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**THE POLICY OF THE RUSSIAN SOVEREIGNS OF THE XVIII
CENTURY IN SIBERIA**

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Abstract

The XVIII century was a special period in the improvement of the management system of the Siberian region by central Russia. A big role in this was played by the policy of the Russian sovereigns, first of all – Peter I. The changes began with the structure, and then with the complete abolition of the Sibirskiy Prikaz. Then, during the provincial reform, a governor with very extensive powers was put at the head of the region, which could not worry the central government, which was constantly looking for making it more manageable from the capital. We can say that nothing actually came out of these attempts. During the reign of Peter the Great's immediate successors, many of his reforms were revised, and the system of management of the outskirts of the Russian Empire was no exception. It was during this period that a Decree was issued to change the powers of local governors, then the Sibirskiy Prikaz was restored, although not in the form in which it existed in the XVII century. In 1741, Elizabeth Petrovna came to power, and changes in the management system still occurred; they also affected administrative issues in Siberia. In addition, it is worth noting that the Russian sovereigns understood the importance of this region perfectly, especially when it came to the development of trade with the countries of the East, as well as the strategic role that Siberia played as an outpost for penetration into Russia.

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1. Introduction

The process of expanding the territory of the Russian state in the XVIII century was very active. This was especially facilitated by the policy of Peter I, who saw his state stretching not even to the Pacific Ocean, but to the American continent. The goals that the Great Reformer pursued included issues of strategic development of the country, relations with foreign countries, development and settlement of the region rich in minerals and resources, clear delineation of territories, and large-scale construction of enterprises, primarily in the metallurgical industry. An important issue of relations between Central Russia and Siberia was, of course, the management of this remote region. Back in the XVII century, the Sibirskiy Prikaz was created, dealing with all pressing issues, including the management of this region. This body was directly subordinated to the tsar or the Boyar Duma. From the very beginning, Peter I did not change this, especially since it was headed by people close to him.

2. Problem Statement

With the beginning of administrative reforms, changes in the management system of Siberia also became necessary. But this was also due to the transformation of the role of Siberia in the life of the country, with the attention that it began to receive from the center. With the death of Peter the Great, many of his reforms were revised for various reasons by the following rulers, and the issue of Siberia within Russia was no exception. The policy concerning this province was also partly revised, as the principles changed, which led partly to the return of pre-Petrine orders and traditions.

3. Research Questions

Of course, most of the Russian rulers understood the special role of the Siberian region in the history of the Russian state from the point of view of the frontier region in relations with its neighbors (primarily trade with China), and as a necessary component of the development of the economy, starting with the active fur valuable fur-bearing animals, then developing metallurgy, gold mining industry, and subsequently expanding agricultural land, which made it possible, despite the difficult climatic conditions, to adapt this region for the cultivation of various crops (from grain to flax), as well as livestock and dairy production. One of the most important issues was the problem of settling an inhospitable region; another was the management of this region, the creation of effective local authorities that would work closely with the central ones. The system of governing bodies was formed gradually starting from the end of the XVI century, primarily in the prikaz-voivodeship version.

4. Purpose of the Study

The goal is to consider the main features of the evolution of the process of governing Siberia in the first half of the XVIII century, connected, on the one hand, with the constant change of political leaders who were in power from the reign of Peter I to the reign of his daughter Elizabeth Petrovna; on the other hand – with the development of industry and trade, which actively occurred throughout the XVIII century.

5. Research Methods

When conducting the research, both general scientific and special historical methods were used. The analysis was used to identify the peculiarities of Siberian politics on the part of each ruler of the first half of the XVIII century, and then, thanks to the synthesis, it became possible to present a general picture of the management system.

The method of deduction made it possible to formulate the main conclusions about the work performed.

The partial search method made it possible to thoroughly investigate sources, primarily from the territory of the Russian Empire. For the same purpose, historical and legal method was also used, which made it possible to trace the slightest changes in the field of lawmaking by state leaders.

The comparative-historical method made it possible to compare the activities of the rulers of Russia on the issue of governing the Siberian region, as well as the prospects that the sovereigns saw in the Siberian issue.

6. Findings

Peter the Great's policy towards the Siberian region was formulated in a succinct phrase by M. V. Lomonosov: "Russian power will grow in Siberia and the Northern Ocean...". This is how the great sovereign saw the prospects for using this land for the whole country, so he paid considerable attention to the issue of management. From the very beginning, however, the difficulties of the center's relations with local authorities became apparent. Thus, Peter I began to carry out an urban reform as early as 1699, assuming to involve the entire country in this process without exception, but the Siberian local authorities did not want to introduce even elements of urban self-government, explaining this to the sovereign with fear of indignation on the part of indigenous peoples, and in fact-fearing restrictions on the power of voivodes.

The removal of A. A. Vinius from the post of the head of the Sibirskiy Prikaz did not change the situation, since he only expressed the interests of a certain group of Siberians. The Sibirskiy Prikaz also appointed voivodes of different levels, defining their duties with special mandate that were gradually unified, but their essence was that the voivodes had to "extend the power of the tsar to new lands, submitting documentation to Moscow" (as cited in Akishin, 2003, p. 105) for their subordinate territory. They also performed military functions, carrying out mobilization measures if necessary. In addition, the voivodes had to appoint clerks to the prisons and settlements, organize the collection of yasak and other taxes, monitor the customs service and the Cossacks. Voivodes were also engaged in economic issues: construction and repair of roads, fortresses, assistance to missionaries of the Orthodox Church. Their powers also included issues of judicial proceedings. Thus, it can be argued that voivodes had considerable local power, which was partly limited to local community bodies, so the reluctance of voivodes to support the implementation of the urban reform in Siberia is quite understandable. But Peter I assigned the voivodes another duty related to the development of the metallurgical industry and the construction of new enterprises in Siberia. It was the voivodes who were supposed to monitor the construction process, provide everything necessary and report to higher authorities about any problems that arose in this matter. The

process of managing smaller settlements was not carried out directly by the voivodes, but through clerks who monitored order, performing administrative, police, and economic functions in small ostrogs and settlements; they were appointed either by the voivode himself or even by the Sibirskiy Prikaz.

But in Siberia, there was another special social group that exerted a significant influence on the decision-making process. These were service people who, due to their remoteness from the capital, were sufficiently free in their actions and statements. Often they supported or did not support local government representatives, sometimes collectively expressing their dissatisfaction. Akishin writes that just at the beginning of the XVIII century, several conflicts occurred between voivodes and military personnel, caused by the desire to preserve their traditional right to influence the appointment of commanders (Akishin, 2003).

The system of administration of Siberia, as well as the whole country, underwent significant changes during the provincial reform of 1708-1711. The whole of Siberia was included in one province, the head of which was appointed M. P. Gagarin, who had previously served in the Sibirskiy Prikaz. However, the Prikaz itself, unlike many others, was not liquidated, but its sphere of activity was now the development of trade with China and local yasach peoples. The governor concentrated almost unlimited power in his hands, while it is quite obvious that the sovereign was well aware of this, so he made several attempts to create various restraining levers in the form of different posts and collective authorities, but these projects were never fully implemented. However, with the advent of the Chief Magistrate in the center of the country, magistrates were also created in provincial cities as a variant of self-government bodies, although in fact, their power was very limited. It is quite clear that the governor was supposed to be assisted in the administration, so the Siberian Provincial Chancellery was created, and the voivodes turned into commandants, with almost the same functions as before.

Peter I saw the cities of his country in a new way: they had to be built according to certain rules, taking into account safety and protection from fires and other problems. But. Bogoslovsky (1902) wrote that the emperor sought to regulate everything, including the construction of peasant huts. The purpose of such regulation was, apparently, not the desire of the sovereign to control all household details, but the fight against fires, to which wooden peasant huts were particularly susceptible. It is worth noting that Siberia is less than other regions that were under this kind of control due to its remoteness.

In 1712, the institute of fiscal officers appeared in Siberia, whose main task, as in the center of the country, was to control officials, but in a remote province they were very dependent on the governor, since it was he who appointed people to these positions, and then all fiscal reports were coordinated with them. Only after the approval of the governor and voivodes, these messages were received in the capital, from which it can be concluded that the real picture of Siberian reality was never recognized in the highest bodies if it concerned shortcomings in the service of local officials. Although history itself showed the shortcomings of such a system: Gagarin was removed and put under investigation, and A. M. Cherkassky was appointed in his place.

Changes in local government have intensified since 1719 as part of the provincial reform (PSZ RI, vol. 5). Only military powers remained unchanged for the governors, and all the rest – they now had to share with the heads of provinces (voivodes). Provinces were supposed to be divided into districts, but, unlike the whole country, the Siberian region retained the old system in the form of counties. Gradually, concerning Siberia, the emperor returned to the system of concentrating power in one hand: it was the

governor who approved the posts of voivodes and other officials. In this regard, at the suggestion of Cherkassky, Siberia was divided into three provinces: Tobolsk, Yenisei, and Irkutsk. It is obvious that the territory of Siberia and the Far East was too cumbersome to manage, so it needed additional officials, primarily voivodes as the heads of these provinces. In addition, areas that were particularly important for the country were allocated to special management bodies. Thus, the entire mining system of the Urals was transferred under the authority of the Berg-Collegium. It is quite obvious that the development of metallurgy in this region was the focus of attention of all sovereigns, even the time of Peter II was no exception, as evidenced by the relevant decrees. Thus, in 1729, a decree was passed on providing Ural and Siberian enterprises with labor in the form of kolodniks sentenced to exile and hard labor (PSZ RI, vol. 8).

The judicial system has not remained unchanged either. Peter I planned to separate the court from the administration in order to improve the efficiency of the judicial system. It was within the framework of this reform that out-of-court courts were created locally, which were subordinate to the Justice Board. In Siberia, the Tobolsk and Yenisei court courts were created, which were responsible for the western and eastern parts of Siberia, and they were supposed to be collegial in nature and decide criminal and civil cases. Apparently, the ideal scenario of creating an independent judicial system in Siberia did not work out, since the governor or vice-governor was often appointed to the highest judicial positions.

Since 1722, judicial commissioners were appointed to deal with minor private matters based on complaints filed (petitions). In case of doubts about the correctness of the decision or lack of qualifications, they could seek advice from the out-of-court courts.

Thus, during the reign of Peter I, the Siberian local government underwent significant changes: the activities of the Sibirskiy Prikaz were abolished, most of the bodies that existed in other regions of Russia were created, but the nature of power was certainly more bureaucratic, since the same people held positions controlled by each other. It seems that this was due to the fact that on the one hand, there was a lack of qualified management personnel, and on the other – the distance from the capitals and the inability of constant control from the central authorities of the country.

The change in the post-Petrine governance system began in 1727, when the power of governors and voivodes was combined, but, in fairness, it should be noted that for Siberia these were minor changes due to the remoteness of the region; these individuals retained significant power even under Peter I.

Until 1730, the administration of Siberia did not undergo serious changes, but with the coming to power of Anna Ioannovna, the Sibirskiy Prikaz was restored, although it is difficult to talk about restoration, since in nature it was turned into a collegial authority, in contrast to the former principal of unity of command. The Prikaz itself was under the jurisdiction of the Senate (PSZ RI, vol. 8.). The initiative to restore this body actually belonged to the Senate, which believed that an intermediary was needed between the distant Siberian voivodes and the government, as well as a controller for their activities, as well as the governor, but the most important issue was, of course, the issue of tax collections. In addition, the independence of this body began to decrease quite quickly, since a prosecutor was appointed to control it, who reported directly to the Senate, which could not but detract from the importance of the restored institution. Over time, the significance of the Sibirskiy Prikaz only decreased, which was due both to a subjective factor, since people who did not have significant authority were at the head, and on the other hand, to objective factors. But there was an important issue that this body unconditionally dealt with:

providing the necessary amount of furs for the whole of Russia, including for the purpose of conducting trade with foreign countries. Inside the Prikaz, the Sable Treasury was specially restored (the name speaks for itself), to which eminent and knowledgeable merchants were necessarily invited to evaluate and organize the trade in valuable fur. On this occasion, two decrees of the Empress were issued in 1731 and 1736. While participating in international trade, this body also had some importance in resolving foreign policy issues, although, of course, not independently, but together with the Commerce Board, the Board of Foreign Affairs, and the governors. Of course, in political matters, the word of the governors and the Board of Foreign Affairs was decisive here, but it is difficult to overestimate the role of the Sibirskiy Prikaz in organizing caravans to Chinese and Mongolian lands.

But still, it is not entirely true that the Sibirskiy Prikaz completely lost its meaning, if only because, together with the Senate, it was supposed to appoint people to the posts of voivodes, although it is worth noting that the candidates were determined by the capital. In addition, the Sibirskiy Prikaz could ask the Senate to increase the staff of the department in case of urgent need. It also had some significance in approving the posts of the governor, vice-governor and voivode, since it could offer its candidacies to both the Senate and the empress. And after the approval of the voivodes, it was the Sibirskiy Prikaz that distributed them to specific cities. Moreover, it is worth noting that if the word of St. Petersburg was decisive when appointing the heads of the Siberian administration, then in the case of voivodes, they very often listened to the opinion of the Sibirskiy Prikaz, since, as a rule, they were appointed from serving people. In 1744, the term of service of the voivode was increased from two to three years, taking into account the need for periodic departure to the capital to resolve pressing issues.

It is also worth noting that in the 1730s, local self-government bodies continued to operate in the form of city halls, but in fact, they were subordinate to the voivodes and the governor, but with the restoration of the Chief Magistrate by Elizabeth Petrovna, they were given the authority to solve economic issues, first of all - the improvement of cities and adjacent territories. But, in addition, they were engaged in collecting taxes from the posad population of Siberian cities. It is also worth noting that, unlike other Russian cities, in Siberia magistrates and town halls consisted mainly of representatives of the merchant class, since the nobility in this region was extremely small.

Of course, the greatest power was concentrated in the hands of the governor, despite periodic attempts and projects of the central authorities to somehow limit it. Thus, the regular troops stationed on Siberian territory were led, of course, by the military college, but this leadership was carried out through the first person in the province. It should be noted that in 1727-1728, the following administrative system was established: a province headed by a governor, a province headed by a voivode, and a county. It was in 1728 that a special decree was issued, according to which both governors and voivodes received virtually unlimited power in Siberia (not only administrative and military, but also other powers). Thus, city and provincial voivodes exercised judicial power, and the governor was the only instance of appeal. The fiscal authorities were much more diverse: an important place was to be given to the search and interrogation of foreign spies, but no less relevant was the issue of religious freethinking (Gauthier, 1913), the eradication of which was also a matter for the heads of the region. As the head of the financial sector, the governor had to carefully monitor income and expenditure documentation. On the other hand, the supreme power was looking for ways to create a system of counterweights to this amount of power. So, the governor and his

decisions could also have complained to the Justice Board or the Senate. In 1733, the prosecutor's posts were restored to the main authorities, including the governor, while prosecutors were supposed to report to the Prosecutor General of the Senate, but in fact, were completely dependent on local authorities.

The desire to limit the powers of the governor from the capital, apparently, largely explains the restriction of powers in several territories. In 1736, Eastern Siberia received a special status of a vice-governorship headed by a corresponding official who reported directly to the Senate, and considerable freedom, which seems quite natural, since the size of the province was clearly larger than any other in Russia, so it was quite difficult for one governor to manage such vast territories. It is worth noting another fact: in the framework of specific state events, some territories received special statuses as part of the Siberian Province. Thus, the organization of Kamchatka expeditions led to an increase in the importance of Okhotsk, which received the status of a port city, and many issues related to its development were directly resolved by the Admiralty Board. I would also like to mention the special status of Selenginsk, which became an administrative center due to the intensification of trade relations with China (Ryabtsev, 2010). But in addition to trade, this locality also had some diplomatic significance, associated with the passage of representative missions to the hundred cities (Kozlova, 2016). These territories were subordinated to military commanders, and only in 1745 there were civilian voivodes who reported to the governor, but the military authorities also retained their powers. During the reign of Elizabeth Petrovna, much attention was paid to the Kyakhta, whose trade turnover was constantly growing, which was due to the reorientation of Chinese imports from rare goods to publicly available ones (Kozlova, 2021).

During the reign of Elizabeth Petrovna, the powers of governors were further specified: according to the instructions sent in 1741, they had to pay special attention to exiled criminals, especially political ones. Special attention was paid to the military role of the governor: there are some contradictions here since only the city garrisons were directly subordinate to him, but he had to ensure border security, which sometimes required all the armed forces to organize a repulse to the enemy. What was new in the fiscal sphere was that voivodes and governors had to pay close attention to all denunciations concerning cases of treason: informers had to be encouraged in all possible ways, first of all, of course, with money (Troitsky, 1974).

This document highlights the diplomatic function of the governor, who was supposed to ensure the follow-up of missions, as well as send proxies to neighboring peoples in order to agitate them to accept Russian citizenship, as well as establish good-neighborly relations. If necessary, it was necessary to build border fortresses, and all organizational issues, of course, were to be decided by the governor and voivodes. In the matter of maintaining order, the governor was to be assisted by police offices established during the reign of Anna Ioannovna, and under Elizabeth Petrovna, they were to act jointly with the magistrates.

In financial matters, the supreme role of the governor in collecting yasak was emphasized, since he not only had to direct the collection of this tax but could also be exempt due to age or lack of health from payment. Namely, the second quarter of the 18th century was a period when the majority of the local population was moving to a sedentary lifestyle, which greatly simplified summer camps (Andrievich, 1889). If the yasak collectors were particularly diligent, and their results were noticeable, then on the recommendation of the governor, they could be encouraged, up to promotion. In addition, unlike other

governors, Siberian one was allowed, in case of an emergency, not to consult with representatives of the central government about spending money.

Much attention, of course, was still paid to the organization of trade, and in Siberia, the state was a monopoly not only on furs, but also on tobacco, wine, rhubarb, and salt, so it was important not to allow illegal merchants, otherwise, the treasury would lose additional income. This largely explains the organization of various kinds of expeditions and the compilation of descriptions of different peoples and their occupations (Slovkov, 2012).

An important issue in Siberia was the provision of familiar food products to serve people, primarily bread, since the autochthonous population was practically not engaged in grain farming, with a few exceptions. That is why the governor had to contribute in every possible way to the development of grain farming among the local population, as well as to the preservation of crops and the creation of reserves in case of unforeseen bad weather and famine.

The system of administration of Siberia included the provincial chancelleries, which fulfilled the instructions of the local leadership on all necessary issues. Under the chancelleries, there were offices of a narrower purpose: the salt office, which controlled the process of salt extraction and delivery, and the rentmeister's office, which resolved financial issues in the region.

Thus, it should be noted that during the reign of Elizabeth Petrovna, the powers of governors were expanded and specified, but, on the other hand, we can talk about detailed regulation from the capital, continuing to search for different ways to control the Siberian province. In addition, it is worth noting that local self-government in the person of city magistrates was restored and further developed, primarily in the issue of urban improvement, as well as in the financial issue.

7. Conclusion

Many authors argue that the power of the governor of Siberia was almost unlimited, which is why it may seem that this power gave only benefits and privileges. This is not entirely true, since, as we see, the governor, and after him – and the voivodes had a lot of responsibilities in various spheres. In this sense, it is worth noting that since the 1720s there has been a transition from collective management (which did not take place on all issues) to one-man management and clearly defined responsibility. In the 1740s, the powers of governors in the military, commercial, judicial, and the number of other spheres were clearly expanded. Thus, despite all the efforts of the central authorities to limit the power of the governor of Siberia, this was not possible in practice, partly because of the specifics of the region, and partly because the highest position was often occupied by extraordinary people who managed to convince the capital authorities of their competence as a leader (even if this was not really the case).

Thus, I would like to note that significant changes in the management system of Siberia in the XVIII century are usually divided into three stages: 1) changes as a result of the reforms of Peter I, when it was the desire, on the one hand, to introduce some principles of collegial system of governance in general and in the management of Siberia in particular, with another to create a system of control of the center, as well as the specific authorities. There is another aspect of the Petrine reforms, as the Emperor tried to solve old problems, but also set new goals, such as improvement of cities, including provincial; 2) 1727-1741 from partial review of Peter's reforms, a return to the traditions of the Sibirskiy Prikaz. Still, it does not seem fair

to call this period the counter-reforms, because, despite some conservative tendencies, roll back to the seventeenth century had not occurred; 3) rise to power of Elizabeth attempts were made, although not entirely successful, the restoration of the orders of Peter the Great, which again led to the introduction of regulatory bodies and the extension of the powers of the Governor. At the same time, it is worth noting that all the sovereigns understood the importance that Siberia had as part of the Russian state, especially in the following aspects: 1) further development and exploration of the eastern tip of the continent, the Pacific Ocean and the American coast, which became the beginning of Russian America; 2) development of trade and diplomatic relations with China and the Mongol lands; 3) active settlement and development of Siberia, construction of fortresses to protect against potential opponents from the south and southeast.

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