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THE POLITICS OF FRUSTRATION: THE GOVERNOR-GENERALSHIP OF N. I. BOBRIKOV IN FINLAND, 1898-1904*

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In August 1898 Nicholas II appointed N. I. Bobrikov Governor-General of Finland. Until that appointment Bobrikov's career had attracted little attention outside a limited circle within the Russian government. Bobrikov's six-year administration of Finland, however, earned him notoriety. In this essay I shall examine his Governor-Generalship from the Russian perspective. The military and economic commitments of the Russian government in the 1890's motivated the change in Finnish policy at that time. Yet opposition in the Russian government did as much to undermine that policy as did the protests of the Finns. Finally, established practices within the Russian administrative tradition explain Bobrikov's methods of implementing policy in Finland.

Bobrikov's background was entirely military.[1] He was educated in the First Cadet Corps and the Nikolai Academy of the General Staff. He received his commission in 1858. Staff appointments which entailed more prestige than responsibility characterized Bobrikov's career. He frequently assisted a member of the Imperial family in an administrative capacity. In 1876 Bobrikov was appointed to serve one of the Grand Dukes at the Main Command of the Dunai Army. During the Russo-Turkish War, Bobrikov, now a General, commanded a Guard Corps but also numbered in the suite of the Emperor. His longest and most successful assignment, however, beginning in 1884, was as the Chief of Staff for the Grand Duke Vladimir Alexandrovich.

The Grand Duke, a younger brother of Alexander III, commanded the Guards Regiments and the St. Petersburg Military District.[2] He did not enjoy a good

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reputation. General A. A. Kireev, who moved in court circles, described him as "an idler and egotist who shoved everything into a drawer."[3] Even the Grand Duke's close friend, the powerful bureaucrat A. A. Polovtsev, admitted that Vladimir was "inclined to laziness, dissipation, and gluttony."[4]

That the Grand Duke turned almost all responsibility for the St. Petersburg Military District over to his Chief of Staff, General Bobrikov,[5] confirmed such descriptions. Polovtsev complained to the Tsar that the State Council could barely conduct business with the Grand Duke Vladimir because it could not obtain "a categorical and independent answer from him . . . a certain person [Bobrikov] sitting behind him always provides the answer."[6]

Polovtsev had a particular aversion to Bobrikov. As a member of the State Council's Committe of Finance,[7] Polovtsev was partly responsible for disbursing the money from French loans. Since 1887 French capital had sought investment in Russia's first efforts at large-scale industrialization.[8] Suspicious about the timing of the conversions of some of the loans, Polovtsev inquired about the matter from P. N. Nicolaev, an assistant to I. A. Vyshnegradskii, the Minister of Finance. Nicolaev betrayed his superior and revealed Bobrikov's complicity. He explained that part of the money was in fact used to repay Russian speculators who formed syndicates to profit from well-timed conversions of the loans. Nicolaev confided that

> General Bobrikov . . . [helped form] a syndicate in which he was given a part, but at the last moment Vyshnegradskii took the lion's share for himself and deprived the other participants of their advantage . . . [9]

Polovtsev attempted to persuade the Grand Duke of Bobrikov's incompetence but to no avail.[10] Vladimir appreciated Bobrikov's ability "to ingratiate himself with everyone."[11] Such talent expedited work within a bureaucracy and saved the Grand Duke from the frequent exercise of his authority.

Until 1898 Bobrikov pursued a successful career largely as a result of his ability to relieve members of the Imperial family from the chores of military administration. Because he had little combat experience, "the parade ground tradition flourished" under Bobrikov's command.[12] Bobrikov's association with the Grand Duke Vladimir Alexandrovich did little to mitigate his authoritarian tendencies. Due to the Grand Duke's aversion to responsibility, Bobrikov assumed the duties of his superior and thus acquired an exaggerated sense of importance. He also used his position to line his own pocket. Yet Russia's growing dependence on France at the end of the nineteenth century gave Bobrikov more than financial opportunity. The two countries initiated military collaboration at the same time.[13] French insistence that Russia modernize her defense capabilities gave those with a military background, like Bobrikov, still more opportunities.

II

Already in 1894 the Russian government had responded to French pressure by attempting to modernize military communications throughout Finland. In a secret dispatch of 27 December 1894, the British Vice-Consul in Helsinki, Charles Cooke, informed his superiors:

> Last spring . . . all the fortified places in Finland were to be in telephone communication with each other . . . [but] at the last moment . . . the plan had been deferred for at least another year.[14]

Cooke also explained that the authorities had begun to increase the fortifications around Helsinki:

> In company with an officer of the Intelligence Department, I made a very successful reconnaissance about the end of August this year of a new fortification, which has been erected on the south side of Drumsö Island and next summer it is my intention to sail out to Melkö Island and see what has been done there.[15]

Within four years the Russian government prepared to initiate changes which would affect all Finland. In the summer of 1898, the government drew up a new Military Service Law for the Grand Duchy. At the same time Nicholas II made three major appointments that underscored the Russian government's concern about the French alliance and Russia's image as a military power. All three appointments indicated the shift in official policy toward Finland.

In January 1898 the Tsar had named A. N. Kuropatkin Acting Minister of War.[16] Kuropatkin's service record was impressive. He had distinguished himself in most of the major campaigns of the 1870's both in Central Asia and the Balkans.[17] His appointment might also have impressed the French for another reason. Early in the same decade, Kuropatkin had spent a year with French forces in Algeria.[18] In July 1898, while Kuropatkin worked on the Military Service Law for Finland, the Tsar elevated him to Minister of War.[19]

In August followed two other appointments that had a direct bearing on the administration of Finland. Early that month Nicholas appointed V. K. Pleve Minister State Secretary for Finland. The holder of that office, often a Finnish Swede, was responsible for managing the affairs of the Grand Duchy within the St. Petersburg bureaucracy. Pleve was Russian. Trained in the law, he had spent a number of years as a procurator in regional courts. In the 1880's he had directed the Department of State Police and then had become an Assistant to the Minister of Interior.[20] Pleve's appointment indicated a new firmness in the administration of Finland. Bobrikov's appointment a week later emphasized what planning for the new Military Service Law had already revealed.

As Chief of Staff for the Commander of the St. Petersburg Military District for the past fourteen years, Bobrikov presumably knew more than anyone else about the defense of the northwest region of the Empire. His appointment could only mean that Finland had acquired a new status in Russian strategic planning.

Strategic considerations with regard to Finland in fact dominated the writings of Bobrikov's assistant, Lieutenant-General M. M. Borodkin. Throughout his career Borodkin had served repeatedly with Bobrikov.[21] The two had a close working relationship.[22] Moreover, it may well have been Borodkin who persuaded Bobrikov to accept the Finnish Governor-Generalship, his first appointment outside the military hierarchy. The following is typical of Borodkin's assessment of the Finnish situation:

> It is enough to imagine Finland independent or belonging to some other state to be convinced how difficult would be the military situation of the Empire. The capital would then be . . . [approximately 21 miles] from the border and only a few hours from the mooring of a foreign fleet.[23]

The thought of "Finland independent" plagued Borodkin because the region already enjoyed a special status. Of all the areas of the Empire administered by a Governor-General, Finland alone retained some local control. The Finnish Diet endowed the region with considerable legislative autonomy. Moreover, each sovereign since Finland entered the Empire in 1809 had, upon ascending the throne, confirmed other rights and privileges that further enhanced the region's autonomy.[24] Yet those privileges were in direct conflict with the office of Governor-General as it had been defined within the Russian administration.

Catherine II established the position in 1775 to supervise the numerous local institutions she initiated in the same year.[25] In practice the Governor-General controlled not just one province but a whole region.

With the establishment of the Ministries in 1802, the Governors-General, most of them local satraps, came into direct conflict with administrators of equal if not greater power.[26] Alexander I tried unsuccessfully to arrange a compromise between the two types of authority.[27] Early in the reign of Nicholas I, the government simply relegated the Governor-Generalships to the border regions of the Empire.[28] In 1853 Nicholas I once again examined their status. He did not restore their competence to the Empire as a whole. He did, however, clarify the extent of their authority. The Governor-General was to be "the supreme power" in the region he controlled and "invested with the full trust of the Emperor."[29] Catherine II had regarded her Governors-General as a form of local control. Nicholas I made them into an external political power with immense authority.

The Russian government subsequently made good use of the position. It was an effective form of administering the newly acquired Central Asian hinterland. Particularly troublesome regions of the Empire also had a Governor-General. In Poland the Governor-General frequently exercised his authority.

If Bobrikov were to pursue a policy of military expediency in Finland, he would have to hold power as a Governor-General in the traditional sense. The connection was not lost on Bobrikov. Shortly after his appointment he sat next to Count Witte, the Minister of Finance, at a banquet in honor of the King of Romania. Witte asked Bobrikov if he were satisfied with his new appointment.

Bobrikov replied by expressing dissatisfaction with the Finnish situation. He compared himself to M. N. Muraviev, the notorious "Hangman of Vilna," who had brutally suppressed the Polish uprising of 1863. Witte answered that he could not agree with such a comparison: "Muraviev was appointed to put down an uprising, but you evidently have been appointed to create one."[30]

Under the Grand Duke Vladimir Alexandrovich, Bobrikov had become almost a Grand Duke himself. Moreover, as a Governor-General, he could draw on a long tradition of near abitrary power. His whole military career, particularly his most recent experience, disposed him to seek guidance in the traditional role of the Governor-General: Russian master of an indigenous non-Russian population.

III

In January 1899 Bobrikov inaugurated his administration by reading the new Military Service Law to the Finnish Diet. Still adhering to established practice, the Tsar requested that the Diet discuss the proposed law and return an opinion. What the Diet heard amounted to significant changes in Finland's military obligation. The new law increased military recruitment so that an additional 5,000 men would be added to Russian regiments stationed in the St. Petersburg area. Finnish troops could be posted to other parts of the Empire and Russian troops under Russian officers placed in Finnish units. The length of service was increased, and Finland was to contribute a large sum annually for general military expenditures.

According to John Michell, the British Consul-General in St. Petersburg, Kuropatkin in consultation with a commission composed of the Headquarter Staff of the Russian army drew up the new Military Service Law.[31] The Pobedonostsev Commission, consisting of Pobedonostsev, Bobrikov, Kuropatkin, and the Minister of Foreign Affairs, M. N. Muraviev, reviewed the work of the military commission. They left its proposals intact.[32]

The Tsar's high regard for Bobrikov had insured his approval of those deliberations. In March 1899 Nicholas wrote Bobrikov of the support which he could always expect. The communication was also noteworthy for the Tsar's admission of uncertainty and dependence:

> If I did not have you in Finland, I could barely cope with the current complicated affairs. . . . Remember that in me you will always find full support and defense. . . . A task so successfully begun promises a successful continuation.[33]

The "complicated affairs" to which Nicholas referred where in fact of his own making. The same month in which Bobrikov read the new Service Law to the Finns, the Tsar had called for a general European disarmament conference to meet at the Hague in May 1899. The Hague Conference was really the unwieldy conclusion of a more modest and carefully calculated proposal of Kuropatkin.

The Minister of War had originally proposed that Austria and Russia meet to conclude an agreement forbidding the introduction of certain types of weapon-

ry.[34] The Russians had recently learned that the Austrians had developed a new rapid-firing gun. The Russian general staff hoped to forestall introduction of the weapon while not revealing their consternation or specific information.[35] In March 1898 the Tsar approved Kuropatkin's plan to meet with the Austrians. However, M. N. Muraviev, the Foreign Minister, saw another use for the conference. He suggested that Kuropatkin's limited proposal be expanded into a call for a general European disarmament conference. According to Kuropatkin, Muraviev intended that "just now, when we are taking decisive steps in the Far East, it will be very important to give factual proof of our peaceful intentions in Europe."[36]

Russian policy now appeared enmeshed in contradiction. In the same month that the Governor-General of Finland had demanded an extended military obligation from the Finns, the Tsar had issued a call for a disarmament conference. To resolve the dilemma, in February 1899, Bobrikov once again appeared before the Finnish Diet. On this occasion he announced the so-called February Manifesto, which declared that matters affecting the whole Empire would not be within the competency of the Finnish legislature. Any military issue was assumed to affect the whole Empire. If the impending peace conference took decisive measures, the new Military Service Law would have to be enacted hastily before the Finnish Diet could protest. In effect, the Russian government intended to bypass the Diet.

The Manifesto naturally alarmed the Finns and in Europe served to belie the Tsar's apparent good intentions in calling the Hague Conference. In a letter to Bobrikov of 26 March 1899, Nicholas explained the steps he was taking to smooth the now troubled waters: "I have instructed the Minister of War and Pleve . . . to occupy themselves with compiling communications for our own and the foreign press. . . . I hope that this will put an end to the continuing agitation."[37]

Although the Hague Peace Conference proved a failure (no restrictions were imposed on European armaments), Nicholas acquired the reputation of a peacemaker. At the same time the threat to Finnish policy that the conference had posed disappeared in windy speeches and meaningless platitudes. No longer threatened, the Finnish policy lost the urgency it had possessed in the first three months of 1899. The government even allowed the Diet to proceed with its deliberations. Despite his avowal of support, Nicholas had qualified his commitment. He preferred his new image to the "full support" he had once promised Bobrikov.

Not until the spring of 1901 did the Tsar present the new Military Service Law to the State Council. The law faced significant opposition. The Finns seized the initiative and attempted to persuade high-ranking Russian officials that Bobrikov's policy was a threat to social stability in the Grand Duchy. According to Borodkin, "Finnish activitists . . . penetrated everywhere to see influential people and to recruit supporters."[38]

Bobrikov had in fact done much to provoke unrest in Finland in the pre-

ceding two years. He had waged a bitter campaign against the Swedish-language press which had taken an uncompromising position against the new Service Law.[39] He had insisted on the use of Russian within the largely Swedish-speaking administration. He had also attempted to replace Finnish civil servants with Russians. The more reasonable among the Tsar's advisors were well aware of the dangers that unrest posed. Some Finnish dissidents had already established ties with the Russian revolutionary movement.[40] Under the circumstances certain members of the government feared open revolt in Finland. Moreover, personal animosity towards Bobrikov stimulated opposition to the Finnish policy.

According to Charles Scott, the British Ambassador, the Grand Duke Vladimir Alexandrovich took

> a leading part with the majority of the Council in opposing and criticising, on military grounds, the change in the present system of military service in Finland.[41]

The Grand Duke's position was surprising given the close relationship he and Bobrikov had enjoyed for so long. All the more striking was the fact that he alone of the members of the Imperial family on the State Council voted against Bobrikov.[42] Possibly the Grand Duke resented Bobrikov's resignation as his Chief of Staff. Whatever the cause, animosity towards Bobrikov motivated Vladimir. Not given to sentimentality, he could have little sympathy for the Finns. It was in fact the Grand Duke Vladimir who had insisted that the Tsar attend a ball in his honor on the same day that hundreds were accidentally trampled in coronation festivities. Vladimir warned his nephew that his absence would make him seem "sentimental," a trait unbecoming to a Tsar.[43]

In an attempt to hide the fact that Bobrikov's former patron opposed him, Borodkin named Witte as the primary spokesman of the opposition.[44] The Minister of France compared the unrest in Finland to previous situations in Poland. He informed the State Council that the uprising of 1831 had cost 185 million rubles and the one in 1863 had cost 150 million. "Having these facts before our eyes, the Minister of Finance finds it difficult to support the view that [the current situation in] Finland is profitable for the account of Russia."[45] Borodkin neglected to mention that the existence of a Polish army had made the 1831 uprising especially bloody. Nor did he indicate that a selective military levy had precipitated the second Polish insurrection in January 1863.

Whoever led the opposition, it proved effective. The majority of the State Council rejected the new Military Service Law.[46] The Tsar, however, still wavered. He appointed a small committee, which represented both groups within the State Council, to propose a compromise.[47] Bobrikov, Kuropatkin, Pleve, and the Chairman of the State Council, the Grand Duke Michael Nicholaievich, confronted the Minister of Interior, D. S. Sipiagin, and the recently appointed Minister of Education, P. S. Vannovskii.

Despite the obvious division, Borodkin maintained the group unanimously recommended that there be no separate Finnish armed force.[48] By the Military

Service Law which Nicholas proclaimed on 30 June/12 July 1901, the Finnish army "was doomed to gradual extinction."[49] Only one battalion of Guards and one regiment of Dragoons were to remain. The Tsar chose to maintain those units for nostalgic reasons. The Guards had always been stationed in St. Petersburg, and his father had established the Finnish Dragoons.[50]

Borodkin insisted that Bobrikov was jubilant at the decision. The Governor-General allegedly informed one of his assistants: "The people will be blessed, the country enriched, and the rebels indignant."[51] The new Military Service Law was not, however, consistent with the proposals Bobrikov had supported so ardently since 1898. Central to his policy was the conviction that Finland's military contribution to the Empire be increased and that more Finns serve for longer periods than had ever been the case before.

Charles Cooke, the British Vice-Consul in Helsinki, conveyed to his government the reality of the Governor-General's frustration. Cooke wrote the Foreign Office of an interview with Bobrikov at this time. He "very soon got on his favorite topic, i.e., Finland and its politics, in which H. E. showed very bitter feelings against the Grand Duchy and declared his intention to go on with the 'reforms' of the same."[52] Cooke made clear that Bobrikov was determined "to go on with" a policy which had in fact been severely undermined.

IV

In October 1901 Bobrikov proceeded to implement the new Military Service Law by disbanding Finnish rifle battalions and transferring Finnish military facilities to the control of Russian personnel. Of the two remaining military units, the Finnish regiment of Dragoons was not longlived. With the resignation of Colonel Schauman, Finland's highest ranking officer, and his immediate subordinates, the Finnish Dragoons were reconstituted the 55th Regiment of Russian Dragoons. The Finnish officers had refused to take a new military oath which the Governor-General attempted to administer. One year later the British Ambassador could report that "the Russian Government, besides appropriating the Finnish barracks, etc., to the value of nearly £1,000,000 sterling, has recently laid hands on the Finnish Military Funds, amounting to about £100,000."[53]

In April 1902 the first levy under the new Service Law was scheduled to take place. Bobrikov adhered to the letter but not the spirit of the new law. Although only 190 men would actually be conscripted, he insisted that large numbers present themselves for examination. He thereby indicated that the armed forces Finland might provide were far greater than the Service Law allowed. At the same time he proved his ability to recruit such large numbers.

Bobrikov took careful precautions in advance of the levy. Charles Cooke reported:

> Among other things that have attracted my attention lately is the appointment of ten Russian officers with the rank of Captain, to the office of District Inspector, through the various towns of the Grand Duchy, evidently with instructions as to the coming conscription.[54]

Yet shortly before the levy took place, Bobrikov suffered a major reverse. His long-simmering animosity toward Pleve broke into open rivalry.

Although Borodkin denied the existence of disagreement between the two officials, he acknowledged that conflict was inherent in their respective offices. Bobrikov was responsible for the actual administration of Finland, while Pleve as Minister State Secretary reported directly to the Sovereign concerning Finnish affairs. Pleve was thus able to influence the Tsar's opinions and to participate in policy decisions at the highest level. Borodkin resentfully described Pleve's advantage:

> according to the Table of Ranks, the Minister State Secretary is lower than the Governor-General; yet, the Minister's role as reporter to the Sovereign places him in a position to control the Governor-General.[55]

The conflict was built-in at the time Speranskii created the State-Secretariat. He made it responsible for assessing and analyzing all reports from the Finnish authorities. Communications from the Emperor to Finland were to receive their final form in the State Secretariat.[56] The institution impinged on the prerogatives of the Governor-General, but then Speranskii was among those in the government of Alexander I who wanted to demote the Governors-General in favor of the new Ministries.[57]

At least up to 1901 Bobrikov and Pleve were able to maintain cordial relations. Bobrikov deferred to Pleve out of respect for his legal training and long experience in the civilian bureaucracy. The Governor-General wrote Pleve, "I thank God that I have found in you an experienced leader."[58] Yet in the same letter Bobrikov hinted at the tension which was also present: "of course the enemies of Russia would be happy at the appearance of any . . . discord in our views."[59] Bobrikov feared Pleve's experience and the power inherent in his position. At first that fear manifested itself as deference. But deference gave way to resentment. Pleve was unwilling to offer the tutelage which Borodkin provided.

With regard to Finnish policy, Bobrikov conflicted with Pleve over two major issues: Pleve's treatment of the University of Helsinki and his attitude toward the personnel within the State Secretariat. In each instance Pleve possessed more flexibility than Bobrikov and showed greater willingness to compromise. In effect, Pleve conveyed himself as a conciliator in opposition to Bobrikov's pursuit of a consistently harsh policy.

In the fall of 1900, Pleve assumed the Chancellorship of Helsinki University. Speranskii, whose liberal policies had eased Finland into the administrative structure of the Empire, had been the only other Russian to hold the post. After him leading Finnish intellectuals had assumed the position. To Bobrikov's frustration, Pleve did little to circumscribe the long-standing autonomy of the university, not even when that independence interfered "in the political life of the region."[60] Bobrikov's repeated harassment of the university was in part motivated by his resentment of the students who absented themselves from the military levies, but also by his vexation with Pleve's administration of the institution. Borodkin diplomatically described the conflict. Because Pleve "was bur-

dened by other responsibilities, there repeatedly arose the question of his replacement [as Chancellor]."[61]

Pleve gave the Governor-General further vexation by defending the Svecomans or Swedish-speaking minority of Finland. In the course of the century, many Svecomans had sought a position in the St. Petersburg bureaucracy. As might be expected, they predominated in the Finnish State Secretariat. Pleve himself admitted to Bobrikov the presence there of "harmful mice."[62] He told Bobrikov that he was ill-informed about opposition in Finland "since my Swedes are inclined to hide from me the most malicious articles."[63]

Because Bobrikov was willing to appoint the Fennomans or Finnish-speaking Finns to administrative positions (the Svecomans had traditionally dominated the economic and administrative life of the region), Pleve had a ready-made constituency. He might champion the cause of the Svecomans whose advice was already close at hand. He suggested that "perhaps it would be timely to draw the Swedish party to the government."[64] Pleve also proposed that the Consultative Committee within the State Secretariat which had existed up to 1891 be reconstituted. It was understood that the Svecomans would predominate.[65]

The conflict between Bobrikov and Pleve intensified when the Minister of Interior, D. S. Sipiagin, was assassinated on 2 April 1902, shortly before Bobrikov's first military levy. According to Polovtsev, the Tsar confided to the Grand Duke Vladimir Alexandrovich that he hesitated between Bobrikov or Pleve as Sipiagin's replacement.[66] To Polovtsev there was no choice. He himself was much like Pleve: cultured and refined, a man of experience in the highest levels of the bureaucracy. In his diary Polovtsev dismissed Bobrikov with the trenchant description: "savage, dirty, in all respects a non-commissioned officer."[67]

P. P. Gesse, the head of the secret police (part of the Ministry of Interior), preferred Bobrikov. Polovtsev believed that Gesse really wanted someone whom he could dominate as he had I. L. Goremykin, Sipiagin's predecessor.[68] Because Pleve had once held the equivalent of Gesse's position as well as several other important posts within the Ministry of Interior, it was unlikely that he would be dependent on his subordinates. Like Polovtsev, the Tsar preferred Pleve's experience. On 5 April Pleve's appointment was announced.

Rumors abounded surrounding that appointment. Even now it is difficult to disentangle fact from fiction. On the eve of Pleve's appointment, Gesse maintained that Bobrikov would be his superior.[69] Gesse, however, made the wish the deed. A week later rumor had it that the Tsar had actually informed Pleve of his appointment on 2 April. At that meeting he told the State Secretary to recall Bobrikov from Helsinki so that he, Nicholas, might express his displeasure with Bobrikov's conduct.[70] More likely the Tsar did hesitate between Bobrikov and Pleve. The rumor of Bobrikov's reprimand circulated after Pleve's appointment had been made. It confirmed Pleve's victory once the position was his. In one respect, however, the rumor was accurate. It made clear that Bobrikov and Pleve were at odds over Finnish policy.

Shortly after Pleve's appointment, Bobrikov returned to Finland to oversee

the first levy under the new Service Law. The conscription attempt was a near disaster. The British chargé d'affairs reported the percentage of absentees at 41.6 per cent.[71] Bobrikov's own report to the Tsar confirmed that figure. He admitted that out of 26,234 men called only 11,886 appeared.[72]

To salvage his position Bobrikov turned to the railroad question. Crucial for the growth of trade and industry, the issue was vital to the Finns. Rail construction might also affect military security. Bobrikov could thus punish the Finns for the results of the first levy. Moreover, he could once again raise the issue of Finland's relationship to Russia's strategic requirements.

Bobrikov proceeded carefully. He had already suffered one reversal on the railroad question. Early in 1902 the Russian government had granted permission for the construction of a line in Western Finland. Bobrikov had maintained that such a route might facilitate the movement of Swedish troops into Finland.[73] Considerations of commercial advantage defeated him.

In the summer following the 1902 levy, Bobrikov engaged the support of Adjutant-General A. P. Ignatiev. The two had much in common. Like Bobrikov, Ignatiev had once been Chief of Staff of a Guard Corps.[74] He also sympathized with Bobrikov's responsibilities as Governor-General. Ignatiev had held the same position in Irkutsk and Kiev.[75]

In the fall of 1902, Ignatiev chaired a commission to consider issues related to the Finnish rail system. The commission proposed that a line link the Finnish and Russian railroads via a bridge across the Neva. Bobrikov issued a report supporting Ignatiev. The Governor-General deplored the lack of rail connections with eastern Finland.[76]

Opposition came from an unexpected quarter. The St. Petersburg Municipal Duma protested against the Bobrikov-Ignatiev proposals for reasons similar to those the Finns had used previously. The Municipal Duma applauded the construction of a new railroad bridge across the Neva, but argued that the line should pass well within the city limits, be suitable for passenger traffic and convenient to the city's factories.[77] The Ignatiev Commission had sacrificed considerations of trade and industry for the sake of military efficiency.

The Tsar did not render a decision on the proposals of the Ignatiev Commission until the following spring. By then the railroad question had become entangled with another issue. At that time Bobrikov raised the question of his power as Governor-General.

As early as February 1902 Bobrikov had requested extraordinary powers. Nicholas turned him down.[78] Perhaps so soon after promulgating the new Military Service Law, he saw no reason to exacerbate the Finnish situation. In 1903, however, Bobrikov pushed his case with greater vigor. He did not want the next levy to be as disastrous as the first. Nicholas was also more disposed to listen. In 1902 and 1903 unrest among the peasants and industrial workers in the south inclined him to harsh solutions. Yet more than rational calculation, the intervention of Finland's ally within the Imperial family decided Nicholas.

The Tsar's mother, the former Princess Dagmar of Denmark, had consistently

opposed her son's Finnish policy. It compromised Russia's position in Scandinavia. Moreover, she had a strong emotional attachment to the Grand Duchy. It had been an idyllic retreat for herself and Alexander III.

Early in 1903 she rallied a faction at court which opposed Bobrikov's request for extraordinary powers.[79] To Nicholas, Maria Fëdorovna seemed intent upon subverting his authority. Like other members of the Imperial family, she had frequently attempted to imbue the Tsar with the strength he did not possess. Nicholas in defense assumed the opposite position from that advocated by a stronger member of his family. Such was the way a weak man proved his strength.

Shortly before the second military levy, Bobrikov acquired the right to banish dissidents, prohibit any kind of meeting and dismiss local officials. He also assumed "general responsibility for all Finnish educational institutions."[80] In effect Bobrikov had acquired the extraordinary powers which Alexander II had granted the other Russian Governors-General in 1879 following the assassination attempt by Alexander Soloviev. Bobrikov had always conceived of the Finnish Governor-Generalship as no different from the same position elsewhere in the Empire. In 1903 he obtained official recognition of his conception. Shortly thereafter Bobrikov was able to reduce the percentage of absentees in the second levy to 32 per cent of those called.[81]

The Tsar also complied with Bobrikov on the issue of the Finnish railroads. On 24 April 1903 he decreed that military considerations should have priority and that a Russian-speaking staff should manage the Finnish rail system.[82]

V

In the following year the conflict with Japan overshadowed all issues relating to Finland. At first Bobrikov refused to acknowledge that the situation could affect him. He wrote one of his associates, "Despite the war, I do not intend to change my system of rule."[83] He even attempted to use the war to his advantage. He threatened to apprehend those who did not present themselves at the levy and send them into combat against the Japanese. Bobrikov did do better in 1904. Absenteeism at the levy was reduced to 25 per cent.

The situation, however, had become absurd. Russian armies were fighting desperately in the Far East while the Governor-General of Finland exerted all means at his disposal to send barely two hundred men to serve with an elite unit stationed in St. Petersburg. Assassination, the ultimate political act of frustration, intervened to settle the matter. On 16 June 1904 Eugene Schauman shot Bobrikov on his way to address the Finnish Senate. Schauman then turned his gun on himself. He died instantly. Bobrikov lingered till early next morning.[84]

Schauman was the son of an esteemed member of the Finnish government who had resigned in protest of Bobrikov's policy in 1901. His uncle had been Colonel of the Finnish Dragoons, which Bobrikov reconstituted a Russian regiment in 1902.

Witte made no secret of his relief. He told the English ambassador that Bobrikov's assassination would make "reconciliation and pacification" possible.[85] For different reasons other members of the Russian government did not mourn Bobrikov either. Their animosity had isolated him within the government and done much to undermine his policy.

Possibly as a result of his resignation as Chief of Staff, Bobrikov lost the support of the Grand Duke Vladimir Alexandrovich. The opposition of the Head of the St. Petersburg Military District was especially detrimental to Bobrikov in the debates over the Military Service Law.

Pleve too proved disloyal. He regarded the Finnish State Secretariat as a stepping stone to Minister of Interior. Since 1881 he had obtained increasingly responsible positions within that Ministry. Bobrikov, on the contrary, wanted to transform his appointment into a traditional Russian Governor-Generalship no matter what the cost. Pleve would not compromise himself for the sake of Bobrikov's power. With the promulgation of the new Service Law, he began to advocate compromise with the Svecomans. The very terms of the law opened the way to reconciliation. Pleve bowed to the prevailing mood and was rewarded. Moreover, once he became Minister of Interior, he needed the support of at least some of those on the State Council who only the year before had opposed him on Finnish policy. Pleve readily abandoned Bobrikov to his pursuit of inconsequential military levies.

Kuropatkin backed down too. With the new Service Law of 1901, Finland ceased to be a major issue in military planning. At best the Grand Duchy would play a passive role in any future hostilities. Moreover, Bobrikov's policy after 1901 earned Kuropatkin's contempt. Bobrikov's levies were a gesture to prove only the strength of his own authority. They had no real military value. To Kuropatkin, a hardened combat veteran, Bobrikov's efforts only betokened his parade ground mentality. Kuropatkin soon turned his attention to the Far East.

Worst of all for Bobrikov, the Tsar proved to be a fickle supporter. In fact, the Finnish policy was symptomatic of the self-defeating inconsistency of much of late Tsarist policy. Nicholas courted the image of a peace-maker while he attempted to convince the French of the strength of Russia's military posture. He pursued Far Eastern adventurism rather than prepare adequately should war actually occur in the West. He conciliated the Finns with the Military Service Law of 1901, yet failed to remove Bobrikov from Helsinki. Finally, Nicholas' dependence on someone as limited as Bobrikov revealed the Tsar's own limitations.

Trained solely in military methods and techniques, Bobrikov attempted to implement a policy of military effectiveness. Used to power and authority, he would not accept the figurehead role of the Finnish Governor-Generalship. Moreover, he needed real power if he were to impose an increased military burden on a region with a long tradition of autonomy. Bobrikov attempted to make his new position comparable to the Governor-Generalships of Poland or Turkestan where a military style of command had long been necessary. Instead

he neither enhanced Finland's military contribution nor secured the Grand Duchy to the Empire. His policies were but a prelude to similar ones which increased Finnish disillusionment with Russian protection and led ultimately to Finland's withdrawal from the Russian Empire altogether.

NOTES

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3 Ibid., p. 55.
4 Ibid.
5 Ibid., p. 56.
6 P. A. Zaionchkovskii, ed., *Dnevnik A. A. Polovtseva*, Vol. II: *1887-92* (Moscow: Nauka, 1966), 108, entry of 18 Nov. 1888.
7 Ibid., Vol. I: *1883-86*, 7.
8 Theodore H. Von Laue, *Sergei Witte and the Industrialization of Russia* (New York: Atheneum, 1969), pp. 26 and 105.
9 *Dnevnik A. A. Polovtseva*, II, 168, entry of 17 Feb. 1889.
10 Ibid., II, 178, entry of 27 March 1889.
11 "Dnevnik A. A. Polovtseva," *Krasnyi arkhiv*, 3 (1923), 86, entry of 19 March 1901.
12 Zaionchkovskii, *Samoderzhavie i russkaia armiia*, p. 56.
13 Von Laue, pp. 26, 106, 209, 296.
14 *PRO* Cooke to the Foreign Office, No. 105, Secret, Helsinki, 27 Dec. 1894; F.O. 65/1458. (By October 1895 Cooke could report that the telephone system had been completed [Cooke to F.O., Secret, Helsinki, 3 Oct. 1895; F.O. 65/1497].)
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26 Ibid., I. 315.
27 Ibid., I, 316-320.
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48 Borodkin, *Upravleniia N. I. Bobrikova* p. 92.
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