?

Guins: It happened in July. I was then in the country and had only the provincial newspaper. I was amazed, but the landowner on whose estate I was living, as a summer tutor of his son, was quite indifferent. By chance there were several guests there, good friends of his who had arrived from Romania. When I shared with one of them my indignation in connection with the news about the dissolution, he told me quietly, "What does it matter? There will be a new election, a new Duma, that's all."

I was surprised to find such an indifference about what I considered to be a great blow struck by the government. At that time I was already a conscious liberal, and I admired the first Russian parliamentarians, their speeches and suggested reforms.

The Second Duma and the New Prime Minister

Guins: P. A. Stolypin was nominated as the new Prime Minister. His name meant nothing to us, the people in the provinces. I had then the impression that a man such as Muromtsev or Prince Trubetskoi would have been much better than the little known governor of Saratov, Stolypin.

The dissolution of the First Duma was accompanied by the proclamation of elections to the Second Duma, but the Second Duma was to be elected on the basis of a new electoral system.

A great number of the members of the First Duma protested against the dissolution. They left for Vyborg, Finland, and there signed an appeal addressed to the population of the Russian empire in which they suggested that people refuse to pay taxes and to serve the government. As a result the best politicians

Guins: from among the Ka-de Party were indicted, condemned by the Court, imprisoned, and deprived of their rights to be reelected to the Second Duma.

The composition of the Second Duma differed essentially from that of the First. The center was much more moderate, and the right wing more reactionary. The left wing proved to be more radical, because the Bolsheviks changed their tactics. Instead of boycotting the elections, they took an active part in the electoral campaign.

It is no wonder that the Second Duma was also dissolved. This time it became easier to take such a step. The Emperor signed the decree about the dissolution without hesitation. The electoral law was changed for the second time, and the Third Duma was elected.

The Third Duma

Guins: The Third Duma received the nickname "zakonoposlushnaia" (the obedient, or quite loyal). Stolypin found the support he needed and began to realize his program. Having succeeded in his plans and enjoying support in the Duma, Stolypin increased his own authority in higher circles.

The Tsar accepted his projects readily, and the country admired his decisiveness and his eloquence. His phrases like "Ne zapugaete" ("Your threats will not avail!"), or "Vam nuzhny velikie potriasseniia, nam nuzhna velikaia Rossiia" ("You need great shocks and upheavals; we need a great Russia!") became widely quoted and inspired people to resist the extremists.

Stolypin's policy had also an educational significance. From that time a real adaptation of the government system to the constitutional changes began to take form in the cooperation of the government with the representative body, the Duma.

Pierce: Did the progressive intelligentsia find this sufficient?

Guins: It was hardly possible to be satisfied. The politicians who represented the so-called "progressive intelligentsia" had expected that the new regime would be truly constitutional, with necessary guarantees of the inviolability of its fundamental principles.

The members of the left groups, the socialists, had hoped for a chance to get a majority in the parliament or at least a

Guins: chance to represent the labor unions and peasant organizations and to acquire in such a manner a leading political role.

From my point of view the weakest or the least satisfactory point of the new order was the continued dependence of the government exclusively on the Emperor. The changes in the electoral law also diminished the significance of the Duma.

Pierce: What, then, could be the significance of the Duma after the two changes in its composition which almost deprived it of influential opposition?

Guins: To answer your question I can refer to what I could observe as an official of the government in the capital. I can formulate two conclusions: first, that because of the existence of the Duma, the bureaucratic apparatus of the government was essentially improved; and second, that the right of the Duma to revise the state budget influenced also in a positive sense the planning of the national economy and the government activity in general.

Without the Duma's approval none of the government institutions could get the credits for which they asked. There were exceptions, of course, involving very considerable amounts. These were the so-called "assured credits" (zabronirovannye kredity). Such credits were, for example, those which were established by laws issued earlier. Unless the corresponding laws had been abrogated, the credits remained open.

There were also credits at the disposal of the Emperor. But all limitations of that kind could not diminish the positive role of the budget rights of the Duma, although there were plans to limit those rights.

I recall that once my chief in the Ministry's office showed me a project for an interpretation of the "assured credits," which could increase them at the expense of the Duma's control. The Minister wanted to know the opinion of a jurist, and my chief asked me to write a legal opinion.

I wrote a critical opinion, asserting that such an extensive interpretation of public law would be incorrect, and that such a decrease of the right of the representative body would be seen as an intention of the government to decrease the rights of the people's representatives.

I indicated also that the motives for the simplification of the budget practice were insufficient to justify violating the existing law by thie reinterpretation. I added at the same time that if the author of the proposition would insist, certain amendments should necessarily be included.

Guins: The next day my chief told me that Minister Krivoshein approved my opinion but omitted amendments suggested by me. He recommended to "the young author of the legal opinion" not to add amendments in the future if he disagreed in principle.

Pierce: Did you suppose that Minister Krivoshein would not support your negative appraisal?

Guins: I did not suppose this, but I was not sure that all other ministers would agree with the project to reject a chance of increasing the budget right of the government at the expense of the Duma's rights.

Besides, I did not know that opinions of the particular ministers were usually sent before the meeting to the executive secretary of the Council of Ministers who reported at the meeting of the Council who supported the project presented for the discussion and who opposed it and for what reasons. Such a system simplified the procedure.

Under such conditions, to present a negative appraisal and at the same time certain amendments was certainly not expedient. I had written my opinion supposing that it would remain in the hands of Krivoshein and help him in case of a strong support of the project.

Legislative Procedure After the Establishment of the Duma

Pierce: How had the legislative procedure changed since the establishment of the Duma?

Guins: As regards legislation, the government reserved the legislative initiative and tried to present its bills in a carefully worked out form with all necessary comments (ob'iasnitel'naiia zapiska). In every department of every ministry there were some specialists, or experts, who could formulate in the form of a bill the principles of a new law or necessary changes in an existing law.

After the approval of such a project by the competent organs of the corresponding branch of the government, a special commission was usually organized with the participation of the representatives of all ministries which could be interested in the projected law or in changes in one of the existing laws. Correspondingly, an interdepartmental commission or a joint committee had to be organized for discussing any article of the projected bill.

Pierce: Did you participate in any commission which had to prepare a bill?

Guins: Yes, I did. It was in connection with my research in Turkestan, where I had made a special tour to become acquainted with the principles of the distribution of water for irrigation. The problems of water law were mostly connected with the activity of the Reclamation Administration (Otdel zemel'nykh uluchshenii), a section of the Ministry of Agriculture.

One kind of reclamation within the competence of this section was the construction and administration of large canals, particularly in Turkestan. That problem, however, was connected with both the plans of reclamation and the needs of the new settlement; that meant that it was necessary to know the right of the government to use the water resources in Turkestan and the most adequate organization of a competent administration for that purpose.

As far as that problem was connected with the needs of colonization, the Resettlement Administration had assigned me, as I told in one of my other interviews (Memoirs), to examine the problem of distribution of water resources in Turkestan from the legal point of view and to recommend how to approach it.

This was in the summer of 1909. I arrived in Tashkent and started my trip through Turkestan in May. In August the chief of the Reclamation Administration, Prince Masal'skii, went to Turkestan for personal orientation. He arrived in Vernyi, the present Alma'Ata, then the residence of the administration of Semirechenskaia oblast.

I was then invited to return to Vernyi from the country to report to Prince Masal'skii what I knew concerning the legal problems of the distribution of water. After his return to St. Petersburg, Masal'skii organized a special commission to work out a bill concerning water law in Turkestan. I was assigned by the Resettlement Administration, with which I was by that time permanently employed, to take part in the commission. It consisted of the representatives of all government institutions interested in the development of Turkestan.

As I have mentioned, the Resettlement Administration was one of the institutions interested in that development in connection with allotments of lands for peasants arriving in Turkestan from European Russia. In most cases such allotments could not be exploited without a secure supply of water for irrigation.

Among the members of the commission were representatives of many other branches of the government, first of all of the Ministry

Guins: of War, because Turkestan was under a military administration. The governor-general at that time was General Samsonov; the governor of Semirechie oblast was also a general; and the entire local administration, the uezdnye nachalniki (district chiefs) and the pristavs (chief of the particular sections of the uezdy), were officers as well.

Consequently, the Ministry of War and the Turkestan administration had to know what was being planned, as the branches of the government interested in the measure not only from the point of view of the resettlement of Russian peasants but also in protecting the interests of the natives. Inasmuch as Turkestan had a military administration, a representative of the War Ministry (Asiatic Department) represented it.

There were also in the commission representatives of the Ministry of Finance. Why? Because if any new administrative organization would consist of employees, it would be necessary to foresee what expenses would be incurred. The Ministry of Finance needed satisfactory information about everything connected with budgetary needs, and the possibility of concentrating new functions in one of the existing offices.

There was also a representative of the State Control, which, like the Ministry of Finance, had to be informed about every government institution, in order to justify it not only from the point of view of the necessary appropriations, but also from the point of view of the correlation of the construction and ranks of new government officers with similar institutions.

There was also a representative of the Ministry of Justice. He could help in editing the provisions of the projected bill and, particularly, in coordinating the new provisions with the already existing legislation.

Finally, there was also represented the State Chancellary, in whose competence was the incorporation of every new law into the Svod Bakonov (Code of Laws). They systematically distributed new laws in various volumes and parts of the sixteen volumes of the Code.

This procedure was usually applied by all ministries when a bill had to be prepared. All government institutions supposed to be directly or indirectly connected with the working out of a bill had thus to send their representative to participate in the commission's work.

The bill was discussed by the commission, usually once a week. One article after the other was discussed until the bill was ready. Such a process usually produced a sufficiently durable bill.

General Kuropatkin as a Statesman

Guins: Once our meeting was very solemn. It was not held in the usual premises but in the large hall of the Ministry, and we were informed that the Adjutant General of His Majesty (General-Ad'iutant Ego Velichestva), General Kuropatkin, would attend.

He was once governor of one of the provinces of Turkestan, and later Minister of War. He had not been successful as commander of the Russian armies during the Russo-Japanese War, but he remained a member of the State Council and had the very honorable rank of "Adjutant General of His Majesty," a high rank which gave him personal access to the Emperor.

I wish to say that I was impressed by Kuropatkin. It was the first time that I had seen a government official of such a high rank possessing such dignity and such self-confidence based on personal knowledge of local conditions and needs. I noticed also his sometimes ironical tone.

Emphasizing the necessity of state control over water resources, he stated that the problem was practical and financial rather than legal. I felt that while all the other representa- of branches of the government approached the project of water law from a special point of view, General Kuropatkin appeared as a man who knew Turkestan very well and who was accustomed to govern and decide problems from the point of view of the urgency of existing needs and the possibility of their satisfaction.

He not only knew the needs of the settled people, but also the needs of the government, and how much the whole population of Turkestan and all of Russia would gain if the Imperial government succeeded in carrying out its great plan of reclamation in the form of a new irrigation project.

I remember him saying, "Certainly it is important to discuss to whom waters in Turkestan belong, just as it is important to formulate the legal principles of the projected regulations. But I believe," he added, "that it is still more important to determine what urgent need the bill is supposed to satisfy in practice, and what plan the population would be grateful for."

"I am therefore," continued Kuropatkin, "more interested in what financial means the Turkestan government will employ and where and how soon our engineers will construct a new irrigation system than in the details of law." It was a practical approach. The legal procedures could wait until the primary concerns were satisfied.

Guins: In connection with the impressions I had listening to Kuropatkin, I recall an anecdote. Once the Emir of Bukhara, the autocrat of the small but rich protectorate of Russia, was going from Bukhara to St. Petersburg. Suddenly the train stopped, and the Emir hurt his head slightly on the wall of the coach. With his characteristic pronunciation, the Emir exclaimed, "Nett Kuropatka, nett poriatka!" (No Kuropatkin, no order!")

This involuntary appraisal was borne out by the impression Kuropatkin made on me during the meeting, as one who had a good memory as the head of administration of one of the Turkestan regions. He was later appointed governor-general of the whole of Turkestan.

Let me add that the project of the water law for Turkestan was ready approximately in 1913, was presented for discussion and approval by the legislative institutions; and after the approval of both the State Duma and State Council and confirmation by the Emperor, it became a law in 1916.

After the October Revolution of 1917, only one part of that law remained in force, the institution for administration and use of water resources. The engineers and constructors of the new large canals, dams, and corresponding structures survived the revolution and continued their creative activity, as General Kuropatkin foresaw it.

The Second Stage of the Legislative Process

Guins: Now I will return to the problem of legislation. When the bill was ready and all members of the commission had signed it, it was sent to the Council of Ministers. It had to be officially approved by the Council of Ministers before being sent to the State Duma. (I describe the procedure of my time, when the legislative body, the State Duma, already existed).

When the bill was presented to the State Duma it was again discussed there from all points of view by a special commission of the Duma. Again, the government's representatives had to report the bill to the members of the Duma's commission. In this particular case the main reporter had to be the secretary of the commission organized by the Reclamation Department of the Ministry of Agriculture, D. Fleksor. He was considered to be an expert in water law, as he had published a book in which he collected from all parts of the Svod Zakonov (Code of Laws) everything that existed in Russian laws concerning water.

Guins: The preparation and discussion of the bill was, if anything, too deliberate. The bill was ready in 1913 or 1914. I remember that in 1915 I was told that Professor Maksim Maksimovich Kovalevskii, a member of the State Council and a professor of state law at St. Petersburg University, wanted to see me.

He had been elected to the State Council as one of the several representatives of the universities and of the Academy of Science. (There were two representatives of St. Petersburg University, M. M. Kovalevskii and D. D. Grimm, who had been for a while the rector of the university.

I received Kovalevskii's invitation to visit him through Professor of Civil Law, M. O. Pergament, by whose recommendation I was attached to the university for preparation for professorship. When I came, Kovalevskii could not recall at first why he had wanted to see me.

Perhaps I could remind him, he said, of what he had heard about me at the university. I told him that he might recall my name from having attended the council of the professors of St. Petersburg University, because at that time I had declared that I was ready to be examined for becoming a magistrant--one who has the right to present a dissertation for the degree of Magister.

I should add that the degree of Magister was not the same a as an M. A. in the United States, but rather like a doctorate here, because in order to be a Magister, it was necessary to pass examinations which were much more complicated than doctoral examinations in the U. S., (at least as far as I have been familiar with the requirements for that purpose at the University of California).

It was necessary, besides, to present and to defend one's thesis if it was approved by the faculty and printed in the form of a book. After the successful defense and awarding of the Magister's degree, it was possible to get the position of Extraordinary Professor (Associate Professor in the U. S.). To become a doctor of law it was necessary to present another book as a doctoral dissertation. The degree of doctor opened the way to the position of Ordinary Professor (the "full professor" in this country).

After I told Professor Kovalevskii about my prospective examination, he exclaimed, "Oh, I heard that you were in Turkestan, and I wished to see you because I received an invitation to attend the committee of the State Council which will discuss the bill on water rights in Turkestan. This bill is approved by the Duma and is being presented to the State Council. I wanted to

Guins: hear something from you about this bill."

I explained to him the main principles of the law, and reminded him of the similar law which had been issued earlier for the Southern Caucasus. That ended our conversation; he knew the Caucasian practice.

The law was soon approved, but this was almost on the eve of the Revolution, so it was never put into effect. Under the Soviet law not only land but waters too became the property of the state. The Soviets simply organized the administration for distribution of waters and accelerated the construction of the new canals.

Practically the same system was applied as under the pre-revolutionary government. Even the same administration, and the same engineers were employed by the Soviets for practical work insofar as they were real specialists and experienced people.

Legislative Procedure and Administrative Practice

Instructions

Pierce: In retrospect, don't you find, perhaps, that the procedure of legislation was too complicated?

Guins: No, I have merely tried to show how complicated the legislative procedure could be and with what attention the interested government institutions and legislative bodies discussed all legislative problems. Certainly if there had been immediate need of such a law, it would have been possible to accelerate it. It would be enough for the minister to say that this project must be ready in two months, or even in one month.

For example, when I was still an employee of the Resettlement Administration, my chief once told me, "Guins, you have to prove your legal gifts. You must prepare for tomorrow a bill of an administrative instruction." It was a problem of the Steppe region, not water law, but relating to the resettlement of peasants and distribution of lands between claimants.

"Don't forget!" he repeated. "You must have it ready for tomorrow."

"Is it possible?" I asked.

Guins: "Certainly it is possible," he answered. "You have to study existing provisions and you will see what is necessary to change. Read the present text and you will see how to re-edit it."

It would be a new experience. So I took the text of the instructions home and worked on it that night. I still had time to sleep several hours, and in the morning presented my project to my chief. He found it quite satisfactory. Maybe it was corrected later, but as a first draft it was not bad. Thus, if an order had to be carried out quickly, it could be done.

Ukazy

Guins: This is the right moment to remind you than when the legislative power of the Emperor was limited constitutionally because of the organization of the legislative bodies, it was one of the prerogatives of the Emperor to issue "ukazy," or decrees. Stolypin used it several times, once unsuccessfully for himself.

Ukazy could be issued during the intervals between the sessions of the Duma. Any ukaz had to be presented to the State Duma on the first day of the resumption of its work, and if the Duma disapproved it then it lost its force of law. Stolypin used this right of the Emperor in order to start the land organization (zemleustroistvo). He wanted to do it as soon as possible, and as the legislative procedure would take too long, Stolypin offered his project to the Emperor for approval.

An old form of approval was, "Soglasen," [Agreed] or "Byt' po semu" [Be it so]. Nicholas II usually wrote "Utverzhdain" [I confirm], or "Soglasen" and signed his name.

The ukaz about land organization was presented to the Third Duma as soon as the Duma began to function. The Duma did not reject it, and for at least two years the ukaz was the only legal basis of land organization until it was finally reedited, developed and approved by the Duma and the State Council, and issued in the finally elaborated and improved form of law.

Pierce: May I conclude that the legal procedure in Russia was more complicated than in the U. S. A.?

Guins: It seems so because of its visible bifurcation in Russia. I cannot judge which one in fact involved less delay. But there was an essential difference between the American and Russian legislative procedures because America is more consistent than any other country in carrying out the principle of the division

of three powers.

In the Russia of "the period between the two revolutions," which we discuss, this Montesquieu principle did not become the foundation of the constitutional order, but at least one important change was fulfilled: the legislative power of the government was limited.

The participation of the government in legislative work, and its right of legislative initiative up to the preparation of an elaborated bill, was hardly a negative function. The government dispatched experts and qualified jurists who could prepare a bill in a short time if it was necessary.

The story of the bill concerning the water law in Turkestan was not typical. The Department of Reclamation was in no hurry, while the Resettlement Administration at that time distributed lands on those parts of Turkestan where there were no complications on the basis of the distribution of land.

The Promulgation of Laws

Pierce: Was it not difficult for citizens to find the texts of necessary legislative acts if, as you said, the Senate promulgated laws in chronological order and sometimes in the form of published bulletins--often with several laws in one bulletin and at times several bulletins during one day?

Guins: The text of a law as it was published by the Senate was the only official text until it was codified and, therefore, jurists had to subscribe to the Senate publications. So did I, after graduating from the university.

But later every law found its place in two other official publications: the Polnoe Sobranie Zakonov (Complete Collection of Laws), a chronological collection, and the Svod Zakonov, the systematic collection of the laws in force.

I have observed that even very competent persons in the U. S. were often, and are possibly now, unfamiliar with that system. For example, when I was teaching at the University of California, the widow of a Russian jurist who had died in Tientsin, China, wrote asking me to try to sell an unofficial edition of the Svod Zakonov.

When I offered it to the University library, Professor Noyes, who was at that time Chairman of the Slavic Department,

Guins: told me that the library already had a set of the Svod Zakonov. But that was not correct. He was referring to the Polnoe Sobranie Zakonov. What the library had were three chronological collections of Russian laws. The first, in a total of 45 volumes, contains all of the laws innued from 1649, with the Ulozhenie (Code) of the Tsar Aleksei, up to 1830. It was published in 1832 when Speranskii started to prepare the Svod Zakonov.

The chronological collections continued with a second series, from 1831 up to 1860. Each volume indicates the years during which the laws included in that particular volume were issued. After the Great Reforms a third series began, which was interrupted by the Revolution of 1917.

The Codification of Russian Law
(A Great Creation by Count Speranskii)

Guins: The Svod Zakonov, unlike the Polnoe Sobranie Zakonov, was a systematic collection of the laws in force. The system always remained the same, but as some laws were abrogated others were added, in conformity with the established system.

The system was devised by Count M. M. Speranskii, the outstanding jurist of the first half of the 19th Century, during the reign of Nicholas I. In spite of all the innovations and changes in separate parts of the Svod, its original system, the order of codification established by Speranskii, survived up to the Revolution. All the innovations were indicated under each article, as well as chapters excluded, with the dates of the changes.

I explained to Professor Noyes the difference between the two kinds of collections, and upon his recommendation the University library acquired the unofficial edition of the Svod Zakonov. As a result, the library has both the very valuable chronological collection of all Russian laws since 1649, which can serve as a source for historical research, and the Svod Zakonov in sixteen volumes which, although not an official publication, is yet of great value. It was very carefully prepared, in full coordination with the official sources.

The Svod Zakonov is, as far as I know, a unique systematic collection of laws. Responsibility for continuation, revision, and correction of the official collections on the basis of the official Senate publications was laid upon the State Chancellery (Gosudarstvennaia Kantseliariia). One of its functions was to

Guins: coordinate every new law with the existing laws and later to incorporate the new law into the Svod Zakonov, replacing an abrogated or changed law, or finding a special place for the new law corresponding most closely to the principles of the system established or approved by Speranskii.

The officials of the State Chancellery were very competent jurists. Some of them were also teachers of law at St. Petersburg University. The Soviets destroyed the former system, and no collection of laws similar to the former Svod Zakonov now exists in the Soviet Union.

Pierce: Did you have any direct contact with the State Chancellery?

Guins: Yes. I was once appointed to the commission organized at the Chancellery to revise the Ustav Blagochiniia, a part of Volume 12 of the Svod Zakonov. That part of the Svod contained many obsolete legal provisions established a hundred years earlier. These provisions were issued to regulate the behavior of citizens from the point of view of correctness, good order, and morality.

The commission was composed of representatives of various ministries, and several officials of the State Chancellery. Among the latter was an outstanding professor of state law, N. I. Lazarevskii. My presence was superfluous, as the Ministry of Agriculture had no interest in that part of legislation.

From the scientific point of view, the 12th volume's content belonged to administrative law, also called in the catalogues of the Russian universities "police law" (politseiskoe pravo). Later the more correct term, "administrative law," began to be widely used.

The work of that commission was interrupted by the Revolution and I did not see the revised text of this part of the Svod Zakonov. But it was interesting to make the acquaintance of the system of revision of the Code, about which I have just told. I could witness how carefully every article of the obsolete code was discussed before being excluded as obsolete.

One of the excluded articles, for example, gave parents the right to demand imprisonment of their disobedient children. Another prohibited men from entering steam baths when women were using them, and another recommended to houseowners that they sweep the streets in front of their houses whenever they were free from business.

Pierce: May I conclude then that in your opinion legislative work was improved by the limitation of the legislative power of the government after the establishment of the State Duma and was duly

Pierce: regulated by the working out of bills by the administrative offices and the subsequent discussion in the Duma?

Guins: Quite correct. Let me only add that the legislative work in the Russian Empire was more complicated than in any other European country.

General Legislation and the Primitive Tribes

Guins: Russia incorporated many territories, many of which were populated by peoples of different culture and different levels of civilization. Imagine for instance the Code Napoleon of France or the Common Law of Great Britain applied in all their former colonies. After three months in Turkestan and some acquaintance with Siberia I understand how necessary it was to decentralize in Russia both the administrative system and the system of legislation.

This problem unfortunately was ignored at the time of the reforms during the period between the two revolutions. It was no less difficult to organize the representation of population of the borderlands in the State Duma, and this representation was not satisfactory, especially after two subsequent revisions of the electoral system.

The Budgetary Commission of the Duma

Pierce: Do you perhaps wish to add something more, Professor Guins, characterizing the interrelations between the government and the Duma? Which from your point of view could give a correct idea about the innovations of the regime?

Guins: I think that during the State Duma's existence perhaps the most important thing was the procedure for discussion in the Duma of the Empire's budget. Even during the discussion of bills presented to the Duma by the government it was necessary to have eloquent and inventive officials to convince the members of the Duma commissions of the expediency of the bills offered.

Some members of the Duma had a good knowledge of the local needs and peculiarities of different parts of the Empire, needs not rarely ignored by government officials. There were, on the other hand, some politicians among the members of the Duma who exaggerated the negative sides of Russian life and intentionally

Guins: ignored both achievements and improvements and the impossibility of solving problems and of improving everything at once.

The main purpose of any government representative in the Budget Commission was to successfully defend the amount adjusted by the intergovernmental commission. They had no right to require any increases of the allotments approved by the government.

The heads of various central institutions or their assistants gave speeches in the plenary meetings of the Duma and answered critical speeches of opponents. The most competent members of their staffs represented the institutions in the Budget Commission and were supposed to impress the Commission with their wide knowledge of plans, their execution, unexpected complications, etc.

Among the members of the Third and Fourth Dumas there was an expert in finance, a professor of Kharkov University, M. M. Alekseenko. He was elected permanent chairman of the budget committee of both the Third and Fourth Dumas, and as a result examined the budgets of every particular governmental institution as well as the Empire's budget in its total. He was both competent and exacting.

Discussion of the budget in the plenary meetings of the Duma involved a general appraisal of the activities and successes or defects of the entire government and each of its branches. If it was a discussion of government policy the Chairman of the Council of Ministers presented his arguments and objections. The various ministers defended government policy as far as their own competence was concerned.

Speeches given by the representatives of the government and by members of the Duma were usually published the next day in the capital newspapers and later in the provincial papers. The whole country knew the arguments of each side and also that both sides tried to be as careful as possible in their speeches. The stenographic reports were carefully corrected if a speech was not read according to the earlier prepared text, or if some remarks from the floor provoked an extemporaneous answer.

Every ministry had to be prepared to defend its project of the budget and to explain how the allotments of the preceding budgetary period were used, and why. There were often deviations, or not all amounts allotted were expended. Representatives of the Ministry of Finance and of the State Control had their own information from their local bureaus.

New Men on the Government Staffs

Guins: It is no wonder that ministries were interested in attracting gifted and competent people to their staffs. Earlier the central institutions of the government were open mostly to young men of noble origin who had graduated from the privileged institutions of higher learning, such as the lyceums and the School of Jurisprudence (Uchilishche pravovedeniia).

Education in these institutions corresponded to the high levels, but there was no such oliversity of students as in the universities, no conflicting methods and ideas, no competition in scientific research works or exchange of knowledge (universitas cittezarum).

Graduates from privileged institutions could serve without salary for some time, as they were interested primarily in developing good ties with influential people so they could get fast promotions and attain high ranks. There were among them, of course, not a few gifted people, from among whom rose some outstanding statesmen, but even the best of them were remote from life and working people and could not approach those members of the Duma who belonged mostly to the middle classes of Russian society.

It is no wonder that since the organization of the legislative body the composition of many of the capital institutions was essentially renovated. This was especially obvious in the newly organized or reorganized institutions such as the previously mentioned Main Administration of Land Organization and Agriculture, and the Ministry of Trade.

The Ministry of Agriculture -- A Case History

Guins: Everything that I have just related concerning the renovation of the staffs of government employees in the capital is based on my own experience. I started my government service in the Main Administration just mentioned. Heading it at that time was A. V. Krivoshein, a close co-worker of Stolypin.

Pierce: Was it a quite new institution?

Guins: It was comparatively new, not yet 75 years old. The history of that institution might be interesting from various points of view. It was reorganized and changed its name several times. It was

Guins: organized in 1838 during the reign of Nicholas I as the Ministry of State Domains (Ministerstvu Gosudarstvennykh imushchestv).

Its first head was a gifted statesman, P. D. Kisilev, later a count, whose main task was to improve the conditions of life of the so-called state peasants (gosudarstvennykh krest'ian), who were serfs not of private persons but of the state and were working on state lands. Different reforms which were accomplished by Count Kisilev were undertaken as an experiment for use later as an example in case of the abolition of serfdom.

As is known the Emperor Nicholas I was anxious about such a great change in the status of peasants, and the problem of abolition was secretly discussed in special commissions. The experiments of Kisilev and the project worked out by the special commissions were later used and applied during the reign of Alexander II in connection with the projected emancipation of the serfs.

Later the Ministry of State Domains was reorganized into the Ministry of Agriculture. Since that time the main function of the Ministry had been to stimulate and support agricultural production. I don't remember at present all dates and details, but I was the author of a book devoted to the history of that important government institution.

It was an official publication and appeared under the title Sel'skhokhoziastvennoe vedomstvo za 75 let ego sushchestvovaniia (St. P., 1913). I completed it in cooperation with the Chief of the archives of the Ministry, Mr. Shafranov, who supplied me with various materials. The book is to be found in the Library of Congress and in the New York Public Library.

After 1906, when the Ministry had to develop its activity at full scale in conformity with Stolypin's program of economic development and improvement of the conditions of the peasantry, the Ministry of Agriculture was headed by A. S. Ermolov, well-known as a writer in agricultural problems. He was at that time an old and inactive man, a typical bureaucrat deprived of initiative.

The activity of the Ministry lagged behind the vital needs of the country. It became quite clear that Ermolov had to be replaced. At the same time nobody wanted to offend an old and respected statesman. The delicate question was solved by the reorganization of the Ministry.

In conformity with a new and very important task of Stolypin's plan, it was decided to use the Ministry of Agriculture to

Guins: liquidate gradually the village communes and to encourage individual peasant economies. Such an extensive plan justified the organization of the Main Administration of Land Organization and Agriculture, with the department of agriculture as an institution which had to develop agriculture on a large scale and variety. This reform was realized, and the Ministry of Agriculture was abolished.

Development and Success of Stolypin's Reforms

Pierce: Will you please add some more details about the development of that initiative?

Guins: The former Ministry of Agriculture was reorganized into the Main Administration of Land Organization and Agriculture. Land organization (zemleustroistvo) occupied, as you see, the first place in the new denomination. Ermolov was made a member of the State Council.

The head of the new Main Administration, although not a minister was nevertheless not only a member of the Council of Ministers, but a very influential member of the government because of the significance of his post and competence. Simultaneously the so-called Resettlement section of the Ministry of Internal Affairs was removed from the Ministry and included in the Main Administration of Land Organization.

Reorganization of village communes, land organization, and resettlement of landless peasants from European Russia to Asiatic Russia were three parts of a single program of Stolypin's, undertaken with the intention of improving economic conditions of the Russian peasantry.

Everything--the separation from the village commune and settlement in Asiatic Russia--was based on the voluntary decisions and agreement of the peasants. And everything was developing very successfully. No less successful were the operations of the newly organized Peasants' Bank, which purchased private estates and distributed them by portions to peasants.

Industrial Development

Pierce: So far you have spoken mostly about agriculture. It is quite understandable since you were closely connected with the Ministry

Pierce: of Agriculture. However, such a country as Russia could not develop as she needed unless she had large industrial enterprises. Could you add something about the development of industry?

Guins: Certainly I am less informed about industrial development. Yet, as a professor not only of civil law but also of commercial law and as the author of the book Predprinimatel' (The Entrepreneur), published in Harbin in 1941, I was interested in industrial development as far as it was connected with the organization of new kinds of banks such as the Volga-Kama, or the Russian Commercial and Industrial Bank, and of powerful industrial organizations: cartels and syndicates, like Stakheev's Company, which was working mostly in Asiatic Russia and founded its own Russo-Asiatic Bank, which was for several pre-revolutionary years one of the largest banks.

The Danishevsky Company was another successful enterprise which started from exporting wood from Arkhangel'sk to Western Europe and later added to its program also the export of fish and construction of its own ships in its own shipyards to become independent in transportation and increase its own revenues.

I was amazed when I was informed about the scale and great variety of the enterprises supported by the Russian Commercial and Industrial Bank, which I have just mentioned. Due to its financial support, elevators were constructed on the banks of rivers in the agricultural provinces, and a special fleet of steamers was constructed for transportation of various kinds of freight from the places of production to the places of demand.

Pierce: How were these enterprises connected with the legal problems in your field?

Guins: Among the newly organized syndicates there were some which tried to become monopolists. For example, the Prodmet (shortened from two words, Prodazha metala). It became necessary to establish control over such companies.

It was interesting also to see what legal forms were preferred by the new industrial giants for their organizations, and also what new forms of contracts were concluded with the banks and other companies (conto-corrent, remburs), and what new maritime contracts (C.I.F., F.O.B., and others).

In connection with the development of the large companies in the form of shareholders' companies, share lists appeared in the newspapers and corresponding stock-jobbing appeared. It was becoming clear that in some years Russia could take a conspicuous place among the industrialized nations. She had the chance to become another America in the scope of her economic development.

A New System of Civil Recruitment and Promotion

Pierce: The St. Petersburg bureaucracy did not have a very good reputation. How did it respond to the new tasks of the government?

Guins: In connection with the described tasks and reforms, some changes were made in the system of appointments to high positions. The newly established institutions had the right to appoint some necessary officials, a procedure which deviated form the old law, which prohibited appointing or promoting a person to positions two steps higher than the class (chin) of the candidate.

An innovation made it possible to attract and to promote capable young men or certain experts who still had no ranks and no positions with the government. There was earlier only one exception in appointing or promoting candidates independently of their ranks and positions.

Such an exception existed for those who had the special Imperial Court ranks or titles. A Kamerger, for example, could take at once the position of the fifth class, one of the highest. Next in order, the fourth and third classes were close to the summit. Ministers' positions were of the third class.

Pierce: In what class did you receive your first position?

Guins: In conformity with the new regulations and contrary to the former but still usual system applied in the capital, I received immediately in January, 1910, the salary of 100 rubles per month, the position of an employee attached to the Resettlement Administration of the Ministry. As a novice I was promised the seventh class, and in the following year, after all necessary formalities, I was already an official for special commissions (chinovnik osobykh poruchenii) of the seventh class.

In 1913 I was offered a better position, of the sixth class, at the Executive Office of the Ministry. I accepted it, but it proved to be unrealizable, because the Executive Office did not dispose such privileges in appointments of officials as the Resettlement Administration had, being an institution with functions of the highest importance.

As it turned out, in the Executive Office I could receive a higher salary but could get only the eighth class until I would receive a higher rank, which would be the next class, the seventh. The new chief of the Executive Office, earlier the Deputy Director of the Resettlement Administration, invited me, without consulting earlier with his assistants who knew the regulations.

Guins: My promotion to the higher rank could be accomplished as one of the rewards for excellent service. I preferred then to be temporarily demoted, and I changed my position as officer for special commissions at the Resettlement Administration for the position of officer for special commissions attached to the Minister.

I decided to change my position in spite of the offer of the Chief of the Resettlement Administration to give me the sixth class at once and even a larger salary than I would receive in the Office of the Ministry. One of my motives was to enlarge and enrich my experience and, last but not least, to have more possibilities for disposing of my time to accelerate my preparation for professorship, because in the Executive Office of the Minister I could dispose of my time more freely and have an assistant.

The future showed that my decision was quite reasonable. The next year I received the eighth class of rank and the sixth class position, and in 1915 I passed the examinations for professorship.

Pierce: Was your promotion to the next rank an exception to the general rules?

Guins: No. Such a promotion one year earlier than usual had been one of the possible rewards. It was the second reward during my short service, and I won, in such manner, two years for promotion. In the capital it was possible to select one of the three possible rewards: a medal, the next rank, or a present from the Emperor from his personal treasury (iz Kabineta Ego Velichestva) with his monogram. Employees who had the chance to be promoted in their positions preferred to get the next rank, which opened the way to higher positions.

There was, however, one more way for rapid promotion. I have mentioned about the exception from all legal regulations for those who had "Court ranks" (pridvornye chiny). Becoming Kamerger, for example, one could receive at once a position of fifth or even of the fourth class. But such a promotion was a real exception, for it was necessary to have high protection from people with connections in the Ministry of the Imperial Court.

It was, besides, a very expensive promotion. Even the uniform which was necessary for the court receptions was costly. Pushkin, who involuntarily became a Kamer-iunker of the Imperial Court, and who could not decline such a "reward" only suffered by fulfilling his duty to attend the balls together with his beautiful wife.

Pierce: May I ask whether you know any example of promotions in other ministries like those you knew in the Ministry of Agriculture?

Guins: The system I have described illustrated the innovations after the reforms of 1906-1907. I know, for example, the newly established Ministry of Trade and Industry. It was organized by Count Witte.

V. P. Litvinov-Falinskii, whom I knew as the Inspector of Industrial Relations in the capital in 1904-1907, was already Deputy Minister of the Ministry of Trade in 1916. He was a very intelligent man and an outstanding administrator. After the revolution he was invited to become a member of the Board of Directors of the Russian Trade and Industry Bank.

Competence of Many Members of the Bureaucracy

Guins: I had once to prepare an opinion on a bill which was to be discussed in the Council of Ministers, and which had in view the annulment of all patents received in Russia by German citizens. It was during the war. The Administration of Patents was one of the sections of the new Ministry of Trade and Industry.

I decided to consult with Litvinov-Falinskii on that problem. He gladly answered my question, explaining the inexpediency of such an annulment. "First of all," he said, "there are thousands of patents which have no significance from the point of view of Russian national interests. Therefore the word 'all,' speaking about patents, is a kind of exaggeration indicating the insufficient competence of the author of the proposed measure.

"Second, there are patents which have no military significance or significance for the national security in general. Third, if a certain measure is not necessary from the military point of view, this measure must be discussed from the point of view of the inevitable rapprochement of the nations after the war."

"Why not postpone the problem of patents until then? Such an approach would be the most reasonable and expedient. If we annul all patents, Germany will do the same. Private entrepreneurs will lose more than the state could gain, if it will gain at all. From the standpoint of future prospects especially, the proposed measure is economically inexpedient, and would be rather negative than positive."

His answer was very logical and convincing. The problem

Guins: itself proved to be not worthy of special discussion, but his method of discussing it was instructive. I was especially impressed by his last point. It was the approach of a statesman who is duscussing problems not under the emotional impulses of the moment, but after a sound appraisal of the problems against the background of more normal and lasting interrelations and interests of the nations.

At that time I could hardly have reached such a conclusion myself. It showed me the difference between the approach to current problems of a politician--from the point of view of transient needs and moods--and the approach of a statesman who does not forget the most distant prospects and interests of the state or, in brief, its future.

I need not add other names and factual data as regards the personnel of the central government institutions in St. Petersburg. In general during my service with the central institutions in the capital I met a number of government officials of various ranks very well-prepared for their jobs and, what was still more important, devoted to their public service.

Some of them were even outstanding in their intellectual qualities and ability to work. No wonder that during my relatively brief connection with the St. Petersburg bureaucracy I could meet not a few officials who managed in that short period to reach quite high positions. They were promoted to very responsible positions without any special protection and support from outside.

I am glad to refer to the memoirs of one of our ministers, A. N. Naumov, former marshal of nobility and member of the State Council by election from the nobility of the Saratov province. He was surprised, as he described it in his interesting and informative memoirs, by the ability and competence of many of the officials of the Ministry of Agriculture after he was appointed to the post of Minister.

But he knew only a few of them. There were many others among the St. Petersburg bureaucracy deserving respect and a high appraisal.

Pierce: Listening to you, Professor Guins, I begin to believe that you could have changed your former liberal ideas under the influence of your favorable impressions during government service. Could this be so?

Guins: It would hardly be correct to use the word "change" to characterize my feelings of respect and my appraisal of the bureaucratic milieu in St. Petersburg. There were not a few officials

Guins: who were interested only in their personal successes and who were ready to do anything that was demanded by their chiefs. The old regime and the survivals of the past still dominated in some institutions less modernized than our Ministry of Agriculture.

However, there were also some officials who were much more progressive than their chiefs. And after the February Revolution of 1917, the Provisional government realized many innovations in a short time with the sincere support of the staff of the former imperial institutions.

Reappraisal of Politicians

Guins: Answering your question about the change of my attitude toward the former regime, I believe it will be more correct to say that I began to reappraise the liberal politicians who impressed me earlier, and to appraise the many modest government officials who were not noticeable from the outside.

My disappointment in the politicians began from some impressions in October, 1906, when for the first time I was present at a meeting organized in the St. Petersburg University of the occasion of the Manifesto of October 18, 1905. The doors of the University were open for everybody.

It was an exclusive day and an exclusive situation. Russia received a legislative body; she became a constitutional state, a self-governing nation. On the streets one could observe jubilant crowds. Walking together with a young lawyer from Kishinev, Alexander Shmidt, I could see how jubilant everybody was.

Pierce: To what social group did these people belong?

Guins: They were, as far as I can recall, mostly intellectuals, but I must confess that I did not give enough thought to it at the time. However, maybe I can partly answer your question in continuing my reminiscences.

Schmidt proposed that we go together to the Polish restaurant (Pol'skaia stolovaia) on Mikhailovskaia Street, not far from the Nevskii Prospect. It was not an expensive restaurant but provided food of high quality, and even students used it. As the restaurant was overcrowded, it was not easy to find a free place. I do not remember any other students besides me among the visitors there on that memorable day. There were

Guins: many people, but an ordinary atmosphere in the restaurant, where people wanted to get good food and a certain comfort at a reasonable price.

So I was very surprised when my fellow-traveler unexpectedly told me that he wanted to make a speech to this assembly. I held his hand and tried to persuade him that it was not the right sort of place for political speeches. I was happy that I managed to dissuade him.

After the dinner we moved toward the Winter Palace, crossed the Palace Bridge (Dvortsovyi most) connecting the main part of the capital with the Vasil'evskii ostrov (Basil Island) and approached the university. There was unusual animation everywhere.

Outside and inside the university building there was a crowd. Here and there one could see knots of people in the middle of which somebody was making a speech. In one of these we heard a warning that the revolution was not over, that the "autocracy" wanted to dupe the working people. I glanced at Schmidt; he remained silent. He was not a socialist, and the audience was unsuitable for gaining success. He was probably wondering whether he could "change political ideology."

We entered the university by a side door on the River Neva embankment, usually reserved for academic personnel. Auditoriums usually serving as classrooms were on the second floor. All of them were full of people. On each door was a sheet of white paper announcing what organization occupied the auditorium. Professional organizations predominated, which indicated that the Social Democrats had organized the meetings. I remember that one of the auditoriums was occupied by a chapter of the Bakers' Union.

However, on the door of one of the largest auditoriums we read that it was occupied by the lawyers of St. Petersburg. It was interesting for both of us. One of the well-known lawyers, Brusenberg, was making a speech when we entered. The next speaker was F. I. Rodichev, a popular lawyer and politician, a member of the Ka-de party.

We remained in the auditorium listening to the speakers for about an hour. My impression was that nobody said anything either inspiring or instructive. Rodichev, for example, seemed to me a man who was embarrassed by the unexpected changes in the political situation and did not know what to say, whether to criticize or to express satisfaction.

I looked at Schmidt. He was silent, embarrassed, I guessed.

Guins: I was too. He was probably still wondering whether or not "to change." I had no clear ideas, I remember. I was simply embarrassed, and perhaps after that I was rather indifferent or skeptical toward politicians.

Pierce: What did you expect to hear?

Guins: Certainly I could not say at that time. I was probably waiting to hear something positive that could indicate how the "constitutional reform" would be used in the future. The leftists outside, and possibly behind the doors of the meetings of the Bakers' Union and other professional groups, criticized the government's concessions and warned against becoming satisfied; while the lawyers, the politicians of democratic and moderate convictions, said nothing either approving or critical and, as I now feel, nothing constructive.

Schmidt and I both left disappointed. I was embarrassed at Rodichev's helplessness. But I was still more embarrassed when Schmidt said to me, "We must now make some steps to the left, away from the Ka-de Party." I understood that he too had been embarrassed by Rodichev's helplessness when he was presiding at the meeting of the lawyers. But I was embarrassed even more by the conclusion of my older friend, "Now to the left."

Such an attitude revealed not only disappointment with the speeches of the "liberals," but a lack of principles, an aspiration for success, originality, an assumption of some kind of false superiority of "advanced" ideas without appraisal of the practicality of those ideas.

I don't think that in 1906 I could already formulate my impressions in such a manner, but I believe that was the inception of my future pragmatic convictions.

Anyhow, I did not change my sympathy toward the Constitutional Democratic Party. It remained closest to my convictions. The university was soon closed by order of the government and reopened only in the fall of 1907, a year later. During that year the First Duma was opened and dissolved. The Ka-de leaders impressed us with their tact and speeches in the Duma.

Pierce: How could your sympathy be reconciled to cooperation with the government, which was inimical to the party?

Guins: Nobody asked me what party I sympathized with. My job had no connection with political activity. I could vote as I wanted, and in the Resettlement Administration, or later in the Chancellery of the Main Administration of Land Organization and

Guins: Agriculture, I was deeply interested in the program of Stolypin which, according to my convictions, was more what the country needed than any amendments to the constitution, however desirable and useful.

I was disappointed by the refusal of Miliukov, the leader of the Ka-de Party, to cooperate when Stolypin asked him to provide some members of the government. Such cooperation could have brought the bureaucratic spheres closer to the Russian intelligentsia and at the same time could have acquainted the members of the party with practical policy, letting them become acquainted with the vital needs of the peasantry and the workers, and with the problems of economic and technical development of the country, which lagged behind its western neighbors in this respect.

All that I understood during my service with the government. Lenin understood it too, better than any other political leader of the time. A man who could save Russia from revolution was the worst enemy of the left extremists, who preferred revolution to development and progress. Nor did German imperialism want Russia to progress, and when it lost hope of winning the war it supported Lenin's party of the Bolsheviks.

I hope that you understand me. I did not betray my political convictions and principles. I cooperated with the government which was carrying out a program corresponding to the vital needs of Russia and promoting the country's economic and cultural progress.

The Ministry of Agriculture and National Progress

Guins: My experience convinced me that the resettlement of peasants in Siberia, about three million people during several years, promoted fabulously the development of Siberia. And in 1913 to 1914, on the eve of the war, there were already some plans for a wider program of colonization, organization of new distribution centers, and construction of new railways, attracting private capital for promoting industrialization.

Working as an official of the Ministry of Agriculture I could observe how quickly and effectively the welfare of the peasantry was being improved in connection with the liquidation of village communes and the redistribution of lands. Industrialization was also benefitting, thanks to additional manpower derived from the movement of certain groups of peasants from the villages to the cities.

Guins: I cannot relate in detail what I could observe as an official of the Ministry of Agriculture. I want only to emphasize that the activity of that Ministry was a more effective factor of progress than any political reform could be.

I could witness how a modest part of the Department of Agriculture which controlled and assisted the development of the fishing industry was transformed into an independent section of the Ministry under the leadership of the great fisheries expert, Mr. Brazhnikov. After the revolution of October, 1917, Brazhnikov emigrated and the Japanese government invited him to be an adviser in Tokyo as a specialist in fisheries.

Once, a gentleman whom I had not known earlier visited me in my office and introduced himself as my future neighbor in the premises of the Ministry. He had been appointed chief of a newly organized section of the Ministry, the Section of Fireproof Construction (Otdel Ognestoikogo Stroitel'stva).

This section had been organized to help save villagers from devastating fires. Because of the straw or cane roofs of peasants' houses, fires spread rapidly and usually a great part or even the whole village was wiped out by the flames.

Once when I was living in a village a fire began. All the inhabitants took part in the struggle for survival. I participated too, standing in the row whose members handed one to another buckets of water. There was no fire brigade in the village.

At last the government paid attention to this vital need. After one year of existence, the new section began to achieve its objective of encouraging fireproof construction, but I am afraid that the revolution halted such activity for a long time.

I could add also some interesting data concerning the program of the Department of Reclamation. In Turkestan construction of large irrigation canals began and was partly completed; In Siberia and the western provinces of European Russia drainage work was organized on a large scale. When Lenin became acquainted with the plans of work of the Department of Reclamation, he ordered the engineer Riesenkampf to be given the necessary means for continuation and achievement of all plans.

I knew the program of the Ministry of Agriculture best. Some other people could add many interesting details about various other ministries. But I hope that what I said will suffice to give an impression of how important was the creative activity of the Russian government before the revolution, or,

Guins: to say more exactly, during the period between the two revolutions.

Stolypin and the Ministry of Internal Affairs

Pierce: Did Stolypin's death have negative consequences for the development of the ministries?

Guins: In Stolypin Russia lost a vigorous chairman of the Council of Ministers. He had a program and he possessed a strong will. His successor, Kokovtsev, lacked these abilities. He was a good worker but not a leader. Krivoshein, as the Tsar characterized him, according to Naumov's memoirs, was a "good entrepreneur." He had good assistants. Some other ministries were not as successful. I want to emphasize, however, that Stolypin's direct responsibility was with the Ministry of Internal Affairs. As the head of that ministry Stolypin worked out certain significant plans.

The Ministry of Internal Affairs in the pre-revolutionary period fulfilled two main functions. The first can be characterized as a preventive function--to eliminate any threat to the existence and functioning of the government. Censorship of every kind was therefore in the competence of that ministry. All police forces were subordinate to one of the most powerful departments of the Ministry of the Interior.

The second function was to control the activity of the institutions of local self-government--the zemstvos and municipalities, both elected by the population, established in Russia on January 1, 1864, at the time of the Great Reforms. The zemstvos were introduced in many provinces and they represented all classes of the population but with the predominance of the landowners. The populations of the capitals of the provinces and other municipalities were represented only by houseowners and businessmen.

When Stolypin became Minister of Internal Affairs, the pressing problem of the day was the struggle with the revolutionary parties, and their subversion and propaganda. The police forces were insufficient for that purpose, and therefore some military forces were also drawn in for repressive measures under the command of generals invested with plenary powers.

Such commanders had no scruples in choosing forms of repression and frequently abused their power. The revolutionary

Guins: movement was finally suppressed, and naturally not only the generals were considered responsible for the atrocities. Stolypin was nicknamed "the Hangman" by the revolutionaries and became a target of their vengeance. They made attempts on his life. Stolypin became a scapegoat in the eyes of the revolutionaries.

The real cause of the revolutionaries' hatred of Stolypin was not the ruthlessness of the repressions, for which he was hardly responsible, but their apprehension that Stolypin could avert the chance of the revolution. Lenin predicted that several more years of the successful fulfillment of Stolypin's program could pacify the largest part of the Russian population--her peasantry. And by losing the potential support of the peasantry, the Bolsheviks would lose their chance to bring about the revolution.

In Lenin's complete collection of works one can find his forewarning. The attempts on Stolypin's life and finally his assassination were not acts of revenge, but expressions of fear that Stolypin was the exclusive statesman of his time.

Another man who had reason to fear Stolypin, as I have mentioned earlier, was Kaiser Wilhelm II of Germany. In 1911 Germany was preparing herself for an invasion of Russia. She, too, was afraid of Stolypin's reforms and their obvious success. A special party of experts was sent to Russia to investigate. Its report, the text of which became known to the Russian government, indicated that Russia would soon become economically independent of Germany.

Stolypin and the Duma

Pierce: What was Stolypin's attitude toward the Duma?

Guins: Stolypin understood that the existence of the Duma was important, but he wanted a friendly and businesslike representative body. He changed the electoral law a second time and the Third Duma satisfied his expectations.

An analysis of the composition of all three Dumas is a very interesting subject for historical research in combination with an analysis of the Duma's activity, which was described in the form of special memoirs by P. N. Miliukov and V. D. Maklakov.

Pierce: Was Stolypin completely satisfied with the composition of the Third Duma, which was elected in conformity with the system of

Pierce: representation he himself had approved?

Guins: I don't believe that he could have been satisfied completely. The Third Duma was loyal, in general, but it was not sufficiently friendly. Stolypin did not succeed in securing real support from moderate political parties, as he hoped.

Stolypin intended to introduce a series of reforms, which he hoped could stimulate the progressive development of Russian economic and social life. For that purpose he needed to get support from two parties: the Octobrists, the most moderate liberals; and the Ka-de, among whom were more or less radical democrats. The typical representatives of these two political currents were Professor P. N. Miliukov, the leader of the Ka-de Party, and the lawyer, V. A. Maklakov.

Pierce: I recall your mention of Stolypin's attempt to obtain the cooperation of the Ka-de Party with the government.

Guins: Yes. Stolypin invited Miliukov and several other prominent leaders for negotiations, but Miliukov declined Stolypin's offer. He was afraid that the cooperation would not be successful and the party would lose its prestige. He published later the story of the negotiations and his reasons for refusing to cooperate. Maklakov belonged to Miliukov's opponents. He was ready to agree and considered Miliukov's position erroneous.

Pierce: What is your own opinion?

Guins: At that time I had no opinion. First of all, I did not know anything about such negotiations, and besides, I was still not prepared for independent opinions on questions of such great importance. I had only begun to work as a government employee and I was satisfied with both the experience which I had begun to acquire and the nature of my job.

Later it became clear to me that behind the scene there were influential forces in the entourage of the emperor which could doom to failure any combination of bureaucracy with the public spheres.

And I must add that later I met both Miliukov and Maklakov personally, and according to my impressions neither one nor the other could have been helpful to Stolypin. Miliukov was not sufficiently flexible to have cooperated under the conditions of the transitory period when it was necessary to approach the emperor, his court, and the influential members of the State Council. Even Stolypin could not overcome the forces behind the scenes.

Guins: As for Maklakov, when I was temporarily Assistant to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kolchak government, I sent him wires from Omsk asking him to send some competent people to assist the Omsk government, and I never even received a reply.

Ten years later, in 1928-1929, I was in Paris. Several prominent emigres, former politicians, invited me for interviews. They were interested in hearing from me the cause of Kolchak's failure and the role of the Czechs and other participants in the Siberian intervention. Among these persons were P. N. Miliukov, former ambassador Giers, and the former chairman of the Fourth Duma, A. J. Guchkov.

They listened to me with interest and attention. They asked me questions showing knowledge of past events and a certain hope for changes which might lead to a Russia without Bolsheviks.

Maklakov impressed me as a man of quite another type, however. I came to see him in his office as an unofficial representative of the Russian emigration, and there I met Guchkov. I had not known Guchkov earlier, but he was obviously interested when I introduced myself. He invited me so cordially to visit him, telling what train I was to take and how to reach him in his residence outside Paris, that Maklakov also gave his address to me.

I did not think that he would have done it unless he saw Guchkov's interest. I went to Maklakov's at the time agreed upon, and for one hour heard him talk about himself with no sign of serious interest either in the Siberian movement and Kolchak's tragedy, or in the prospects of Russia.

Pierce: Can one therefore conclude that any cooperation of Stolypin with Miliukov and Maklakov would have been unsuccessful?

Guins: I do not wish to state that so categorically. It seems to me that neither could have helped Stolypin very much. But I cannot say about the cooperation of the Ka-de Party with the government in general.

A positive result could have ensued if some of the Ka-de members had begun to visit the Tsar to report to him about their intentions and about various obstacles and impediments. Nicholas II could have seen that they were patriots, might have understood them, and rejected some prejudices against the liberals which existed in his entourage.

I could notice this sort of prejudice while working with

Guins: Admiral Kolchak. He met with suspicion my every suggestion to organize a state council comprising representatives of various social groups. Sometimes, as I mention in my book Siberia, the Allies and Kolchak, he used to refer to the proposed "state council" with the contemptuous word "sovdep," a shortened form of the "Soviet of Deputies."

When I finally succeeded in convincing the Admiral of the necessity of contact with the representatives of Siberian society and he understood the significance of mutual understanding between the chief of the government and the representatives of society, the "state council" was organized, but it was already too late.

However, we have strayed from our story about the period between the two revolutions, have we not?

Pierce: Perhaps, but in connection with your reminiscences one naturally wonders whether Russian liberals later changed their attitude toward Stolypin and his plan of reform.

Guins: Stolypin's popularity was gradually rising. His eloquence helped him in the Duma, and his plan to reorganize village communes by stimulating individual allotments was becoming more and more popular.

His program consisted of several parts: first of all, to secure individual farms for the peasants who wished to become independent from the village commune; second, to assist those who preferred to resettle in the Trans-Ural regions; and, third, to acquire lands from landowners through the newly established Peasant Land Bank and to sell them in parcels to peasants on advantageous terms. This variegated program proved to be effective.

Stolypin also wanted to develop the role of the zemstvos. The zemstvos were under the control and protection of the Minister of Internal Affairs. Various projects arose about developing the net of zemstvos, both in depth, including into zemstvos the small administrative divisions known as volosts, and in breadth, establishing zemstvos in gubernias which still lacked zemstvos, that is, the western regions and some regions in Siberia.

Problem of the Zemstvos in the Western Regions

Guins: Stolypin decided to start with the zemstvos in the western

Guins: regions. I mentioned earlier how he failed. You know that these regions had been separated from Russia for some centuries following the Mongol invasion until their reconquest during the reign of Peter the Great and the partition of Poland while Catherine II reigned. For example, the gubernia of Kiev had no zemstvo institutions because it was under Polish control for about 300 years.

During the long period of separation of the western regions many landed estates and business enterprises had been acquired or established by non-Russians, mostly Poles. For that reason, the Russian government preferred not to introduce zemstvos in the western regions and to prevent some complications of a nationalistic character.

Stolypin, on the other hand, supposed that participation in the zemstvos could unite the various nationalities. Opposition to his plan arose among the right extremists who were especially strong in the State Council. The Duma approved Stolypin's bill, but the mighty leaders of the opposition in the State Council managed to get a majority of votes and the bill approved by the Duma was rejected by the majority vote in the State Council.

Pierce: We already know of the fatal end of Stolypin, and also how he transferred the bill approved by the Duma into the Emperor's ukaz. But it would be interesting to know how the zemstvos in the western regions accomplished their functions, if they were established there.

Guins: I never heard of the introduction of zemstvos in the western regions. Stolypin was killed in 1911. His successors in the Ministry of Internal Affairs were all reactionaries, and it is very probable that the reform remained on paper only, especially because in 1914 World War I began and the western regions became a main theater of the war.

Whether or not it would have been beneficial to have zemstvos established in territories densely populated by Poles is difficult to say. The Poles could hardly prefer German domination to that of the Russians, but they could not have foreseen that after the restoration of Poland, achieved as a result of World War I, Poland would become a Soviet satellite.

Consequences of Stolypin's Murder

Pierce: Were there any essential changes in Russia after Stolypin's death?

Guins: The main change was the disappearance of a great statesman who possessed not only a strong will, but also rich political intuition and administrative capacities. As regards the general internal development of Russia, it continued in conformity with Stolypin's outlines, at least as far as the activity of the Ministry of Agriculture was concerned, and other newly established institutions. Economic progress did not stop, but political conditions were worsening.

Pierce: In what way?

Guins: Stolypin could not overcome completely the existing disunity of the Council of Ministers. However, thanks to his authority a certain unity and coordination of policy could be observed. It was possible that he had a certain influence when changes in the government took place.

Once it became known that while passing through Moscow Stolypin had a conversation in his railway car with Professor A. Kasso, director of the Moscow Lyceum. Soon afterwards Kasso was appointed Minister of Education, evidently by Stolypin's choice. It was a very unsuccessful appointment.

Kasso was an outstanding expert in civil law. He had reason to be elected to the vacancy in the St. Petersburg University to replace the late Professor Duvernois. But M. O. Pergament was invited to fill that vacancy. Besides Kasso, there was also another worthy candidate to the same position, the Professor of Civil Law at the University of Kazan, Shershenevich, of Polish origin, the author of widely-read books on civil law, commercial law and the theory of law. Kasso too was the author of several books which were acknowledged to be valuable contributions to the existing Russian legal literature, while Pergament had published only one.

After his appointment to the post of minister, Kasso began to transfer professors from Petersburg and Moscow to the provincial universities. Such a measure looked like repression and was a violation of the universities' autonomy. Why was it done? one could ask. And one more question can be offered, why did professors of law only or predominantly become victims of such a violation of the autonomy of the universities?

I should say that Professor Udintsev, who replaced Pergament at the St. Petersburg University, was not worse than Pergament, but they were scholars of quite different types. Pergament was an excellent teacher of modern European law. Udintsev, on the contrary, emphasized the study of Russian civil law.

Guins: A general characteristic of all the professors appointed by Kasso would be correct only from the point of view of those who approached this problem from the political point of view and approved appointments either as apolitical people or as conservatives.

Pierce: How did students react to arbitrary actions of the new minister?

Guins: One could suppose that they protested, organized a strike in support of outstanding scholars and the right of university autonomy. There was in fact no reaction at all. Students are an impersonal mass of people who do not act unless a leader appears. The revolutionary parties were probably very glad that there was such obvious arbitrariness, but no leader appeared.

In any case, the appointment of Kasso to the post of minister was a great mistake of Stolypin's, especially because it was his personal choice.

Pierce: What can you say about Stolypin's successors?

Guins: Kokovtsev was the best of them. At least he was an authoritative person well prepared as an administrator and as a minister of finance. But in comparison to Stolypin he was a weak man deprived of major initiative.

Krivoshein

Guins: For several years Krivoshein, the Minister of Agriculture, had a certain influence. Although technically not so designated, he can certainly be characterized as an active minister and a man who succeeded to gain the confidence of the emperor and of various groups of politicians.

As I said earlier, I was, for instance, an official for special commissions attached to him as one would be to a minister, not having direct connection with him but being sufficiently informed about his activity and personal relations.

I mentioned earlier that the emperor characterized Krivoshein after his resignation as a "good entrepreneur." It was an apt characterization. Krivoshein was a very good administrator. He selected his assistants, directors of the departments, very successfully. Personally he applied very well the art of personal charm and tact or, in brief, he possessed what is

Guins: usually called "savoir faire."

During his occupation of the post of Minister several remarkable publications were prepared by various departments, such as Aziatskaia Rossiia [Asiatic Russia] in two volumes with excellent illustrations and a large collection of maps of all the Siberian regions.

Another de luxe publication was the Al'bom kustarnykh izdelii [Album of Craftsmanship], with an excellent portrait of the Empress, as patroness of that kind of art. Among the publications of the Ministry of Agriculture must be mentioned also the reports of Stolypin and Krivoshein on their inspection trip in Siberia, and separately of Krivoshein in Turkestan.

There were also many special publications, as, for example, on cotton production in Turkestan by Mr. Kniese of the Department of Agriculture. I helped him edit the book.

All of these publications were given out to a number of high standing and influential people in the capital. I could not foresee that a list of these people which I usually saw and read with interest should be preserved for the memoirs. I could not certainly imagine of what interest it could be for the characterization of the period, when some people behind the scenes still secured their influence. I remember only Voeikov, the Commandant of the Tsar's Palace, and the maid of honor, Mme. Naryshkina. But there were dozens of others of equal or maybe even of greater importance than these two.

Pierce: Could Krivoshein have become Prime Minister?

Guins: I don't know whether he considered himself to be the right man for that place. But there was a saying in Russia: "Bad is the soldier who does not hope to become a general." Krivoshein resigned in 1915 soon after the Emperor decided to replace the Grand Duke Nikolai as the Commander-in-Chief and to assume that duty himself.

Several members of the Council of Ministers tried to persuade the Emperor not to leave the capital, but he did not change his decision. He was even displeased by the ministers' interference. All those who advised the Tsar not to replace the Grand Duke as the Commander-in-Chief resigned one after the other. Among them was Krivoshein.

He asked to resign for reasons of health. His close co-workers attributed his resignation to his foresight. He was not the only one who resigned at that time.

Guins: During the counter-revolutionary White movement Krivoshein was an adviser to General Denikin and later headed the government of General Baron Wrangel. He did not succeed in that role. I do not believe that he could be a leader, although he possessed many good administrative qualities.

Wartime Stress

Pierce: Why was the Grand Duke replaced and why did the ministers try to persuade the Tsar not to become the Commander-in-Chief?

Guins: Some military experts thought the Grand Duke and especially his Chief of Staff, General Ianushkevich, not competent enough for the positions they had; and the experts considered them responsible for a series of military failures. The Emperor would not attempt, they believed, to be a real Commander-in-Chief, and General Alekseev as the Chief of Staff would be simultaneously the real Commander-in-Chief. On the other hand, in that role the Emperor could support the needs of the armies better than if he were apart form them.

As for the opponents of such a change, they felt that the absence of the Tsar from the capital (his residence was near Petrograd) could open the way for irresponsible influences. This apprehension unfortunately was justified. Subsequent appointments of Prime Ministers and Ministers of Interior Affairs were each one worse than the other.

There was also another reason in favor of the Emperor's staying in his residence. In case of a new failure, the burden of responsibility would not be on the Emperor. And in case of conflicting interests of the front and the rear, the interests of the latter could be protected with more success than they could if the Emperor were also the Commander-in-Chief.

Pierce: Was the prediction of the opponents justified with regard to violation of the balance of military and civil needs?

Guins: I can answer affirmatively on the basis of my own wartime experience. I have in mind some additional functions which I had to perform during that time. After the beginning of World War I a Special Committee for Food Supply was established under the general control of the Minister of Agriculture, and I was invited to cooperate with the staff of that Committee as its legal advisor.

As far as I remember, there were two more similar committees

Guins: established simultaneously: one for food supply, and another, I believe, for war materials supply. My experience was with the first of these. In the first year or two of war the problem of food supply was complicated by several factors.

First, agriculture lost a great part of its manpower; second, the railways were overloaded by military transportation of troops, supplies and prisoners; and, finally, there were conflicting requirements of the armies and industry and cities. Orders from the headquarters of the armies always had preference, and there was no institution which could regulate supply on the basis of objective appraisal of needs and expediency.

During the meetings of the Special Committee I heard more than once the disputes between the representatives of the Food Administration and the representatives of the Ministry of Ways of Communications, who constantly referred to the orders received from headquarters. It is very possible, however, that the lack of bread in Petrograd in October, 1917, was the result of an abnormal condition of the distribution of flour and not the absence of it. Two days after the October overthrow there was no difficulty in getting bread.

There were different organizations and agencies, and no general control, no organization which could dispose of the stocks and regulate distribution. It became clear that the central organization was defective, that not all had been foreseen, and that competition among the various authorities undermined order.

Pierce: As I understand it, your conclusion is that the revolution originated in defects in the administrative organization which were exacerbated and complicated by wartime conditions.

Guins: I can agree with that summarizing if you will add that there were many defects in the administrative order before the beginning of the war, and that during the war the central government was badly shaken by unsuccessful personnel changes in the central institutions and by stopping necessary reforms.

All these circumstances favored the success of anti-government propaganda in the barracks and trenches. Such apparently inconsiderable circumstances as concentration in the capital of a great number of drafted soldiers were in fact of decisive significance in the predominance of revolutionary forces in Petrograd, Moscow, and large provincial cities over forces for the defense of law and order.

IV BETWEEN THE REVOLUTIONS: PROVINCIAL ADMINISTRATION

Administrative Officials

Pierce: As we agreed earlier, Professor Guins, our next subject will be the Provincial Administration in Russia between the two Russian revolutions.

Guins: Yes, I will try to give you the information you desire, but let me warn you that my acquaintance with provincial life was episodic. In my answers I will refer not only to what I myself knew, but sometimes to what I heard or learned. My personal impressions and some contacts with the local administration are connected mostly with the time which preceded the revolutionary movement of 1905 and 1906 (there were no essential changes thereafter), and with the three years after, 1907 to 1909. After that I resided in the capital.

Pierce: Will you begin with the highest administrative institutions and descend gradually to the lowest and most numerous administrative agents, those close to the peasantry?

Guins: I think that this will be the best approach. That system, by the way, corresponds to the plan according to which Count Speransky systematized legislation in his remarkable Svod Zakonov. The first volume included only laws relating to the central government institutions. The second, the local administration, namely the provincial government and its agencies. Into the third went everything about government employees.

If anybody wants to know more exactly how this complicated apparatus of the Russian empire was organized, he can find answers in the Svod Zakonov. I will not give details and prefer to give some characteristics of the Russian administrators, in conformity with my recollections, and of administrative

Guins: practice as I could observe it.

Pierce: Will you emphasize anyhow the changes which probably took place during the period between the two revolutions?

Guins: The period which we are discussing was very short and, as I tried to characterize it earlier, was a period of the adaptation of the old regime to the constitutional changes in conformity with the establishment of the State Duma, a legislative organ. There were "ups" and "downs" during that period of adaptation and some essential changes took place, mostly in the upper strata of the administrative sphere.

Yet personnel changes in the capital influenced the development in the provinces. Successes of government policy as, for example, in agriculture and the development of industry and trade, could not remain without influence on the activity of local institutions.

Namestniks

Guins: As we have agreed, I will start with the highest administrative institutions in the provinces. During the autocratic regime, the Emperor used to appoint Namestniks, officials corresponding in position to the viceroys in western European countries. Alexander I, who respected Polish civilization and gave a constitution to Poland after the end of the war with Napoleon, appointed his brother Constantine as Namestnik to Warsaw.

Later, after the incorporation of the Caucasus and after a long struggle with the warlike mountaineers, Tiflis, the largest city of Transcaucasia, became the capital and the residence of the Caucasian administration headed by Namestniks of the Russian Emperor.

One of them [1905-1915] was Count I. I. Vorontsov-Dashkov, of the famous family of brilliant intellectuals and gifted diplomats and statesmen. Vorontsov was a man of unusual tact and displayed a vivid interest in the prosperity of the rich region.

He, with his respect for the ancient culture of the Caucasus, assisted in the pacification of the region and in its successful economic and cultural development on the basis of friendly cooperation with the Russian scientific and educational institutions. He tried also to secure friendly relations

Guins: between the Russian administration and local nationalities, as well as among the local nationalities themselves.

During World War I [1915-1917] the Grand Duke Nikolai Nikolaevich was appointed Namestnik of the Caucasus and the Commander-in-Chief of the army which operated against Turkey. This decision was made shortly after Nicholas II decided to take over command of the Russian armies against Germany on the European front.

I remember one more namestnichestvo in Russia, namely in the Far East. Admiral E. I. Alekseev was appointed to that high post by Nicholas II, who knew Alekseev because the latter accompanied him during his journey in Japan and Siberia.

Alekseev was unsuccessful as Namestnik, and later also as Commander-in-Chief of the Russian armies during the Russo-Japanese war. He was responsible for the war itself due to his tactless attitude toward Japan and his overestimation of Russian forces. He was finally displaced and appointed a member of the State Council.

On the basis of historical experience one can conclude, I believe, that a position such as that of Namestnik depends greatly upon personal qualities of the autocrat who makes the appointment and upon the appointee. One could work out well, and another not.

Whether a large country may risk such results is a problem which has found its decision in world history by the replacing of autocratic regimes with constitutional ones, which hardly can be immaculate, yet which give more guarantees than one man's choice.

Governor-Generals

Guins: In function the general-gubernatorstvo, or governor-generalship, represented almost the same kind of position as the namestnichestvo. In European Russia such a position was established, for example for Finland, where the governor-generalship represented the supreme power of the Russian empire. His role under the condi of home rule in Finland was in part purely military, inasmuch as Finland had no army, but he also served as the protector of the legitimate relations between Finland and Russia.

In Asiatic Russia governor-generalships were established

Guins: for regions with a majority of aborigines. The first governor-general was Count Speransky, appointed for the whole of Siberia. According to his suggestion and the project based upon his own plan, aborigines received their own legal status, retaining their own customs and elected tribal leadership. The commanding administrative positions remained in the hands of the Russian administrators under the control of the governors, and their administrative apparatus subject to the governor's district administration.

After the incorporation of Turkestan a governor-generalship of a purely military character was established there because of specific geographic conditions and a possible conflict with other powers. Besides the governor-general, the governors, chiefs of the districts in every gubernia or oblast of Turkestan, and the chiefs appointed to govern separate parts of the districts were all officers of the Russian army.

The functions of these seemingly minor administrative agents were in fact incredibly complicated. To the population they represented the Russian state, and upon their attitude toward the rank-and-file nomads depended the attitude of the nomads toward Russia herself.

During my traveling in Turkestan I met there a comparatively young officer, the chief of a part of a district (nachal'nik uchastka). He showed me a portable medicine chest which he had always with him to cure sick Kirgiz and told me that once he fulfilled even the duties of a midwife. "I only wish all of the Russian administrators were like you," I exclaimed, listening to his story.

Pierce: Did some administrators receive the title of governor-general for special assignments?

Guins: Yes, this was done and as far as I remember the last such appointments were made during the 1905-1907 period, when such governor-generals were appointed to carry out repressions against the revolutionaries and rebellious masses. In Moscow, the Grand Duke Sergei Aleksandrovich (1857-1905), one of those appointments, was killed by a socialist who wanted to accomplish a "heroic deed." The widow of the Grand Duke, a very merciful, religious and noble lady, pleaded that capital punishment not applied toward the murderer and took the veil.

I should say that not a few of the governor-generals, the post-revolutionary pacifiers, proved to be very brutal. I cannot approve or deny such a characteristic, but I admit the possibility of abuse through the unlimited power and exuberant eagerness of such executives. We could witness the same

Guins: phenomena during the revolution and the civil war.

Appointed Atamans

Guins: To end my recollections as regards governor-generals, I want to add the so-called appointed (nakaznyi) atamans of the Cossack voiskos (or hosts). They had the same administrative function as governor-generals, commanding military forces and heading the civil administration of the regions under their control.

Reminiscences and Impressions on the Round Trip in Turkestan

Pierce: Can you add something about your impressions in Turkestan?

Guins: It is just what I want to relate at present. When I was in Turkestan I was there as a kind of scout. My official title was "temporary hydrotechnician of the Semirechensk region." Because of my special assignment to collect materials which could help in understanding the existing customs and legal relations of customary character concerning the distribution of waters for irrigation, I was quite independent in my choice of itinerary and methods of fulfilling my duties.

But I was certainly under the supervision of the chief administrator in the Semirechensk region of the resettlement there of peasants from European Russia. According to my impression, this administrator regarded me as a tourist who had arrived under the protection of some influential officials in the Resettlement Administration. He received me in a very friendly manner, as he did all other temporary agents.

He also organized as he did for all such young men newly arrived from St. Petersburg an excursion to a picturesque place in the mountains surrounding the capital of the region, the city of Vernyi (now Alma-Ata, as it was called before the Russian occupation). Besides me there were in the group Rozhevits and Ptashitskii, two botanists sent from St. Petersburg to study the local flora. The local administration did not intervene in the activity of such specialists assigned from St. Petersburg and was not responsible for the results of their work.

During my two short visits to Tashkent, it was not necessary

Guins: for me to be presented to even the local governor, not to mention the governor-general of Turkestan. Neither had I any direct contact with governor-generals and governors later. My impressions are therefore limited to some occasional meetings. For example, I met the governor-general of the Steppe region in St. Petersburg when he arrived once and visited the chief of the Resettlement Administration.

I knew some governor-generals from afar when there was an exchange of correspondence connected with the functions of our institutions with the local administration. I knew the governor-general of Priamuriie, N. L. Gondatti, especially well. It so happened that after the revolution we were both in Manchuria and occupied various positions in the administration of the Chinese Eastern Railway, as well as in the Harbin municipality and later in the institutions of the Harbin organization of homeowners.

Relations Between the Provincial and Central Administrations

Pierce: I think that it would be interesting if you could give some characteristics of the interrelations between the governor-generals and the central administration.

General Scalon, Governor-General of Warsaw

Guins: Well, I will start with the governor-general of Warsaw. As a historian you know about the role of Grand Duke Constantine, the brother of Alexander I and of Nicholas I. He was the governor-general of Warsaw and did not win the sympathy of the population. I had some information about General [Georg Antonovich] Scalon, a great patriot and gentleman, who was governor-general there [1905-1914] when I started my government service in St. Petersburg. His approach to the Poles differed from that of the Grand Duke Constantine.

In 1909, my wife took part in an excursion of Russian students, young girl students of the Bestuzhevskie kursy (a kind of university for girls). It was at a time when girls were not admitted to the regular universities. My wife was not a student of that institution, but my sister, who was a student there, persuaded my wife to join the group.

The excursion did not have any political character and

Guins: promised to be an agreeable and interesting trip, and a friendly rapprochement with the Poles. My expectations as well as those of my sister were completely justified. There was only one incident which unexpectedly became a kind of demonstration of the sympathy of the Russian younger generation for the Polish nationality and its hope to be restored.

Those on the excursion placed a wreath with red ribbons at the grave of the famous Polish poet and patriot, Adam Miczkiewicz. During their sojourn in Warsaw they were surrounded by representatives of the Polish nationalists. That was all that could be interpreted as a demonstration.

The governor-general was informed about this "demonstration" by the Russian police, and also by the newspapers which described the reception of the representatives of the Russian youth from the Polish nationalist point of view as an expression of sympathy with the Polish dream to restore her independence. The governor-general only smiled, and ordered the police not to interfere. It was quite clear that the excursion had nothing in common with any political movement. Miczkiewicz was a writer known all over Europe, and was welcomed at St. Petersburg, where he was received in the famous salon of Princess Volkonskii.

The same General Scalon committed suicide when Warsaw was occupied by German troops in 1915. He was a Russian patriot. I believe that he was quite acceptable for the Polish patriots as governor-general, but not as a man who enjoyed power to introduce innovations which would improve the Polish-Russian interrelations.

Count Vorontsov-Dashkov, Viceroy of the Caucasus

Guins: As regards the Caucasus, I cannot add anything more to what I told about the competence and tact of Count Vorontsov-Dashkov. He was one of the richest people in pre-revolutionary Russia, quite independent and undoubtedly very intelligent and benevolent. In Odessa and in Tiflis I saw monuments in honor of his forefather Prince M. S. Vorontsov, who was also Viceroy in Tiflis [1844-1854] and Odessa [Governor-general of Novorossiick Region, 1822-1844]. As a ruler of the Caucasus he accomplished several measures which contributed to the well-being of Odessa and the Caucasus.

In 1916 I was returning to Petrograd from a journey to Samara. On one of the railway stations our train was stopped for a while to let a special train of Count Vorontsov-Dashkov

Guins: pass by. It was probably at the time when the Emperor replaced the Grand Duke Nikolai Nikolaevich as the Commander-in-Chief of the armies and appointed the Grand Duke Viceroy of the Caucasus to replace Vorontsov.

Governor-General N. L. Gondatti of the Amur Region

Guins: As for the governor-generals in the Far East, I did not hear anything worthy of mention except for N. L. Gondatti [Governor-general of the Amur Region, 1911-1917].

Gondatti was an interesting person. His father was a sculptor. His son became known as a member of an expedition organized in 1885 for studying the northwestern part of Siberia. He was interested especially in the life and customs of the Siberian aborigines, and he lived there for 22 months. His subsequent life was characterized by different explorations and undertakings in various parts of Russia and also in China and Japan.

He acquired also administrative experience, receiving various assignments from time to time, in particular the organization of the resettlement of Russian peasants in the Maritime province.

In 1900 he began to serve in various conspicuous positions. He was governor of the Tomsk gubernia, later headed a special expedition for studying the needs of Siberia, and in 1911 was appointed governor-general of Priamuriie, the region north of the river Amur.

The Emperor was always interested in Siberia, which he crossed while the heir to the throne and chairman of the committee for the construction of the Trans-Siberian Railway at the end of the 19th Century. When Gondatti, as chief of the expedition for Siberian studies, presented to the Emperor several volumes of printed reports on Siberia, he received one of the highest court ranks, Sthalmeister, in conformity with his high position of governor-general.

Being governor-general, Gondatti could not know all officials of that large region, but he managed to acquire the reputation of being a wonderful administrator who knew everything. I heard some anecdotes concerning this and the means he used to enhance it.

When he arrived at a certain station, where his local

Guins: officials were to meet him, he used to look from the window of his car from behind the drawn curtain, invisible to the waiting officials but seeing them himself, and would ask his assistants to tell him who was in the row of people on the platform, and what was each one's position and reputation. Later, upon leaving the car he would address each one and surprise them by his knowledge of the administrative personnel and the competence of each one.

He was probably a good governor-general, but he spoiled his reputation by applying a very unsuitable measure regarding the Chinese workers who invaded Russian territory without entry permits. He ordered specially prepared manacles with numbers of the entry permit soldered on the wrists of Chinese workers who arrived legally, and thrust all the others back to China. It was hardly his own invention, but he was the responsible person and the Chinese did not forgive him for the humiliation of their compatriots.

After the revolution Gondatti found asylum in Harbin, Manchuria, where he occupied, as I did, various positions on the Chinese Eastern Railway. Gondatti was connected with forestry, but he was routine and unoriginal in his methods and unable to develop the exploitation of forests on the concession.

He was also responsible for the disposal of free lands on the territory of the concession. But there again everything was subject to routine. He was equally unsuccessful in his own affairs and ended his life deprived of comfort, a sick and senile old man.

Pierce: You also mentioned a governor-general of the Steppe region earlier. Who was he?

General Shmitt, Governor-General of the Steppe Region

Guins: He was General of Cavalry (General-ot-kavalerii) E. O. Shmitt. Simultaneously he was the appointed (nakaznyi) Ataman of the Siberian Cossack Voisko. His residence was in Omsk and his functions were mostly connected with reconciliation of the privileges of the Cossacks, especially of the rights of the voisko to the territory ten versts wide along the bank of the river Irtysh.

These Cossacks' privileges conflicted with the interests of the peasants resettled from European Russia. The Cossacks did not exploit the whole territory, and the new settlers

Guins: finding free lands close to the river and good for cultivation willfully occupied some lots which they found best for their villages and farms. There was no demarcation of the Cossack territory, and the conflicts of interests were very delicate.

As regards regular activity of the administration in the Steppe regions, which included several administrative regions, the governor-general hardly had any specific functions, as each region had its governor.

I saw once General Shmitt in our Resettlement Administration. He was a typical general of cavalry, an elegant old man, probably a good officer but hardly sufficiently if at all prepared for administration in the region which had to acquire an important significance in the economy of western Siberia.

I remember that one of our professors of state and administrative law once told us that, according to statistical data, a great majority of the governor-generals were cavalry officers. The cavalry was regarded as the most brilliant part of the troops as compared to infantry and artillery.

All three main component parts of Russian troops carried out important functions in time of war, but during peace time the cavalry was always the most impressive. Cavalry officers were the most elegant, their horses the most beautiful trotters, their uniforms the smartest; and mostly rich people would choose that part of the troops for their military careers. The maintenance of their apparel and way of life, corresponding to the traddidions of each regiment, cost more than the government could contribute in the form of modest salary of rank-and-file officers.

Appraisal of the Governor-Generals

Pierce: What is your general appraisal of the institution of governor-generalship?

Guins: From my point of view it was not superfluous for such a great empire as Russia was. But it could be regarded as an exclusive organization. Let me remind you of the appointment of Speransky as a governor-general of Siberia with plenary powers. His post had the character of a revision and at the same time of finding what had to be done to reorganize and improve the existing system of government. Speransky introduced a special regime for the aborigines on the basis of their tribal organization

Guins: and legalization of some of their forms of justice.

The special institutions for the Caucasus administration were also quite expedient as far as I can judge on the basis of my limited information. But the appointment of governor-generals had sometimes involved the rewarding of high-ranking generals (especially generals of cavalry) who normally had to retire under the age limit. Such appointments were only a kind of sinecure.

Still worse for the prestige of the position of governor-general were the appointments of governor-generals especially for the repressions against the revolutionaries which were accompanied with the application of military justice and executions.

Governor-Generals in the Transitional Period

Guins: Future historians should discern the different functions and quite different character of the institutions with the same denomination. From the point of view of our main subject, the transitional period between the two revolutions, the appointment of governor-generals represented one of the survivals of the autocratic regime.

The first years after the revolution of 1905-1906 were obviously the last years of the existence of governor-generalships with repressive functions. At that time Russia needed a reorganization of her administrative system at large on the basis of self-determination and adaptation to local and national characteristics.

Pierce: Do you want to discuss this problem of the necessary reorganization just now?

Guins: I do not know whether we need to discuss the problem of reorganization at all. In any case it would be consistent and corresponding to our plan to continue my reminiscences concerning the administrative system as it existed. The institution of governor-generalships had a special, not a typical, character. On a par with this institution should also be mentioned the position of the appointed (nakaznyi) Ataman of the Don Cossack Voisko, a large region populated by Cossacks who had their autonomous system of administration on the basis of a special electoral system.

The organization of the central government is thus certainly

Guins: more complex than if it is characterized only as autocratic, constitutional, or parliamentary. It is very important also, if you are speaking as we do about Russia, to know how was organized its judicial power, the Senate; of what departments consisted the ministries; what correlations existed between the State and the Church as compared with the same in the Catholic and Protestant countries.

Yet it is sufficient to limit our subject, as the general characteristic of a certain period of Russian history is concerned as we agreed, to the period 1906 to 1917.

Administration in the Provinces (Gubernias)

Guins: I prefer to limit our survey of various administrative institutions and to concentrate on the most ordinary, such as governors and the government institutions in gubernias or oblasts. Each one of them had its governor and certain special institutions which were submitted to the corresponding central institutions, mostly ministries in the capital.

Pierce: It should be interesting. Little is known about the administrative system in the Russian provinces.

Guins: Fine. I believe that we should start with the governors as the chiefs of the local administration, including those administrators who were not subject to the governor and were responsible directly to their chiefs in the capital or elsewhere. Is that what you mean in speaking about the administrative system in Russian provinces?

Pierce: Exactly that. And I would add also that I had in mind the Russian zemstvo as a system of self-determination.

Guins: It would be a correct approach to our subject. The governors were the highest representatives of the administrative power in their particular regions, but their competence was limited: first, because some ministries had their own organs in the same region; and second, because in some regions existed the zemstvos and municipalities which were independent in their sphere of activity, at least as it was determined by the special laws according to which zemstvos were established.

Correspondingly, we have to mention first of all the organs of the central administration, which existed in the Russian provinces during the period between the two revolutions.

Guins: The governor, no matter how high his position, was first of all a representative of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, to which he had to report, and from which he received instructions. His position was certainly very high on the ladder of the hierarchy and he had to present his annual report to the Emperor. Besides the governor there was in the region another representative of one of the special branches of administrative power, the Chief of the Gendarmes, also an organ of the Ministry of the Interior.

The Minister of the Interior was at the same time the chief of the corps of gendarmes. The corps' local agents had to cooperate closely with the governor. The gendarmes and the police forces were at the disposal of the governor. The other officials could not ignore the governor, but were not so close to him.

It was not quite clear, but was indicated, that a competent, resolute governor with initiative could become an influential administrator. The right to preside in all collective organs in his province opened also to governors many chances to suggest to other administrative and public organs various plans, ideas, and initiative.

As far as I could see, governors did not remain too long in the same place. Yet they had to become acquainted with their regions, which was not easy due to the extent of all regions in European and especially in Asiatic Russia, and because of the great variety of the provinces as concerns the development of their economy, composition of the population, needs of a cultural nature, and problems of social relations and political controversies.

During the period between the two revolutions the governors' responsibilities became much more complicated than at the end of the 19th Century, because of the awakened political and national self-consciousness of the population. Under the new conditions governors needed more time to establish direct contacts with influential people, to become adquainted with the region and its needs, and to organize competent organs for examination in case of disagreements between the government offices, or complaints from the organs of local self-government.

For such needs there were two organs which could assist the governor: one a collective institution, the consultative body called the Gubernskoe pravlenie (Government's Administrative Office), and the other the governor's chancellery. The vice-governor was usually the chief of the governor's chancellery, and presided also during the meetings of the Gubernskoe pravlenie.

Guins: One of my classmates in the gymnasium (high school) in Kishinev, Ustruyov, was the son of the vice-governor. I could therefore notice that the vice-governor remained the same person for at least eight years while I was learning in the gymnasium, while during the same time four governors of Bessarabia replaced each other.

The Gubernskoe pravlenie consisted of two or more councillors, one assessor, who should be prepared to replace an absent councillor; and if necessary, one or several specialists from among the local officials appointed by the Ministry of Internal Affairs could be invited to attend the meeting.

Pierce: Were there also any other collective organs connected with the functions of gubernia administration?

Guins: While I was living in the province I never heard of any other collective organs. But as a student of law I became informed about a certain collegial organ which I recall because of its ancient name, prisutstvie. The word indicated that it was summoned ad hoc.

A peculiarity of their meetings was the participation of several competent persons, including the representatives of zemstvos and nobility. According to the legal rules the prisutstvie supervised the activity of local administrative organs and tried cases connected with complaints offered to the prisutstvie for solution.

In fact, there were prisutstviia of different kinds and different composition and their meetings had a character of the collegial discussion of various problems. The governor, who mostly presided at their meetings, had always the predominant position. In cases where the problems of zemstvos and municipalities were concerned the role of the prisutstvie was rather more restrictive than cooperative.

The different government institutions had their own local organs with competence determined in corresponding legal provisions. They were supervised by their direct chiefs and organs, but could not refuse the governors information.

I don't think that it would be important to give more details about all the above named organs and the others sometimes connected with specific functions, like irrigation in one group of regions, drainage in others, supervision over the forestry, mining industry, etc.

Pierce: It would be of interest to be acquainted with some practical

Pierce: solution, but I believe it is more important to emphasize in general what practice did exist at that time in the local administration from the point of view of the cooperation of the governors and other officials and between the representatives of the bureaucracy and representative organs of the local population.

Guins: I share your opinion. As regards the intergovernmental relations I want to mention that in all regions of the Russian empire, both before the constitutional reforms of 1906 and thereafter, there were representatives of the Ministry of Finance, of State Control, and in many of the regions there were special organs of the Ministry of Agriculture, in particular organs of administration of state properties (domains), of forest conservation and management, etc.

One could expect that the governor as a principal representative of the State had dominance over all other governmental agencies, but it was not so. Neither before the revolutionary movement of 1905-1906 nor later did governors have a commanding position.

Of course, all representatives of the central government institutions in the provinces had to visit governors in case of his invitation. According to the letter of the law the governor had a right to inspect or to audit their organs, but as far as I know such a right was never used by any governor in my time.

The chief of the treasury (Kazennaia palata)--the main organ of the Ministry of Finance--was the highest representative of the government in the province after the governor and replaced the governor if the latter was absent and had no vice-governor. The chief of the control department (Kontrol'naia palata) represented the State Control in the provinces and was the main organ of inspection over the other government institutions from the point of view of correct use of the corresponding appropriations.

The chief of the excise office (Upravliaiushchii aktsiznymi sborami) was also an official of high rank and therefore quite independent. Some others had mostly functions of so special a character (agricultural, medical, educational, for example) that hardly anybody could be competent enough for any revision except corresponding specialists assigned from the center.

The governor had more chances to demonstrate his prevalent position and administrative power in his attitude toward the elected public organs, such as zemstvos and municipalities. In the case of discord between the governor and the high officials of the central institutions in his province the latter could

Guins: always find protection in the capital. But I never heard of any discords of that kind.

As a matter of fact, the governors became representatives of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and not of the central government at large. Inasmuch as Stolypin was simultaneously Chairman of the Council of Ministers and the Minister of Internal Affairs, and, besides, a man of a very strong will, some of his proteges appointed by him as governors could attempt to carry out some of the plans of their chief. But that could be rather accidental than typical.

There was no real unification of power above, nor was there a really united Council of Ministers, so naturally there were disagreements in the center. Neither was there or could there be a true unification of administrative activity in provinces, and only individual governors could succeed in renovating the local administration. A great majority understood their functions as protection of law and order in the sense of the struggle against the revolutionary movement and against possible tendencies of the zemstvos and municipalities to express their political trends.

Pierce: If everything depended on the character and political sympathies or antipathies of particular governors, how could local policy be unified?

Guins: It was unified by instructions from St. Petersburg. But if some urgent local problems had arisen of a specially delicate nature from a political point of view or from the point of view of the interrelations between various influential persons or groups, it was, of course, the problem of the governor's intuition, his own political feeling. Some administrators learned to act in ways which could delay solutions for an indefinite time. One such method was known as the writing of papers "troinym khliustom."

Pierce: What does it mean?

Guins: This expression was invented by an unknown specialist in writing official papers in a triplicate manner. It means that nobody could understand what was the opinion of their author. I recall a meeting of a jocular nature but which contained an irony not devoid of sense. Liubimov, the governor of the Vilno region, arrived in St. Petersburg and related in a joking way the conditions of his work. In reply to one of the questions of our chief, he said in my presence, "It is necessary to know how to write papers when replying to St. Petersburg."

Guins: "I wish I could be acquainted with such an art," said my chief, Tkhorzhevskii, evidently his good friend.

Liubomov, the governor, then added, "That means to write in such a way that no one can understand what it means although at the same time it seems to be very well founded. For example, you begin with various legal references, and you use so many of them that no one can possibly understand what the connection is."

"But you have to add a conclusion," we said.

"Oh, certainly, but the conclusion is that the problem must be solved in conformity with the legal provisions referred to!"

We understood this as only a joke, but later I met a man who was living in the Vilno gubernia and who was connected with the administration, and I asked him, "Do you know anything about Liubimov?"

"Liubomov? Oh yes, certainly I know of him. He was a very able man. He was a young man when he was appointed governor. Once one of his associates told him that he had received a paper from St. Petersburg in which they had asked how to solve a problem which seemed to be exceptionally difficult.

"What seems to be the difficulty?" asked Liubimov.

"Because there are so many different opinions about how to solve this, I don't dare to choose between several decisions. Each one seems to me sufficiently reasonable, so I cannot find the solution."

"Well," Liubimov told him, "leave it to me. I will decide the problem"

Several days later he came to Liubimov. "Did you forget the paper which I had to answer?"

"Oh, I will do it," replied Liubimov.

The same thing was repeated several times. At last Liubimov said, "Ha! What to do?" And he wrote the resolution "postupit' po zakonu"--to apply the law. But what law? I had to ask. As I could not understnad what this strange phrase meant, I was then told that it meant to delegate or transfer the burden of the decision (or, in English, "to pass the buck").

All of this was half joke and half earnest. Liubimov was

Guins: an intelligent and self-confident man, and was soon appointed Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs. So he knew how to get along. Certainly he had some other advantages besides his intelligence. He belonged to a noble family; he graduated from a privileged institution of higher learning, the Lyceum of St. Petersburg; he had very good connections. Last but probably not least, I heard that he had a beautiful wife.

Some Typical Governors

Pierce: Did you know some other governors?

Guins: I grew up in Bessarabian gubernia, the present Moldavian S.S.R., so I recall several of the governors of that region. Some of them visited the gymnasium (high school) at which I was a student (gymnazist). One was General von Raaben, a very strange person. It was quite clear that when he asked something of our teacher of Greek, our teacher could not understand what the governor wanted to know and had to answer off the point.

During Raaben's governorship there was a Jewish pogrom in Kishinev, and as he proved unable to find ways to stop this pogrom, he was dismissed soon afterward. He was a military man with a military education. He had to retire because of his age, and having good connections in St. Petersburg had received a good civil appointment because there was no age limit for a governor. Such governors depended completely on their closest assistant.

Von Raaben belonged to the group of governors who inspired anecdotes. About one of these, a former general who was appointed governor, there was spread a rumor in the city about which I have to say as Italians do, 'Si non e vera e ben trovata' (If it is not true it is well told).

This governor, a former general, is said to have read a paper which was given to him for getting his resolution, and to have asked one of his assistants or perhaps his vice-governor, "Is it what we are writing, or is it what someone else is writing to us?" In such cases the actual governing had to be in the hands of the governor's assistant. I am sure that governors of that type could hardly be supported after the first revolution.

Quite another type of governor in Bessarabia was represented by Prince S. D. Urusov, who replaced von Raaben. He proved to be a very liberal man, which was unknown, I believe, to the Ministry of the Interior. Or if it was known they did not know

Guins: the scale of it, or perhaps he was appointed governor to show that the Ministry did not encourage such phenomena as pogroms. But in fact Urusov soon earned the respect of the numerous Jewish population of Bessarabia. And when he was later appointed Deputy Minister of the Interior [1905-1906], he received from the Jewish population a very valuable present, something of precious metal like a golden key, and an address.

Later Prince Urusov became a member of the Constitutional Democratic Party, headed by Miliukov, and was elected a member of the State Duma. This was, as you see, quite another type of governor.

Thus not all governors were conservative, not all were careerist, but there were some who understood that it was necessary to be closer to the population and help the development of the region to which they were appointed. Unfortunately I don't know the names of other governors whom I could mention. In any case Prince Urusov was a rather exceptional type, like N. N. Kutler, a member of the Ka-de Party, who was for a while Head of the Main Administration for Land Organization and Agriculture [October 28, 1905 to February 2, 1906].

Later, after Prince Urusov, there was another very intelligent governor in Bessarabia, A. N. Kharuzin. He too became Deputy Minister of Interior Affairs [1911-1913]. He was a man who knew his job and was interested in the economic and social life of Bessarabia. His reports--I don't know what kind of reports he presented to the Emperor--but his reports to the Ministry were very interesting in their content and propositions and programs, and the promotion which was given to him indicated that the Ministry was interested in having such people in the central government.

I will remind you that that was after the State Duma came into existence, and again I want to stress that the State Duma had a great significance which not all people understood, that the existence of such a body required changes in the staff in St. Petersburg and in the provinces.

You can imagine that when Kharuzin appeared before the State Duma to express something relating to the government's program, those to whom he spoke were impressed by his business-like approach and experience.

Some of the governors I knew personally, for example, Governor Neverov from Akmolinsk oblast. I met him when I was an official of the second section of the Resettlement Administration, in whose competence was the colonization of the three steppe

Guins: regions behind the Urals: Turgai, Akmolinsk, and Semipalatinsk oblasts. When governors of these regions arrived in St. Petersburg they usually visited the Resettlement Administration, and I had sometimes a chance to attend the meetings to which they were invited.

I saw Neverov as a man who was interested in colonization and was well informed in everything concerning resettlement. I met him again during World War I, when he also visited the meetings of the Osoboe Soveshchanie po Prodovol'stviiu (Special consultative organ for organization of food provisions) applied to the needs of the army. This was organized in 1915 and constantly developed, and there were representatives of this institution in all regions where grains, meat, and butter were purchased for supplies. I was then already an official for special assignments to the Minister of Agriculture, and at the same time a legal council of the Osoboe Soveshchanie.

Many years later, at the time of emigration, I once met a former official of the Ministry of Agriculture. He had survived the first years of the Bolshevist regime in Petrograd and told me that many persons of high rank managed to leave the capital and either reached Western Europe through Finland or Poland, or joined the White government of Denikin and Wrangel. As regards Neverov, he told me that he heard that he was living in a hotel in Petrograd. Having no other means for existence, he had accepted the offer to serve as the hotel's doorman.

To this small gallery of portraits of Russian governors I will add one more. It was Mr. N. N. Ianushevich, a man of Polish origin, landowner and marshal of the nobility of one of the districts of Bessarabia. He was living in Kishinev and was a member of high society there.

I remember very well his dignified appearance. He was nice looking with a well trimmed beard. He had an attractive wife and young daughters and was always noticeable when he appeared in the theater or in the Dvorianskoe sobranie (Nobility Club), where various spectacles, concerts and balls were organized with free access for everybody. He was appointed governor of the Stavropol gubernia in the North Caucasus, and was said to have fulfilled his duties very successfully.

The Role of the Nobility

Guins: The appointment of a marshal of nobility, Ianushevich, to a

Guins: government position was not an exclusive case. On the contrary, such appointments were more usual than the appointments of generals. The nobility had various privileges in pre-revolutionary Russia, and at the time when there was still no representative body the representatives of the nobility met every three years in all provinces where the nobility was organized (in others there were not sufficient noblemen), and such meetings not infrequently presented their addresses to the Imperial government.

Sometimes the Emperors themselves used such meetings for their own appeal to the nobility as, for example, in Moscow before the emancipation of the serfdom. The nobility was considered as a social class which had to render the most active support to the throne. After the establishment of the State Duma this practice ceased.

However, the nobility did not lose its important role. The Dvorianskie Sobraniia (Nobility meetings) and in particular meetings of the marshals of the provincial nobility (one in every gubernia) and the marshals of the nobility in each district of the gubernia (province) not only represented the nobility in various solemn occasions and ceremonies but were sometimes used as advisers, expressing existing local trends and opinions and presenting them to the central government. They had access to the most influential circles in the capital. It is no wonder that many of the marshals of nobility were appointed governors, some became Ministers of Interior, and others were made members of the State Council, a very high position, or were made Senators.

But every one of the governors I have mentioned had his own individuality, unlike any other. And it is undoubtedly so with respect to all others. Each had another past, as far as his preceding service, education and experience were concerned. Some were former officials of the central government institutions; some had been in public service, some in civil, some in military service; some were old; some were only beginning their career; some were appointed because of their abilities, and others because of high favor. During the period between 1906 and 1917, appointments of governors were according to my impressions more selective, as it was in all governmental institutions.

Pierce: During the revolutionary years of 1905-1906 quite a few governors were killed by the revolutionaries, were they not?

Guins: As officials of the Ministry of Interior Affairs, the main Imperial organ of the police function and political repression, the governors were considered as the chiefs of the police, and the terrorists hated them, supposing that they were responsible for all repressions against the revolutionary activity. Not

Guins: rarely, however, the terroristic acts were pertetrated without any definite grounds against the victims, but simply to create confusion, or to terrorize people and government officials.

Pierce: Were the governors not responsible for the repressions?

Guins: They were, of course, but they were also the highest representatives of the central government in the provinces. They were often called unofficially "masters of the gubernias" (khoziaeva gubernii) in which they occupied their positions. And as I tried to explain earlier, they were mostly agents of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, and therefore responsible for keeping order and peace in its general sense.

Every other representative of the central government in the same province had to follow the instructions received not from the Minister of the Interior but from the ministry which he represented: one from the Ministry of Finance, another of the State Control, or of the Ministry of Education, Agriculture, etc. These could not ignore invitations of the governor or his demands for special kinds of assistance within the limits of their competence, although they had a right to do so.

As there was no full unity in the activity of the central government, neither could it exist in the provinces. Discords or dissonances could be noticed mostly in the relations between many of the governors and the zemstvos or municipalities where such public institutions existed.

On the eve of the revolution a half of the population of Russia, Siberia, and the western parts of European Russia had no "zemstv's" institutions. The provinces with a predominant population of non-Russian origin could not use officially their own language, or have representatives of their national interests. All that became one of the causes favorable for the revolutionary process, rather than for the anti-revolutionary movement.

The Ministry of Interior Affairs was not deprived of officials who understood the need for reforms, but the functions of the protection of the existing order, the fear of changes, the risk of innovations in the country with so many different nationalities, so many contrasting conditions and conflicting interests prevented bold initiative. It would be easier, it was thought, to innovate the existing order and social life in cooperation with the representative body, and such cooperation began to exist.

The Ministry of Internal Affairs considered the elected institutions to be hotbeds of sedition or nests of the opposi-

Guins: tion, while the ministries of Agriculture, Education, and maybe Trade and Industry cooperated with many of them if not with all and even invited the most active zemstvo men for government service.

The Department of Agriculture in our ministry was headed by a former zemstvo man, D. J. Slobodchikov. It was hardly a unique example. Not everywhere was there friendly and efficient cooperation between zemstvos and the governors. Conflicts on the platform of political differences could not be avoided if governors had prejudices against the organd of local self-determination, or if the zemstvos in certain provinces were too pretentiously disposed.

General Appraisal of Gubernia Administration

Pierce: What is your general appraisal of the gubernia administration?

Guins: According to my impression the administrative system in several provinces lagged behind the needs of the country with her developing economic life and rising level of civilization. There were already some plans for the broadening of the zemstvo institutions, the so-called small units of the zemstvos, "mel'kaia zemskaia edinitsa," a kind of foundation of the entire zemstvo structure.

It was necessary in the gubernia and district zemstvos and in the municipalities to enlarge the representation of businessmen and peasantry.

Administration of the Villages

Pierce: According to our plan we were to descend the administrative ladder. Could you now add something about the administration of the villages, or perhaps better, tell something about the administration of the majority of the Russian population, the peasantry?

Guins: That is one of the greatest problems. The most burning issue in Russia during the transitional period was the problem of the organization of peasant life. I have in mind land reform, which was the problem of emancipation of the individual peasant from the obshchina (commune). This problem was solved by Stolypin.

Guins: Probably if there had not been a revolution this reform would have continued, and in combination with resettlement in virgin lands, subsidies from the Peasant Bank, and the aid of agronomists, might have solved the economic problem of the villagers. From the economic point of view if this problem was not solved a good beginning had at least been made, with sound ideas.

But there was also the idea of organizing the life of the peasants, whether as a village or as a complex of individual farmers. Anyway, it was necessary to know how they themselves could solve their problems, as a social group bound by common interests.

The Volost

Guins: At the time of the emancipation the authority of the landlords was replaced by the institution of the volost, an administrative unit composed of elders of the villages. They would elect several persons as candidates, and from them the government would appoint one as volost elder (volostnoi starshina), and organize a volost court (volostnoi sud).

The word volost comes from "vlast'," indicating one who has power over the several villages. If there was a big village more than 2,000 peasants could form a particular volost, but such cases were unusual.

There was another plan not to form too big volosts, not more than seven or ten villages, for example, and on territory not more than thirty miles from the central point where the volost center was supposed to be organized. But in fact this was not so. Sometimes it was a very large territory, because it was sparsely populated; and sometimes there was only one village.

The volost organization of the period of the Great Reforms was supposed to be one of self-government, but as you know during the reaction which followed, especially during the reign of Alexander III, the new trend of bureaucratic supervision began to dominate, and the original plans were essentially betrayed.

The new trend was generally unpopular, but it was very strong, especially with the support of the Emperor and his entourage, who decided after the brutal murder of Alexander III

Guins: that the revolutionary movement must be suppressed and that it was necessary to hold the reins firmly in the hands of the government.

The Zemskii Nachal'nik

Guins: And then a new institution was created particularly for controlling the peasantry, namely the institution of the zemskii nachal'nik, the rural commandant or supervisor. A zemskii nachal'nik could punish even the volostnoi starshina, the elected representative of the volost. He could overrule the decision of the volost administration (volostnoe upravlenie), the collegial administration of the volost, and he could revise the decision of the volost court.

But at the beginning of the 20th century, in connection with the revolutionary movement of 1905 and the organization of the State Duma which, as I always emphasize, had a good influence in spite of its weakness, especially among the members of the State Duma there were people who knew the country and who knew the defects and the evils of the system. They wanted to improve the system as much as possible rather than change it radically.

The new trend was to transform the volost administration into the small zemstvo unit (mel'kaia zemskaia edinitsa). We had the gubernia zemstvo, the uezd zemstvo, but we had no zemstvo close to the peasantry which could serve as a school of welfare within the general zemstvo organization.

But how to organize it? There was the example of the Baltic regions. The level of civilization in the Baltic regions was higher than in central Russia and in spite of the domination of landlords, the descendants of German barons, there was a kind of self-government in the lower institutions of government. It was based not only on the institutions of the peasants, many of whom were illiterate, but on representation of all the people living in this region--businessmen, industrialists, landlords, industrial and commercial entrepreneurs, intellectuals, and zemstvo workers.

The latter, the so-called third element in the zemstvo, were not elected but were closely connected with the zemstvo government, because they were the instrument of self-government--the doctors (zemski vrach), medical personnel, teachers, statisticians, etc.

But when such a kind of project became known, there were

Guins: objections not only from the conservative groups but from the progressives. They expressed their fear that the landlords as intelligent people would dominate in the peasants' electoral bodies and, therefore, the peasant zemstvo would be in fact a docile organization directed by the landlords.

As a result, the bill met opposition in the State Duma, where it was decided that it would be better to exclude landlords from the small zemstvo. When finally the bill reached the last instance, the revolution of 1917 had changed the situation radically, and the Provisional government published it and prepared to put it into effect.

The small zemstvo was thus introduced according to a decree of the Provisional government. But this law was hardly applied in fact under wartime conditions, when the time of troubles for a second time began to reign in the Russian land.

Pierce: What was your own attitude toward the institution of the zemskie nachal'niki?

Guins: I don't think that it would be correct to characterize all of the zemskie nachal'niki as negative types. But in my contact with peasants I often noticed their ingenious approach to the problems and conditions of their life. They could appraise good suggestions and follow good examples. They did not need supervisors, but assistants.

Meanwhile, every zemskii nachal'nik was first of all a government employee, with a supervisory function. The Russian intelligentsia always criticized this institution as bureaucratic, and the Russian press drew the attention of the government to the abnormalities of such a kind of tutorship. Probably some zemskii nachal'niks were very favorable to the peasantry, and many were very close to the peasants. But this was, I believe, exceptional. They were first of all government employees who fulfilled their duties according to the instructions they received.

Because of the lack of responsibility and insufficient role of the volost elders (starshina), the volost self-government in its then existing institutions was not satisfactory up to the revolution. The elders were practical people, who knew the life of the country. They could have done much because they knew what the people wanted and needed, as for example roads, bridges, schools, etc., but they had no means for it.

Their budget was very limited, and they had to write too many papers to the zemskii nachal'nik and to the higher administrative officials to report about this and that. As a result

Guins: they spent most of the means at their disposal for salaries for the volost elders and other members of the administration and employees.

As for the volost court (volost sud), it was very limited in its activity and besides it had the right to apply customs. The customs were not too well known to Russian jurists. There was a saying: "Chto gorod to norov, chto v derevnia to obychai" (So many differences as many cities; so many customs as many villages).

Every city had its own way of life and every village its customs. And it they were customs which were studied and collected, often they were criticized as institutions of a very ancient period--obsolete--and it was said that modern times require organization of a legal system. For customs are always very conservative because their authority is of very ancient origin.

So the volost courts were also imperfect and limited in their activity and were supervised by the zemskii nachal'nik. The whole system of law needed reform. And I base this not only on my own opinion, for I know that when I was a student and had relatives who were members of the gubernia zemstvo and gubernskoe semskoe upravlenie, all people understood that it was necessary to modernize and to reform the courts and laws. Probably again several years of war even without the revolution could have accomplished that because these projects were already prepared and accepted by the Provisional government.

Status of Women

Guins: The status of women was similar to that in France. If you are familiar with the Code Napoleon, wives were dependent on their husbands. They could not be hired without permission of the husbands, and they could not sign promissory notes, nor vote. And it was the same in Russia. Women had no right to vote or to be elected, neither passive nor active voting rights. Ladies who owned property could keep the power of attorney only if they had no husband.

"Several changes and amendments to the laws in effect on personal and property rights of married women." So it was on the eve of World War I that this law passed the State Duma. It was not in the form desired by the Russian intelligentsia. Not all rights were unlimited, but many limitations were avoided.

Guins: For example, women could be hired without permission if they were living separately from husbands; in case of separation, living on their own means, they had the right to earn a living, to earn money to provide for a professional education, etc. At the same time if not earlier special institutions of higher learning were organized for women and it was permitted for girls to enroll in the universities. So in my time we had already not many but maybe ten or twenty young girls who were students in the university.

Finally all the survivals of the old time were abolished in 1917.

Inorodtsy (Aliens)

Guins: We should also mention inorodtsy (aliens). The inorodtsy were divided into three groups, some settled, others nomadic, as the Kirgiz population which had summer and winter residences. A third group was the wandering (brodiashchikh) peoples, not following any set pattern but changing several times during the year.

The inorodtsy were partly under supervision of the uezdnyi nachal'nik and pristava--military administration--but mostly had their own organization, with elected officials--aksakals. The Russian government did not wish to interfere. Originally all inorodtsy were under the supervision of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as if they were not true subjects of the Russian Empire, but later they were put under the Ministry of State Domains (Ministerstvo gosudarstvennykh imushchestv).

That central institution was organized, as I told you, under the reign of Nicholas I for organization of the population of the lands which were considered as belonging to the state (kazennye zemli). All land in Siberia was considered as such except for some small parts recognized as private property. The state had the right to dispose of its lands. It left them to the former population, but if some lands remained unused they were allotted for the resettlement of peasants and other persons from European Russia.

So it was supposed that inorodtsy had to be allotted certain parts of free land like peasants. That was a new step. The third step was to recognize the old system of organization under the supervision of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, like all other local organizations in the country. And therefore in

Guins: Siberia there were krest'ianskie nachal'niki. I described that system in the publication Aziatskaia Rossiia (Volume I) in my article, "Administrativnoe i sudebnoe ustroistvo Aziatskoi Rossii" (Administrative and Judicial Organization of Asiatic Russia).

George C. Guins in the U.S.A. - 1941.

(The following retrospective appraisal was prepared by Professor Guins in 1970 in response to a request by Dr. Pierce that he add such a conclusion to his earlier interviews)

V A GENERAL SURVEY

Pierce: Could you add to the preceding interviews, Professor, some data characterizing the years directly preceding the revolution? I mean a short review of what reforms were expected and not realized or rejected, and what complications the participation of Russia in World War I entailed. It would help one to understand the events of the revolution of 1917 and of the failure of the Civil War.

Guins: In my preceding interviews I tried to share with you my impressions concerning the transitional period of 1905 to 1917, reminiscing about what had been achieved. However, certainly not all had been done and not all was improved. I will try to answer your question, but I must emphasize that it will be difficult for me to separate in my answers various factual data from my own personal impressions and appraisals. Besides, I hardly will be able to distinguish between what I knew or what I thought at that distant period of my life, and what is the result of subsequent reflections, information and conclusions. Many years have passed, much new rich experience has been acquired, and my present appraisal of the events of the prerevolutionary time will, I believe, express my present understanding and my present convictions.

Pierce: This is understood. Your appraisal will be anyhow the appraisal of a contemporary observer and participant. It should not be difficult to distinguish in your narration between your personal impressions of that time and knowledge later acquired. And as regards appraisal of the past on the basis of your personal experience, it does not really matter exactly when that appraisal was formulated.

Guins: Well, I will try to indicate, when it is reasonable to do so, when and where I acquired certain experience on which I based corresponding conclusions. I believe you are right that even additional experience does not deprive me of a certain advantage

Guins: as a historian who has himself survived certain events or reforms and also their consequences. So let us agree first of all about the system of this last part of the interviews. Would it not be the best to start as we did earlier from the upper governmental institutions and gradually descend to the smallest provincial ones?

Pierce: Of course. That should be the best system, and, I believe, it will not exclude certain peculiarities of borderlands and the national problems connected with their population.

Guins: More or less, of course, for more of them arose after World War I and the revolution of 1917. So let me start.

The Third and Fourth Dumas

Guins: After the revolution of 1905 and due to that revolution the State Duma was established. It was the first and not perfect representative legislative organ established in the Russian Empire. Yet its existence, as I explained it earlier, was very important. However, after two changes in the electoral laws, the Third and Fourth Dumas did not represent satisfactorily the needs of the Great Empire as a whole and various groups of the population in particular, especially the working classes and the national groups. The time for which the Fourth Duma was elected expired during World War I. It was not a proper time for the new elections, and the term of its existence was prolonged. That circumstance diminished still more the last Duma's authority.

The Role of the Duma in February, 1917

Guins: The situation worsened still more in February, 1917. The session of the Duma was prorogued according to the Emperor's decree (ukaz). Many members left the capital, and at the time of the February (March) revolution many of its deputies were absent. The Duma, whose term had expired and whose plenum could not be immediately convoked after the Emperor's abdication, was thus deprived of the possibility of becoming the supreme organ of power, which could organize the temporary provisional government as it should be, although such an occasion was not anticipated by the Fundamental laws of the Empire. It was not

Guins: strange, though, that the Duma became at once the only center to which people could and did direct their expectations.

However, as already mentioned, the Duma could not reopen its session, and to the misfortune of Russia, the Soviet of the Workers and Soldiers Deputies immediately appeared in the premises of the Duma and from the first day of the Revolution began to participate in the reorganization of the supreme power in the former Russian Empire.

The Central Apparatus of the Government during the War

Pierce: But what became of the other government institutions?

Guins: The government was the reverse side of the medal. As soon as the Empire was without its sovereign, the supreme institutions -- the State Council and the Senate -- lost their authority, as they consisted mostly of appointed, not elected, people. Some members of the government were arrested, some ignored. But as a whole the government lost its power and ceased to exist simultaneously with the sovereign who appointed its head -- the Chairman of the Council of Ministers -- and its members.

I should say with a certain feeling of bitterness that it is a great displeasure for me to remember the Imperial Russian government of the last year before the February revolution. It was still not so bad in the Ministry of Agriculture where I had at that time the position of the Official for Special Assignments (Chinovnik dlia osobykh poruchenii of the VI class) attached to the Minister. Minister Krivoshein was retired at his own request. His first successor, the very gifted member of the State Council, A. Naumov, followed Krivoshein's example. Next, and the last pre-revolutionary successor, A. Rittikh, was a typical bureaucrat, but also an energetic and experienced worker. Our ministry was not the only institution which survived the February revolution as regards its personnel, while the main rulers did not.

But the general political atomosphere in the capital was unwholesome. During the war appointments of the members of the government, especially to the positions of the most influence -- Chairman of the Council of Ministers, Minister of Interior Affairs, and Minister of Justice -- were most ill-advised and unsuccessful. According to the gossip of that time which was spreading in the capital, the most important appointments took

Guins: place on the recommendation of the Empress, who was in turn advised by Grishka Rasputin, who abused the confidence of the Empress and in fact served the courtiers. As I remember I had all that in my oral memoirs in the form of interviews with Romanov (Boris Raymond).* Due to all the described circumstances, the political atmosphere in the capital was in engeral unhealthy. As a result, the government at once lost any significance.

Influences from Behind the Scene

Pierce: Since what time? It seems that at the time of Stolypin the government had been more influential.

Guins: It was for a while, but the courtiers, including certain maids of honour attached to the Empress, had always significance. I forget the names of these influential people. But I know that all publications of the Ministry of Agriculture which had a common interest were delivered to a special list of about thirty persons surrounding the Emperor and ladies who surrounded the Empress. As I remember, among them were always Voiekov, Commandant of the Palace, and the Maid of Honor, Mrs. Naryshkin. If anybody could find the list of persons to whom such complimentary copies of the official publications were delivered, it would indicate who composed the comarilla and were the most influential people behind the curtain.

Pierce: But the Emperor was at that time in Mogilev, the headquarters of the Russian active forces.

Guins: It is true, but that only increased the influence of the Empress, or, more exactly, of those who were beside her. Earlier ministers visited the Tsar every week, and sometimes several of them during the same days. But they could not get to Mogilev so often.

In the meantime, the Empress was writing to the Tsar almost every day.

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*George C. Guins, Professor and Government Official: Russia, China, and California, an interview by Boris Raymond, 1966, Regional Oral History Office, The Bancroft Library.

Capital and Local Administration (The Origin of Bureaucratism)

Pierce: Were there any essential changes in the organization of the local administration?

Guins: As you know, it is easier for me to describe the Russian administrative system from the point of view of the existing law rather than from my personal reminiscences. I had no personal experience or close contact with the local administrations. Yet I can characterize the most unfavorable conditions for the Russian provinces. They were first, the unbounded space of the empire, and the great distance between the capital and the majority of the provinces. Many gifted officials who occupied high positions in the central government institutions did not know the country. To know one or two provinces was not sufficient. On the other hand, special missions to the distant regions were considered as a special kind of reward, as they were paid in conformity with the distance and the rank. Officials of the high rank received much more than they spent; employees of small rank did not received such missions at all; and all others very seldom.

Personal Observations

Guins: As regards myself, I was more happy than many others. Let me remind you that I had a special mission as a temporary employee in Turkestan, and lived there for about three months. I have related that in my memoirs, Reminiscences. That mission let me cross a great part of European Russia and the spacious western part of the territory of Asiatic Russia. Later, as a legal adviser attached during World War I to the Special Committee on Food Supply, I visited the city of Perm and had a journey on the steamship along the rivers Kama and Volga. Later I had a mission to Samara (Kuibyshev) on the Volga River, and Revel (at present Tallin) in Estonia. I also had chances to visit Kiev, where the family of my father had its residence; Odessa, where the closest relatives of my mother were living; and Kishinev. I was living in Bessarabia (now U.S.S.R.) with the parents of my mother. I also crossed Siberia twice from Omsk to Vladivostok.

On the basis of my observations and impressions, I should say that from my point of view the centralization of power in Petrograd deprived the Russian administrative system of necessary flexibility. Finland was subject to unnecessary limitations by

Guins: the central government. The population, culture, and history of the Baltic provinces indicated their right to cultural automony, of which they were deprived. In Bessarabia, the majority of its peasantry of Moldavian origin did not know the Russian language, and it was obvious that there were not sufficient schools for the Russification of the Moldavians, that could help capable Moldavian youth not only to improve conditions of their life, but also to strengthen the ties of Bessarabia, incorporated since 1812, with the rest of Russia.

The "Customary" Institutions of the Natives

Guins: In the several months of my life in Turkestan I saw how defective, and I should say even vicious, was the system of administration based on the obsolete customary native interrelations. The rich native people dominated there. They had close connections with the Russian representatives of the military administration, which was introduced in Turkestan after its incorporation during the second half of the 19th Century. The poor people did not know what the word "law" meant. They had no such word in their vocabulary, neither had they any idea about "rights." They knew only the words, "May I?" or, "Can I?" or, "I may not," or, "I cannot." That means that they did not dare to demand; they should obey and ask permission of the Russian administration as well as the influential people of their same origin, their fellow countrymen; while the latter could make demands of and exploit those who were dependent and had no connections with the Russian administration.

The same pattern characterized the interrelations of the Kirgiz (Kazakhs) in the Western Steppe region of Asiatic Russia. The so-called "tribal government system" introduced by Speransky when he was Governor-general of Siberia was quite expedient at that time, as it was better to support the existent customary system than to break it and replace it with the Russian heterogeneous administration, which would treat nomadic people as savages.

The Siberian Problem

Guins: I wish to add some words about Siberia, which I knew better because, being an official of the department of the transplantation

Guins: of Russian peasants from European Russia to Siberia, I also studied the foreign systems of colonization. I prepared then several articles on the problems of colonization which were published in the Symposiums in "Voprosy kolonizatsii" (Problems of Colonization), published in St. Petersburg, 1912 to 1913.

In Siberia there existed since the 19th Century the so-called "regional movement" (oblastnichestvo). I devoted several pages to that movement in my book Siberia, Allies and Kolchak, Volume II. During the first two centuries after the incorporation of Siberia and the Far East into Muskovy and later the Russian Empire, this spacious territory was exploited as a colony, a source of economic resources -- mostly precious furs and later gold -- and as a place for banishment of politically suspect persons and convicts condemned to hard labor.

In the second half of the 19th Century there were already big cities in Siberia and various enterprises of large scale. Among the inhabitants of the large cities -- Tomsk, Irkutsh, Blagoverhchensk -- there were intellectuals of various groups, some of them former exiles or their offspring. Among these people there were not a few "Siberian patriots" who loved Siberia, understood its great economic potential and its needs, and wanted therefore to have a better administration there. Such an administration, being elected and organized by the local population, would do more and better than the government employees appointed to Siberia to get larger salaries and more advantages of a material character than they could get in European Russia. These employees later returned home, to that part of European Russia where they were born and had relatives and friends. The "Oblastniki," as local people, had serious reasons for trying to get self-determination.

The "Regionalism"

Pierce: Could such self-determination become separatism?

Guins: I believe that the government did not approve of oblastnichestvo, mostly because it suspected that the "oblastniki" were politically unreliable, fiery offspring of the exiled persons, or their adherents. Oblastnichestvo had in fact nothing in common with any of the political ideologies as it was originally set forth by Yadrintsev, Potanin and their followers. It could, however, be used by the leftists, because the Siberian

Guins: intelligentsia consisted mostly of adherents of various socialist parties. But they were not separatists. It could not be a serious separatist movement; Siberia needed capital, various investments for its economic development. It needed also a considerable increase in the population for a labor supply and an organization for administration and cultural needs. Siberia was not sufficiently explored. It needed scientists and professors for the research and educative work. And finally, it had to be well-protected to secure independence, if such an independence could exist at all. A separatist movement could not exist under such conditions.

Pierce: Are there exact data about the leftists among the Siberian intellectuals?

Guins: I never heard about exact data, but I know that among the deputies elected in Siberia to the State Duma during the period of 1906 to 1914, and to the "Oblastnaia Duma" (the Regional Assembly) in 1917, there were mostly socialists.

It was almost the same when after the February revolution the first zemstvos and municipalities were elected in several regions and cities as organs of self-determination. Even the K.D. ("Cadets" or Constitutional Democrats) Party had but single deputies, not to mention the members of the conservative parties, if such existed in Siberia at all.

"Self-determination" under Suspicion

Pierce: Was this the reason for which the pre-revolutionary government postponed the introduction of zemstvos and municipal institutions in Siberia and some other parts of Russia?

Guins: Inasmuch as you connect Siberia with the other borderlands, it was not only because of the political unreliability of potential candidates, but also in order to restrict nationalist movements. The events of the post-revolutionary period, I find, indicated that the policy of containment proved to be erroneous. Russia lagged behind in its political development and administrative system.

Rapprochement Rejected

Pierce: What kind of regime should have been established, Professor, in your opinion?

Guins: Well, up to the present I have shared with you my reminiscences and simultaneously added my critical appraisal of some institutions and orders of the pre-revolutionary period. Your question now I can answer only on the basis of both my former and recently formed conclusions. Referring to my political sympathies contemporary to the period between the two revolutions, I should say that I never was a socialist. But I was very disappointed by the dissolving of the First Duma. The government met it with an open unfriendliness. The Second Duma had less Constitutional Democrats but more Socialists. It too was dissolved. At last the Third Duma, elected again according to the newly revised electoral law, proved to be sufficiently loyal from the point of view of the government. Stolypin offered to several members of the Duma the chance to join the government. It was a bold and, I believe, very wise step. However, his offer was rejected. From my point of view (I want to emphasize that it is my present point of view) the refusal of Miliukov was a mistake. I find that N. Maklakov was right in his polemic on Miliukov. Members of the Duma, if they had become members of the government, could have opened the new era of the rapprochement of the central government with the liberal political parties, and of the rapprochement of the deputies of the people with the Emperor and the people who surrounded him. Perhaps many unsuccessful appointments later could have been prevented.

There was one more wise step in the same direction. Krivoshein, the Minister of Agriculture who used to be very careful in his political activity, offered to the Emperor his project to organize the Government of the National Defense (Pravitelstvo Natsional'noi Oborony). That was at the time of World War I, approximately in 1915. The project was not approved, and Krivoshein retired. His retirement was understood as a sign of his disappointment, but we did not know exactly what was its real cause. I must confess that the real cause became known to me only much later during my visit with my former chiefs in Paris in 1929. Then I was told about Krivoshein's project.

Governmental Deficiencies

Guins: Russia's government lagged behind her cultural development and the political consciousness of her intelligentsia. The legislative body, the State Duma, as well as the zemstvos, needed reorganization, better representation of the people, and closer cooperation of the central government with the population. The national problems, in particular the problems

Guins: of the borderlands in general, also demanded revision of the system of the government. Siberia remained without the cadres of people prepared for self-determination because nobody there could get necessary experience. In the meantime it was not difficult to prepare Siberia for that purpose as, in connection with colonization, the Department of Resettlement organized various kinds of research in Siberia. There were in St. Petersburg more data concerning these areas than, maybe, about many other parts of the Empire. On the eve of World War I there was already a chance to develop the activity of the Department of Resettlement, transforming it into the Department of Colonization. It seems to me that I have mentioned my articles under the title "Resettlement and Colonization" written on the basis of setting forth the general ideas and plans of colonization. The latter was not limited by the frames of the resettlement of peasants, but included various plans of economic and cultural development. In Stolypin's and Krivoshein's report to the Tsar about their mission to Siberia, the analogous plans were included. But the war stopped them.

Pierce: Thank you, Professor. At present according to our original plan we have to descend from the summit to the plains, from the central government to the people, to the masses, to the peasants and workers. Isn't that so?

Guins: I wish I did not have to reject such a topic. But, as you understand, I was closer to the center and to the government activity than to the life of the masses of the people. Speaking in particular about government activity in the field of conditions of life of peasants and workers, I have to repeat that the Ministry of Agriculture did everything that was possible for reaching success. But it was easier to reorganize some central institutions than to accomplish such reforms as the redistribution of land or abolition of the village commune. It could have been easier to organize the village zemstvos (melkaia zemskaia edinitsa). Such a project existed, but only the Provisional government, after the February revolution, enforced it as law. It was possible also to develop peasants' cooperatives. Those cooperatives of a large scale, which existed in Siberia, were working very successfully. They became prosperous and improved the conditions of the Siberian peasantry. A project of law on cooperation was also ready, and it was also the Provisional government which promulgated it as its edict.

I want to add also that the legislation of pre-revolutionary Russia well protected the life and health of the industrial workers, especially women workers and non-adult workers. But there was no possibility for workers to organize unions, as I

Guins: remember. There was constantly lack of confidence as regards self-determination and fear of self-initiated activity of various groups of the population. A prejudice against the organization, self-determination, and self-activity, which could not be sufficiently controlled by the government, was rooted partly in the peculiarity of the multinational empire and its unbounded space. However, such a prejudice had to be overcome. The Russian administrative system had to be reorganized and to become more flexible than it was.

The Main Factor of the Revolution

Pierce: Was this the main cause of the revolution?

Guins: I do not think that it was the main one. Not the main cause, but the main factor, was the consequences of the prolonged war and the defects of the organization of the administrative system during the war. The Emperor left Petrograd contrary to the advice of his ministers. His presence in the headquarters strengthened the authority of the military administration and decreased the influence of the civil government. The Railway transport, for example, fulfilled the orders from the headquarters of the army and neglected the needs of the cities. Drafting surpassed the needs of the armies. Both capitals, Petrograd and Moscow, were over-crowded with the drafted adult people, while in the villages there remained as workers only women and boys.

In the meantime, the Rasputin story in various perverted forms undermined the prestige of the sovereign and, unfortunately, the Emperor. And last but not least Nicholas II himself abdicated too hastily without securing the necessary succession. I am sure that the Russian government could still have been reorganized and could have survived in a reorganized form, but events were developing with catastropic speed.

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