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L. H. Rhinelanders

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## VICEROY VORONTSOV'S ADMINISTRATION OF THE CAUCASUS

L. H. Rhinelanders

The administration of the Russian empire was a complex enterprise. Finding patterns in the welter of policies and practices is a challenge for historians. The complexity existed partly because no two non-Russian territories were alike.

The Caucasus was not only unlike other non-Russian territories. Internally it was so fractured -- socially, ethnically, linguistically, culturally, politically -- when the Russians moved in at the end of the eighteenth century that only in a geographical sense did 'The Caucasus' have any meaning; and even that term developed schizophrenia, with 'North Caucasus' referring to the mountainous and northern piedmont regions, 'Trans-Caucasus' to the area south of the main range. Little wonder the Russian administration of the Caucasus was a patchwork affair. Yet, around the middle of the nineteenth century, the administration changed noticeably. Michael S. Vorontsov, the first Caucasian Namestnik (Viceroy, Vicegerent) took charge. The effect was like that of a catalyst in a chemical reaction. Exercising a remarkable flexibility, he transformed the Caucasian administration.

Flexibility and regionalism were by no means strangers to Russian imperial practice. Despite a persistent drive to maintain political unity, despite a broad goal of assimilation and integration of non-Russians into the imperial polity, the wise and salutary neglect preferred by numbers of practical imperial administrators over time had woven patterns of reconciliation into the imperial cloth.

Yet, since the watershed of the Catherinian age, regionalism had lost favour. New and more aggressive policies of imperialism had come into effect: energetic expansion, colonization of imperial societies, active utilization of the empire's resources, rationalization of the imperial administration.<sup>1</sup> Vorontsov's methods of ensuring and using a greater local autonomy stand out against this trend and hark back to earlier practices.

Vorontsov, to be sure, did not seek autonomy specifically in order to ease the pressures on the Caucasian people. Indeed, he has been blackened as an instrument of tsarism, a weapon to destroy the individuality and strength of the Caucasian peoples, all the more deadly for an apparent benevolence.<sup>2</sup> But these accusations are irrelevant. He did it for the sake of the emperor, who required a tightly bonded empire.

Vorontsov believed he could best forge the bonds through an effective assimilation of the Caucasian social elite into the Russian imperial leadership. Again, he was continuing a tested and respectable imperial practice. In numerous border areas over the centuries Russian agents had assiduously turned native leaders into loyal servitors of the tsar. But again, too, he stands out in his time for espousing the old policy. Although many criticized him for turning Russian officials out of office and replacing them with native Caucasians, his policy was effective. His predecessors, like General Paskevich and Baron Hahn, had managed with their rationalizing and Russifying remedies to alienate native Caucasian leaders. Those leaders, having heard something about Vorontsov's work in New Russia, welcomed him to the Caucasus and were not disappointed.

More than any other Russian administrator, Vorontsov won the affection and loyalty of the native Caucasian aristocracy.<sup>3</sup>

Modern, more democratically-minded historians have criticized him for his elitism, for shoring up an impoverished (and doomed) aristocracy at the expense of the labouring classes.<sup>4</sup> But restoring traditional proprietary and social rights and privileges to Muslim *beks* and *agalars* did help to quiet the Muslim population.<sup>5</sup> Wooing the Georgian and Armenian aristocracy won him incalculable prestige and authority. And how, we may ask, could Vorontsov have thought otherwise in his time and place? The socialist criticism is unhistorical. Nowhere in the western world did the transformation of society occur except after the elite had become educated and managed to loosen up the structure from within. Certainly not in Russia itself in the 1840s and 1850s, where even the notion of public service was only an embryo in the mentality of the responsible elite. History is context. In order to transform society, to 'modernize' it in the sense of creating an intellectual and therefore a social mobility, Vorontsov had only one instrument available: the aristocracy.

A more telling criticism than social lopsidedness, however, might be that Vorontsov's policies were not consistent across the Caucasus. They benefited Georgians more than Armenians, Armenians more than Azeris. And the benefit to the highlanders of the North Caucasus was limited, at best, to a lessening of a military oppression ('pacification') which had bordered on genocide. Which brings us back to the notion of complexity.

It would be an oversimplification and misleading to view Russian rule in the Caucasus as monolithic and changeless. Speaking most generally, of course, we can state the obvious: that Russian imperial policy in the Caucasus was consistent in aiming to keep the territory within the Russian orbit. But beyond that it is hard to find consistency. Furthermore, it is a long pitch between policy and practice. If policy fluctuated, practice produced a hodge-podge of *ad hoc* arrangements. This period of Russian rule in the Caucasus was a constant tug of war between officials concerned about military strategy, and those more concerned with civilian problems; between centralists, and regionalists; between those who wanted to clear up the mess once for all, and those who preferred to let well enough alone; between those who would have liked to see the Caucasian 'colony' pay for Russia's sacrifices, and those who realized the territory was bound to be a money sink for generations to come.<sup>6</sup> The imperial administration in the Caucasus over the entire period from 1783 to 1844 was like a shuttle on a loom, lurching from one extreme to the other in the struggle to deal with the insurmountable complexities. But like a shuttle, only the apparent motion is from side to side. The real movement is inexorably forward. The administration that Vorontsov took over in 1845, cobbled together as it was, was still a functioning institution. He merely set out to fashion it into a more congenial, better-knit, more effective whole. Flexibility was the instrument that gave his administration its effectiveness.

The change of style is most apparent in comparison to

the rule of the Russian administrators before him. General Tormasov, Marquis Paulucci, and General Rtishchev (from 1809 to 1816); and Baron Rosen (from 1831 to 1837), preferred what can only be called a method of benign neglect as the best means of keeping the civilian population quiet and gradually -- very gradually -- bringing about their assimilation. Rtishchev, for example, justified his endorsement of his predecessor's 'emergency' and 'temporary' measures, which had virtually retained only perfunctory Russian supervision over an unchanged Georgian *divani* administration in Kakheti, Guria, Imereti, Megreli, and Abkhazeti, as serving the 'overall aim of the public good.' If left alone under benevolent Russian supervision, he propounded to St. Petersburg, their local loyalties would 'in time' be transformed into devotion to the emperor.<sup>7</sup> Such a non-policy policy, to repeat, had roots in past imperial practice. In comparison, Vorontsov's form of regionalism, where a Gurian administrator may have come from an old Gurian ruling family but had to report regularly and formally to his Provincial Board, which was under the direct supervision of the viceroy's chancery in Tbilisi, was a model of instrumentality.

Two of his predecessors, it is true, had attempted consciously to fashion a more responsive administration, adapted to special Caucasian circumstances. General Tsitsianov, who took over in 1801, was one. He actually spoke Georgian, since his grandfather (along with other Georgian aristocrats such as General Bagration's grandfather) had emigrated to Russia in 1723 and he had grown up in Moscow's aristocratic Georgian

community. He realized the threat to smooth assimilation that a sudden deluge of Russian laws and procedures entailed. He wrote to Emperor Alexander I:

No matter how legitimate the notion that at some point it will be necessary to bring their customs into line with Russian statutes, I submit that our goal can be reached only by bending the laws to fit the customs now, for those customs can be altered only by time or by violent means.<sup>8</sup>

The evidence suggests that he would have attempted to create a special Caucasian government, had he not been shot down outside Baku in 1806 and thus had his term cut short. Vorontsov, coincidentally, first saw active service in 1803 in the Caucasus as a young *poruchik* under Tsitsianov. The latter was impressed by Vorontsov's service, and Vorontsov was impressed by his commander. It is interesting to read what Vorontsov wrote about the same subject to his emperor in 1846:

Every change, every new proposal which changes centuries-old customs is exceedingly difficult anywhere, and particularly in this territory; in such cases we must act with great care. Tough measures not only do not bring good, they can have very harmful effects.<sup>9</sup>

Another of Vorontsov's predecessors who tried to hammer out a more appropriate administrative structure was General Ermolov. His term was also cut short before he could accomplish anything lasting. He was responsible, for example, for having the Georgian law code finally translated into Russian, published, and distributed to Russian officials so that Georgians could be judged according to their own rather than Russian laws.<sup>10</sup> He set up a commission to attempt to define the noble, gentry, merchant, and peasant classes in terms of their conditions, duties, rights, and privileges so that the administration could adjust

accordingly.<sup>11</sup> But because he was primarily a military man and not a civil servant he was more interested in trying to pacify the Caucasian highlanders than working out a suitable government for the Georgians and Armenians and Azeris. Although it is still not clear how much he is personally to blame for the rise of the bloody guerrilla movement known as Muridism, it is at least clear that he could not control it, and control over the rebels was high on the list of the new emperor, Nicholas I. Ermolov had made a lot of enemies in the course of his service, despite his leadership qualities.<sup>12</sup> So in 1826 he, too, was shot down, although by the emperor's displeasure rather than a bullet, victim of the intrigues of an arch rival, General Paskevich. It arrested the regional experiments. But it did not arrest the friendship between Ermolov and Vorontsov, and their voluminous correspondence continued until the first man (Vorontsov) died.

Others of Vorontsov's predecessors had been for outright 'Russification' of the administration. The first had been the first Caucasian High Commissioner [Glavnoupravliaiushchii], General Knorring, who did not last out the year 1801 (he was a victim of Alexander's romantic visions of a traditional Georgia preserved intact within the empire). The notorious favorite, General Paskevich, Ermolov's replacement, was as ignorant of the Caucasian situation as he was uninterested in it and horrified by it. He proposed thorough reform to Emperor Nicholas: he would sweep away the irregularities and the corruption by introducing Russian laws and procedures throughout the territory,



which would, he suggested, win Caucasians' devotion and bring them closer to Russia.<sup>13</sup> He called for, and got, a senatorial commission to investigate and work out the details. The well-meaning senators arrived in 1830 and eventually proposed eliminating the patchwork of districts, special districts, military districts, regions, and protectorates by neatly dividing the entire Caucasian territory down the middle into two provinces, each to be run like a standard Russian province according to standard Russian laws and procedures.<sup>14</sup> The preamble of their proposal, which was addressed to the new ministerial Caucasian Committee set up in 1833 in St. Petersburg for the purpose,<sup>15</sup> gives an idea of the flexibility of their viewpoint: 'to bind [the Caucasus] to Russia as one body with civil and political ties, and to compel the inhabitants to speak, think, and feel in Russian.'<sup>16</sup> Fortunately for the Caucasians, Paskevich had by then left for Poland (where he served the emperor in a similar brickbat style) and more cautious heads in the capital prevailed. Meanwhile, responding to the rudderlessness of the government, a cabal of Georgian aristocrats attempted a coup in 1832; it was unsuccessful, but for many Caucasians the punished conspirators became martyrs to an anti-Russian cause.<sup>17</sup> Rosen, Paskevich's successor, fought the trend toward greater centralization before the ministers. His eloquence was ineffective and he lost the fight in 1837 when a new senator, the equally notorious Baron Hahn, intrigued for his removal so he could carry out his drastic purge.<sup>18</sup>

St. Petersburg turned down the flame of Russification

after Hahn's demise in 1842, but the legacy of the Russian Bowdlers was still much alive when Vorontsov arrived in 1845. Had he attempted to return to mindless centralization, the regime would undoubtedly have had the whole of the Caucasus to pacify instead of just the highlands. Because he made it clear from the start that he would use his extraordinary authority as viceroy to temper the Russian forms and encourage the local presence, he appeared in sharp relief to the entire foregoing regime.

The foundation for Vorontsov's course of action in the Caucasus was precisely this extraordinary authority. Nicholas I's refusal to delegate real authority is a usual theme for the history of his reign. Yet the special legislation that established Vorontsov personally as the emperor's viceroy in the Caucasian territory<sup>19</sup> gave him the unequivocal status of a minister and in some respects more authority. Before telegraph and railway communications, which only came later in the century, the enormous distance separating the Caucasus from the capital, a distance effectively increased by winter snows, avalanches, wash-outs, or guerrilla attacks along the Georgian Military Highway, was a crucial factor in administering the territory. Previous High Commissioners had in practice taken advantage of the factor to modify or even ignore capital directives, although according to the statutes they had no authority to do so, except temporarily for emergencies. And nothing becomes so permanent as a temporary device.

Now the situation was reversed. The viceroy's decisions were final unless they were overturned by the emperor; other

ministers could make suggestions to the viceroy, but he decided whether or not they were applicable to any or all of the Caucasus. They could only communicate to a Caucasian department normally under their purview -- as Minister Kiselev was distressed to find out when he tried to communicate with the officials in charge of Caucasian state forests, for example<sup>20</sup> -- through him, and *vice versa*. Even the Caucasian Committee in St. Petersburg, previously powerful because of its ministerial members, became essentially the viceroy's St. Petersburg office managed by General Chernyshev, who happened also to be the Minister of War. And on Vorontsov's recommendation, Section VI of the emperor's chancery was dissolved.<sup>21</sup> In his twenty-two years as an influential governor-general in New Russia, Vorontsov had exercised considerable administrative authority, but his authority as a viceroy in the Caucasus was greater still.

We should, of course, view the establishment of the Caucasian viceroyalty as merely another example of Nicholas's tendency to set up new governing bodies outside the normal ministerial structure to deal with particularly intractable state problems.<sup>22</sup> And from that perspective the Caucasian viceroyalty was really a new 'Ministry of the Caucasus' with a bureaucracy of its own. But from another perspective it resembled an old Muscovite *prikaz*, which may explain why its installation met strong resistance from the regular ministerial system. For that reason it is hard to imagine, as is commonly held, that the viceroyalty was carefully elaborated in St. Petersburg between 1842 and 1845 in the Caucasian Committee and in Section VI of

the emperor's chancery as an overdue response to the patent failure of the Russian regime either to administer Caucasian affairs smoothly or to put down the Murid movement.<sup>23</sup> In fact, the position of viceroy appears to have had a more sudden, if more prosaic, birth.

The emperor wanted Vorontsov for the job. He admired his work in New Russia and trusted him implicitly. But Vorontsov in 1844 was sixty-two, in failing health, and ready to retire. Military service, which had included heroic action at Borodino, action in Europe against the faltering Napoleonic forces, and command of the Russian occupational force in France after Napoleon's defeat; and his governor-generalship in New Russia, added up to forty years of active service. Without considering exactly what the position entailed, and without consulting any of his advisers, Nicholas invented and offered the viceroyalty as an enticement. In November of 1844 he entreated Vorontsov to become 'My viceroy in the Caucasian territory with unlimited plenary powers,' as well as commander-in-chief of the Caucasian forces.<sup>24</sup> Vague and undefined as it was, it was nonetheless an exalted and exceptionally powerful position, an obvious honour, and an impossible offer for a loyal servant of the emperor to refuse.

It was left to Vorontsov himself to work out the details of what it meant to be a viceroy. Precedence was no great help. The Polish and Bessarabian viceroyalties were of little relevance,<sup>25</sup> and indeed none of the documents make any reference to them. It involved a fight with certain high officials in the capital, but

Vorontsov was an experienced and adroit politician. He enlisted the support of the powerful Minister of War, Chernyshev; engineered the ouster of the chairman of Section VI, Pozen; and speedily secured the emperor's approval of the statute delineating his powers as Caucasian viceroy.<sup>26</sup> In the Spring of 1845 he arrived in Tbilisi to take up his new, custom-made duties.

His first task, ironically, was to lead a large and 'final' military campaign against Shamil and his highland rebels. Ironical, because Vorontsov was one of the few Caucasian administrators with extensive experience in civil administration. His title was General of the Infantry, but ever since 1815 he had been concerned primarily with civilian matters. Doubly ironic, because he had advised against such a campaign. But Nicholas had been adamant: one final, knock-out blow.<sup>27</sup> And, except for the important and apparently miraculous fact that Vorontsov was not killed in the fighting, the campaign was a dismal failure. Nicholas obviously felt guilty about it, for he promoted Vorontsov to Prince as a reward for his valour. More important, he allowed Vorontsov to pursue the struggle against the highlanders in his own way, which amounted to a policy of *cordon sanitaire*, or gradual strangulation, as opposed to grand campaigns. Vorontsov furthermore won considerable influence among the 'pacified' Daghestanis and other highlanders by restoring proprietary and social rights to traditional tribal leaders, rights which the Murid leaders had overthrown.<sup>28</sup>

Although it took a lot of the glory out of the Russian effort, it also reduced the number of Russian casualties and

gradually defused the confrontation. Vorontsov's more war-like successor, Bariatinskii, managed to restore some of the gore, but in reality he was able to capture Shamil five years after Vorontsov's departure because the resistance had been slowly squeezed out of his followers.<sup>29</sup> From the point of view of St. Petersburg, and undoubtedly most Russians, this denouement probably justified the creation of the viceroyalty. Vorontsov, however, was more interested in getting the Caucasian administration to function smoothly and effectively.<sup>30</sup>

The major obstacle to the smooth running of the administration was the legacy of Hahn's over-zealous reforms of 1841. Briefly, Hahn had tried to solve the problem of irregularities in the administration by simply eliminating them. Like the senators before him, he had divided the territory into two provinces. Each province had been divided into districts [*uezdy*], each district into sections [*uchastki*]. In each province he had set up departments to carry out the directives of the ministries in St. Petersburg. The departments had offices in each district, and at the bottom of the hierarchical chain in each section a 'police official' [*politseiskii chinovnik*] was supposed to execute department orders and refer problems back to the proper superior. All officials, Hahn had decided, had to be Russians. All justice had to be carried out according to Russian law and procedures.<sup>31</sup>

The scores of Russian officials that Hahn brought in to fill the new positions were rapidly overwhelmed by their tasks and simultaneously produced a howl of protest (even several

riots) throughout the territory.<sup>32</sup> An emergency commission led by General Chernyshev on the emperor's errand investigated the outcry in 1842 and, using emergency powers, put Hahn's reforms in abeyance, temporarily restoring old offices and practices by declaring special military districts or 'inspectorates' presided over by staff officers.<sup>33</sup> Superfluous Russian *chinovniks* were freed to drift into Tbilisi or back to Russia. And back in St. Petersburg the officials of the Caucasian Committee and Section VI put their heads together to try to come up with a better solution. It was in the middle of these deliberations that Nicholas had cut the Gordian knot with the sword of the viceroyalty. But the problem of reorganizing the administration remained.

Vorontsov attacked the problem from several angles. He broke up Hahn's unwieldy territorial divisions. The Georgian administration was re-divided into its two traditional parts: Kutaisi Guberniia, corresponding to western Georgia (Guria and Imereti), and Tbilisi Guberniia, corresponding to eastern Georgia (Kakheti and Kartli). Hahn's 'Caspian Region' was also re-divided into Derbent, Shemakha, and Erevan Gubernii, which corresponded to the traditional divisions among the Daghestani, Azeri, and Armenian peoples. Within the provinces, the districts were also re-drawn to correspond more closely to traditional territorial units.<sup>34</sup>

At a stroke Vorontsov had accomplished two important objectives. First, he had restored a territorial integrity to traditional groupings of Caucasians, easing a major cause of

upset and anti-Russian feelings. Indeed, the Armenians had had their hopes for a restoration of greater Armenia dashed by Hahn's reforms; Vorontsov's reestablishment of an Armenian province revived their hopes and secured their loyalty to the new viceroy.<sup>35</sup> The second accomplishment was a more subtle blow for assimilation. Russian provinces were named after the city which was made the provincial capital. The new Caucasian provinces followed suit; their official names no longer referred to 'Imereti' or 'Georgia' or 'Armenia,' which even Hahn's reforms had continued to do, but now merely to the names of their administrative centers.

After establishing the new districts, Vorontsov proceeded to the more difficult task of reorganizing the bureaucracy. He threw out the ministerial hierarchical structure that Hahn had outlined for each province, replacing it with a decentralized and simplified scheme. In place of the provincial and district departments of civil justice and criminal justice he instituted a number of 'provincial courts' [*gubernskie sudy*]. A proportion of the seats on each court were reserved for Caucasians who could demonstrate a knowledge of local traditions as well as an ability to speak Russian. This was particularly welcomed in the eastern, Muslim regions.<sup>36</sup> Cases were referred to the courts by the district justice boards, consisting of appointed Russian officials assisted by native officials elected by the district's aristocratic inhabitants. The courts decided cases collegially, and their decisions were subject to the approval of the provincial governor, who in turn could refer them to a central body called the 'Council of the Caucasian High Commission'



[Sovet Glavnogo Upravleniia Kavkazskogo Kraia], which served as the Caucasian court of appeal. It was chaired by the viceroy's deputy, the 'Chief Authority of the Civil Administration'; its membership consisted of most of Vorontsov's top officials and advisers.<sup>37</sup>

For executive functions, he set up a provincial board [*pravlenie*] in each province, which had broad executive responsibility for matters formerly handled by the ministerial departments. The provincial directors of the boards were members of the newly enlarged 'Chancery of the Caucasian Viceroy,' which thus became the chief Caucasian executive body. It was also chaired by the viceroy's deputy. It met regularly, and any matters which required further deliberation were referred to the Council. Only after that would matters come to the viceroy, who would refer them to the emperor if he felt he could not make a final decision himself.<sup>38</sup>

The Council and the Chancery together, whose members were both Russians and Caucasians, supplied the glue to hold the new system together. In a real sense the Tbilisi government actually replaced the St. Petersburg government, in that all local matters were decided there without reference to the capital. The viceroy was literally the emperor's surrogate, although Vorontsov seemed to have been able to instil more of a 'systematic,'<sup>39</sup> attitude among his officials than the emperor could among his.<sup>40</sup>

Before long it was functioning smoothly on its own without the regular attendance of the viceroy. But it was the organization of the lower provincial bodies, which gave responsible

positions to a large number of native Caucasian officials, that proved particularly effective in gaining the confidence and cooperation of the Caucasian inhabitants, something notably lacking under the previous system. Vorontsov had had to justify to the emperor his sending so many Russian officials home and his new policy of appointing Caucasians instead of Russians to as many position as possible. A sufficient number of qualified Caucasian natives, trained in educational institutions in the Caucasus or elsewhere in the empire, were, he wrote, ready and willing to work in his administration.<sup>41</sup>

Other projects he undertook had the same assimilative effect. Georgians had long upheld the principle that they should be judged according to ancient Georgian law, not Russian laws. None of the versions of the Georgian law code, however, were clear or reliable. Vorontsov's novel but sensible solution was to entrust a definitive review of the code to a committee composed entirely of Georgian officials and scholars. The committee surprised itself in eventually declaring the majority of the old Georgian laws outmoded, irrelevant to present-day conditions. Only twenty statutes in all were judged valid and worthy of recognition. Vorontsov sent the statutes to the emperor with his approval, and they were eventually written into the tenth volume of the imperial code of laws as applying uniquely to the Georgian provinces of the empire.<sup>42</sup>

Vorontsov similarly solved the exasperating problem of determining which Caucasian families could rightfully claim inherited aristocratic status -- without, that is, having to

earn it through imperial service -- by turning the matter entirely over to the respective provincial aristocratic assemblies. Caucasian peers proved able very shortly, even ruthlessly, to determine who their own peers were, something the Russian authorities had been unable to do satisfactorily since 1783.<sup>43</sup> The viceroy went so far as to impose restrictions on Caucasian serfs in favour of their landlords, which may have won him the criticism of many contemporaries (such as Kiselev) as well as a legion of socialist-minded historians, but it made administrative sense and eventually helped rather than hindered the task of emancipating the Georgian serfs in 1864, a decade after Vorontsov's departure.<sup>44</sup>

Nothing won aristocrats as much to his side, ultimately, as the increased opportunities to find positions in the administration. The chief instrument of this assimilative policy was, of course, the school system. Vorontsov had claimed to have a sufficient number of qualified Caucasians for the civil service, but in fact the number soon proved to be insufficient.<sup>45</sup> When he had arrived in the Caucasus, the educational system was in a neglected state. Nominally, Caucasian schools came under the supervision of the Kharkov educational district. Previous proposals for reorganizing and increasing the inadequate number of schools had been ineffectual. Vorontsov commissioned a thorough study of the entire Caucasian school system: its drawbacks, the obstacles to its development, and the requirements for putting it on a par with other educational districts in the empire.<sup>46</sup> The result (in 1848) was the creation, on a trial

basis, of a separate Caucasian educational district.<sup>47</sup> Meanwhile the viceroy's new school supervisor had been implementing the commission's other suggestions. A new *gimnaziia* had been constructed in Kutaisi to serve the needs of west Georgians; Tbilisi already had a *gimnaziia*, which would now be able to take more east Georgian and Armenian students. In the *gimnazii*, courses in Georgian, Armenian, and Turkish, as well as Caucasian history, were made part of the curriculum, along with Russian and Russian history.

At a lower level, the system of district schools was expanded; the purpose of the district schools was spelled out in the 1848 statute: to prepare children of 'unprepared' [*nedostatochnye*] aristocrats and officials for government service at the lower ranks; to provide the children of 'urban and other free classes' with the opportunity to obtain a 'necessary and practical education'; and to prepare children for entrance into the *gimnazii*. Besides the district schools, four two-grade 'parish' schools were set up in highland districts, offering basic literacy courses. Other measures established schools for girls, for Muslims, and for those wanting to learn trade skills.<sup>48</sup> Vorontsov even managed to secure sixty government scholarships to enable Caucasian *gimnaziia* graduates to study at Russian institutes of specialized or higher learning; and for *gimnaziia* graduates who wished to attend Russian universities but were weak in certain areas, he arranged places at special boarding schools attached to those universities.<sup>49</sup>

The reforms served to indicate Vorontsov's determination

that education should play a preeminent role in the process of assimilation of the Caucasians. On the basis of their success, the emperor approved a law in 1853 which permanently established the Caucasian school system as part of the regular imperial school system.<sup>50</sup> By the end of his rule as viceroy, Vorontsov had succeeded in his task of assuring a steady stream of qualified Caucasians capable of satisfying the administration's ever-increasing demand.

Education was important to Vorontsov, but not the whole answer. Indeed, he does not seem to have left any facet of Caucasian life untouched in his efforts to bring the territory to life. In the cultural field he established presses which published classical and modern works as well as newspapers in Caucasian languages, he built libraries and theatres, he established a Caucasian branch of the Geographical Society, and he even laid out parks and gardens in the major cities. In the field of economics, among other things he ordered steamboats from England and established steamship communications along the Black and Caspian coasts and up the various rivers, widened old and constructed new roads for improved transport and communication, encouraged bazaars and trade fairs and trading companies, and re-gained for the Caucasus a tax-free status for transit trade. These and related undertakings quickened the tempo of cultural and economic life and laid a basis for further development in the decades to come.<sup>51</sup>

For all the apparent dynamism of Vorontsov's administration, he was not a particularly dynamic man. He was quiet,

judicious, soft-spoken, punctual, elderly, nearly blind, and increasingly feeble. It seems rather to have been his style of leadership, his willingness to delegate responsibility, that gave the dynamic quality to the administration that had been lacking under his predecessors. He was the quintessence of the Russian inclination to allow and to encourage local, non-Russian contributions to the imperial enterprise. His rule demonstrated the constructive possibilities of a flexible, regional approach that sought to utilize rather than neutralize regional forces for change: it satisfied the government's desire to consolidate its dominion in the Caucasus, and it satisfied Caucasians' desires to live more secure and more productive lives. The generations of Caucasians who manned the civil service in the years following kept the tradition of regional responsibility strong.<sup>52</sup> Although most of his successors continued the thrust of his policies,<sup>53</sup> Caucasians remembered (and still remember) Vorontsov as the only decent Russian administrator.

It is hard to find criticisms of Vorontsov and his work. Contemporaries, with only a few exceptions, admired him enormously. In all the memoirs, normally full of spiteful gossip, only a few nasty stories about him circulated. Caucasian and Russian and Russian pre-revolutionary historians admitted that he played a crucial role in turning the Caucasian administration around after generations of frustrations. And present-day historiography admits the same, even if in Soviet accounts his effectiveness is more often seen as an important step in the consolidation of an oppressive tsarist regime.<sup>54</sup> Whatever the

personal reasons for his effectiveness as an administrator -- his great wealth, his social prestige, his English education and relatives, his personal relationship with the imperial family, his tolerant outlook, or his catholic intelligence -- his success in exercising administrative independence and instilling a lasting sense of self-responsibility in the Caucasian civil service surely make him an exception in the course of Russian political history.<sup>55</sup> But what was the impact of his rule on the Caucasian inhabitants? Is it legitimate to claim that his transformed administration in turn transformed Caucasian society?

The administrative history of a territory is one thing. The social and cultural history of that territory is quite another, and the changes wrought in that society and culture by the administration yet another. Caucasian culture and society -- or rather cultures and societies -- in the nineteenth century are under-studied. The most we can attempt to do now is to consider some promising areas of investigation.

One obvious area is the impact of Russian rule on Caucasian peasant society. Vorontsov gave some people, like Kiselev, the impression that he was no friend of emancipation, that he was trying to tighten the bonds of serfdom in Georgia while the rest of the imperial government was agonizingly trying to move in the opposite direction.<sup>56</sup> Yet Vorontsov had, bréefly, been involved in an abolition movement around 1820, enough to give some proto-Decembrists a fillip<sup>57</sup>; and he appears to have treated his serfs mildly and justly.<sup>58</sup> More likely, the cause of his hesitancy was the fact that Georgian serfdom was a far

more complicated, feudalistic institution than Russian serfdom. And Vorontsov did not simply support the Georgian serf-owners over their serfs. He did, however, enlist their aid in helping him place lord-serf relations on a clearer footing. The same was true in Muslim areas, where serfdom as such had never existed (although there were various forms of dependency among classes). To repeat, what Vorontsov did, probably made the eventual emancipation of the Georgian and other serfs in the Caucasus in 1864 easier than it would otherwise have been.<sup>59</sup> It deserves closer attention, even though in the long run his efforts may not have solved the problem of turning Caucasian peasants into first class citizens of the empire.

His effect on the economic life of the Caucasus was certainly evident. As he had done in New Russia, he showed himself in the Caucasus to be an active supporter of capitalist enterprise and equally active opponent of monopolies, colonialism, and other forms of economic restriction. It would be instructive to examine the extent to which his economic incentives paved the way for the rapid industrial growth that took place later, particularly after petroleum exploitation began in the 1870s and 1880s with its concomitant growth of Caucasian industrial classes.

Vorontsov's cultural impact would be harder to define than his economic impact, but it must have been powerful, perhaps the most important of all. Georgian culture, in particular, blossomed in the 1870s, '80s, and '90s; Georgian writers, actors, and scholars brought about what can only be called Georgia's second golden age. It owed much to Vorontsov's years of exceptionally



active patronage<sup>60</sup> and in turn strongly influenced Georgian national feeling.

Determining the extent to which Vorontsov's administrative transformation affected the rise of Caucasian national feelings and aspirations in the latter part of the nineteenth century presents the most difficulties. Caucasian nationalism took different directions. By befriending the Armenian patriarch, Nerses V, Vorontsov had secured that individual's great influence in keeping the Armenian population 'generally loyal.'<sup>61</sup> But by reestablishing an Armenian province he may have kindled nationalistic feelings rather than assuaged them. Armenian nationalists appear to have been mainly concerned with territorial integrity, particularly with reuniting Turkish Armenia with Russian Armenia. Georgian nationalists appear to have been more concerned with preserving Georgian culture in the face of pressures for Russian assimilation.<sup>62</sup>

Increasing Caucasian nationalism has been presented as a negative reaction to oppressive Russification in the 1870s, '80s, and '90s; Nationalists claimed to be reacting to an oppression.<sup>63</sup> But seen from a distance, perhaps the nationalism arose as a result of what the government had done for Caucasians rather than against them. Certainly many Russians honestly felt that becoming Russianized meant, for non-Russians, a liberation from the cramp of a limited, underprivileged existence. Caucasians had gained much by joining imperial society.<sup>64</sup> Georgians, at least, had acquired all the prerequisites of nationhood, yet rappings to break away from the Russian fold were rare to the

point of non-existence. Was Russian oppression perhaps an invention of Caucasian nationalistic minds? The famous politician Irakli Tsereteli, having grown up in Georgia in that very period of alleged Russian oppression, renounced the anti-Russianism of his newspaper-editor father. Like most other Georgian reformer-revolutionaries, he favoured socialism but not nationalism.

Nationalistic sentiments are easy to find, but their causes are complex and obscure. How much Georgian nationalism, for example, was caused by rivalry with the Armenian bourgeoisie? Vorontsov's policy of enticing Caucasian aristocrats into the imperial service in the short run may have served, intentionally or not, to blunt or postpone nationalist aspirations.<sup>65</sup> In the long run, while the effect may have been to make Caucasians more articulate, it also seems to have instilled a realization among most leading Caucasians of the benefits to be had from union with the Russian empire. An ambivalent legacy, to be sure, but one which reflected the ambivalence of Russian imperialism as a whole.

The development of Caucasian political society after Vorontsov's rule also needs to be considered. It appears that subsequent Russian administrators in the Caucasus followed Vorontsov's direction. Grand Duke Michael, Alexander II's brother, ruled as Caucasian viceroy from 1862 to 1882, by far the longest Caucasian rule of any Russian administrator in history, twice as long as Vorontsov's. He has been vaguely characterized as 'broad-minded,' 'dignified,' and 'popular'

with Caucasians.<sup>66</sup> But if Georgian political society came into active being in this period, an investigation of his administration and its impact would seem to be in order. And why did Alexander III decide to abolish the position of Caucasian viceroy in 1882?<sup>67</sup> Had pacification of the highlands together with telegraphic and rail communications killed the only benefits the viceroyalty had to offer?<sup>68</sup> Was it done on or against the grand duke's advice? The effect of the abolition of the viceroyalty should be investigated, too.

The Russian administrator who followed the grand duke, General Dondukov-Korsakov, ruled as the 'Authority-in-Chief' [Glavnonachal'stvuiushchii] from 1882 to 1890. His rule also suggests problems that need investigation. The 1880s, under Alexander III, is usually thought to represent the height of oppressive Russification in the empire. But Dondukov-Korsakov had earlier served under Vorontsov and was his strong admirer. He had also written the constitution for the Bulgarians in 1879. And both he and his successor, General Sheremetev, have been vaguely characterized as 'popular' among the Caucasians.<sup>69</sup> How, then, was political society affected by their policies? Investigation would be illuminating.

As would investigation of the effects of General Golitsyn's rule, for the crucial period of 1896 to 1904. He appears to have had the same delicate touch as his contemporary in Finland, General Bobrikov, with the same result. But how much damage and suffering did his policies actually cause? And why, when his regime was ended in 1904, did Nicholas II reinstate the position

of Caucasian viceroy in 1905, under General Vorontsov-Dashkov? Did the emperor fear an outbreak of violence in the Caucasus, and imagine a viceroy would be stronger? Or did he realize the paradoxical truth that freedom means loyalty, and wish to recapture the loyalty that the first viceroy Vorontsov (a distant relative of the second) had originally managed to secure? These questions have not been explored, nor has the precise nature and effect of Vorontsov-Dashkov's administration, which lasted until 1915, a decade that saw the growth of a strong and articulate Georgian socialist party that was solidly Menshevik. What was his role, furthermore, in translating Duma policies and reforms into Caucasian conditions? It must have had an important bearing on the maturation of Caucasian political society.

On a broader level, we can try to determine the veracity of the words of Irakli Tsereteli. One of the few sensible heads in the soviet government in 1917 before it became Bolshevik, he wrote in exile in 1948: 'The Georgian people [might he have written Caucasian peoples?] will only gain the freedom to determine their own fate when the Russian people have this freedom. History has bound them together.'<sup>70</sup> Tsereteli's remark brings us back to the issue that confronted Vorontsov a century earlier: how best to satisfy both Russian and Caucasian aspirations?

Vorontsov's method, as I have tried to show, was to employ an administrative flexibility that transformed the whole Caucasian administration. It contrasted with the administrative

practice during the previous half-century, which had shown no particularly dynamic merit, other than keeping the Caucasus within the Russian empire. Vorontsov's style was not one that other imperial administrators demonstrated, nor one that would necessarily have had the same effect in other parts of the empire. He did have an undeniably far-reaching effect on Caucasian history.

It is possible to take an overall view of the Russian rule of the Caucasus, though different perspectives give different conclusions. A Western historian can say that the empire consolidated its hold over the Caucasus without much difficulty because of its relatively tolerant attitude toward ethnic and religious minorities. A nationalistically-minded Caucasian historian can say that, with an overwhelming superiority of technology and numbers and a total disregard for national aspirations, Russia planted itself firmly across the whole Caucasus until it was thrown off and rejected in 1917 -- for a time. A Soviet historian can say that the tsarist colonial policy represented a double yoke, autocratic colonialist exploitation and feudal aristocratic exploitation, that grew heavier and heavier until it finally became intolerable. But all, it seems, are simplifications. Good history, like good writing, is specific. The actual Russian presence and its actual effects have not been studied thoroughly and they need to be.

## NOTES

1. E. Sarkisyanz, 'Russian Imperialism Reconsidered,' *Russian Imperialism* (T. Hunczak, ed.; New Brunswick, NJ, 1974), 45-81; M. Raeff, 'Patterns of Russian Imperial Policy Toward the Nationalities,' *Soviet Nationality Problems* (E. Allworth, ed.; New York, 1971), 22-42.

2. N. Berdzenishvili, 'A. Kikvidze,' *Sakartvelos SSR Metsnier. Akad. Javakhishvilis sakh. Istoriis Instituti: Shromebi*, Vol. I (1955), pp. 465-86; A. Baramidze *et al*, *Istoriia gruzinskoi literatury: Kratkii ocherk* (Tbilisi, 1958), 168; *Chto sdelala Rossiia v Tchenia Stoletia, 1801-1901, dlia Gruzinskoi Tserkvi i Obshchestva v Dukhovno-religioznom Otnoshenii?* (n.p., 1900).

3. V. N. Ivanenko, *Grazhdanskoe Upravlenie Zakavkaz'em ot Prisoedineniia Grusii do Namestnichestva Vel. Kn. Mikhaila Nikolaevicha: Istoricheskii Ocherk* (Tbilisi, 1901), 348-51; K. K. Benckendorf, *Souvenir intime d'une campagne au Caucase pendant l'été de l'année 1845* (Paris, 1858), 5; Vl. Tolstoi, 'Kniaz' Mikhail Semenovich Vorontsov,' *Russkii Arkhiv*, 1877, No. 11, 301.

4. Berdzenishvili, for example.

5. S. Esadze, *Istoricheskaiia Zapiska ob Upravlenii Kavkazom* (Tbilisi, 1907), 35 and 527-30; Sarkisyanz, 78-9; *Kavkaz*, 4 January 1847, No. 1, pp. 3-4.

6. See L. H. Rhineland, 'Russia's Imperial Policy: The Administration of the Caucasus in the First Half of the Nineteenth Century,' *Canadian Slavonic Papers*, XVII (1975), 218-35.

7. *Akty sobrannye Kavkazskoiu Arkheograficheskoiu Komissiei* [hereafter AKAK], V, Nos. 559 and 586.
8. AKAK, II, No. 65.
9. Quoted in Ivanenko, 349.
10. *Polnoe Sobranie Zakonov Rossiiskoi Imperii* [hereafter PSZ], 28 February 1825, No. 30272; Ivanenko, 101-2.
11. Ivanenko, 105-13.
12. M. Whittock, 'Ermolov: Proconsul of the Caucasus,' *The Russian Review*, XVIII (1959), 53-60.
13. AKAK, VII, Nos. 10, 35, 108.
14. Ivanenko, 181-2, 204-6.
15. Tsentral'nyi Gosudartsvennyi Istoricheskii Arkhiv v Leningrade, *Putevoditel'* (Leningrad, 1956), 42; A. Sh. Mil'man, *Politicheskii stroi Azerbaidzhana v XIX nachale XX vekov* (Baku, 1966), 107.
16. *Kolonial'naia Politika Rossiiskago Tsarizma v Azerbaidzhane v 20-60-kh godakh XIX v.*, pt. II (Moscow, 1936), 280.
17. Ivanenko, 192-4; D. M. Lang, *The Last Years of the Georgian Monarchy, 1658-1832* (New York, 1957), 279-81.
18. L. H. Rhineland, 'Hahn, Pavel Vasil'evich,' *The Modern Encyclopedia of Russian and Soviet History*, Vol. 13 (Gulf Breeze, Florida, 1979), 221-3.
19. PSZ, 30 January 1845, No. 18679; the position was institutionalized and further clarified as time went on, chiefly in 1846: PSZ, 6 January 1846, No. 19590.
20. 'Kavkazskii Komitet,' Tsentral'nyi Gosudarstvennyi Istoricheskii Arkhiv SSSR v Leningrade [hereafter TsGIASSSR],

f. 1268, op. 1, d. 671b, listy 51-58ob. and 79-84ob.

21. PSZ, 3 February 1845, No. 18702.

22. See A. A. Kizevetter, 'Vnutrennaia Politika v Tsarstvovanie Nikolaia Pavlovicha,' *Istoriia Rossi v XIX v.*, I [n.d.], 195-6.

23. N. P. Eroshkin, *Istoriia Gosudarstvennykh Uchrezhdenii Dorevoliutsionnoi Rossii* (Moscow, 1968), 196; J.-P. LeDonne, 'La Réforme de 1883 au Caucase: Un exemple d'administration régionale Russe,' *Cahier du Monde Russe et Soviétique*, VIII (1967), 23; G. L. Yaney, *The Systematization of Russian Government* (Urbana, 1973), 223.

24. AKAK, X, p. i.

25. See, for example, Ermolov's letter to Vorontsov of 31 August 1846, telling him that Paskevich was extremely envious of Vorontsov for never having been granted similar authority: *Arkhiv Kniazia Vorontsova*, XXXVI (Moscow, 1890), 312.

26. PSZ, 30 January 1845, No. 18679. For a more detailed investigation see L. H. Rhineland, 'The Creation of the Caucasian Vicegerency,' *Slavonic and East European Review* (forthcoming).

27. Benckendorf, 8-9.

28. Sarkisyanz, 78-9.

29. A. J. Rieber, *The Politics of Autocracy* (The Hague, 1966), 62, would appear to exaggerate the significance of Barianinskii's military actions.

30. See AKAK, X, ii.

31. See Ivanenko, chap. XI.

32. Esadze, 75-81.



33. 'Kavkazskii Komitet,' TsGIIASSSR, f. 1268, op. 1, d. 196b.

34. 'Kavkazskii Komitet,' TsGIIASSSR, f. 1268, op. 2, d. 345, listy 1-50b.; *PSZ*, 14 December 1846, Nos. 20701, 20702, 20703, and 9 June 1849, No. 23303.

35. R. G. Hovannisian, 'Russian Armenia: A Century of Tsarist Rule,' *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas*, XIX (1971), 34-5.

36. Before Hahn's reforms, all cases had been tried by courts martial in all areas except eastern Georgia. See J. P. LeDonne, 'Civilians under Military Justice during the Reign of Nicholas I,' *Canadian-American Slavic Studies*, VII (1973), 176-7.

37. 'Kavkazskii Komitet,' TsGIIASSSR, f. 1268, op. 7, d. 415, listy 15-15ob.

38. *Ibid.*, listy 52-54ob.

39. Yaney, 3-4.

40. See Am M. Fadeev, *Vospominaniia*, pt. II (Odessa, 1897), 5; Tolstoi, 297-302.

41. *AKAK*, X, 843; *Kolonial'naia Politika*, II, 289.

42. *PSZ*, 20 October 1859, No. 34980.

43. *PSZ*, 20 March 1846, No. 19891, and 6 December 1850, No. 24707; also *AKAK*, X, 878, and No. 44.

44. *AKAK*, X, 878-9; D. I. Kipiani, 'Zapiski,' *Russkaia Starina*, LI (September, 1886), 615-21.

45. See Vorontsov's letter to A. Bulgakov, 'Vorontsovy,' Leningradskoe Otdelenie Instituta Istorii AN SSSR [hereafter LOII], f. 36, op. 1, d. 1297, listy 97ob.-98.

46. K. L. Zisserman (ed.), *Sbornik Materialov dlia Opisaniia Tiflisskoi Gubernii*, I, pt. II (Tbilisi, 1871), 432-57.
47. *PSZ*, 18 December 1848, No. 22838; see also *AKAK*, X, 854-5.
48. *AKAK*, X, 897.
49. *PSZ*, 11 June 1849, No. 23307.
50. *PSZ*, 29 October 1853, No. 27646.
51. *PSZ*, 14 December 1846, No. 20699; 'Kavkazskii Komitet,' TsGIIASSSR, f. 1268, op. 2, d. 637a, listy 2-5ob. and 27-27ob.; op. 4, d. 315, list 30ob.; op. 5, d. 152, listy 1-6ob.; op. 7, d. 415, listy 87-102; 'Vorontsovy,' LOII, f. 36, op. 1, d. 794, listy 1-33; op. 2, d. 439A, listy 1-1ob.; M. P. Shcherbinin, *Biografiia General-fel'dmarshala Kniazia Mikhaila Semenovicha Vorontsova* (SPb., 1858), 256-66; Tolstoi, 303-4; M. K. Rozhkova, 'Iz Istorii Ekonomicheskoi Politiki Rossiiskago Tsarizma v Zakavkaz'e,' *Istoricheskie Zapiski*, XVIII (1946), 196-7.
52. See, for example, Esadze, 90.
53. Rieber, p. 68, again appears to exaggerate the significance of Bariatinskii's claim to have won independence from the Caucasian Committee in St. Petersburg -- which Vorontsov had already done in 1845 -- or to have 'modernized' the Caucasian bureaucracy when in fact he only refined and enlarged Vorontsov's basic system.
54. E.g., *Bol'shaia Sovetskaia Entsiklopediia*, V, 369; Eroshkin, 198-9.
55. See H. J. Torke, 'More Shade than Light,' *Canadian-*

*American Slavic Studies*, VI (1972), 12.

56. 'Kiselev,' TsGIIASSSR, f. 958, op. 1, d. 698, listy 1-9.

57. M. F. Orlov, *Kapituliatsiia Parizha* (Moscow, 1963), 226.

58. V. V. Ogarkov, *Vorontsovy, ikh Zhizn' i Obshchestvennaia Deiatel'nost'* (SPb., 1892), 70-1.

59. See AKAK, X, 878-9; Kipiani, 615-21; Esadze, 302-5; S. L. Avaliani, 'Gr. M. S. Vorontsov i Krest'ianskii Vopros,' *Zapiski Imperatorskago Odesskago Obshchestva Istorii i Drevnostei*, XXXII (1915), 47-9 and 57 (where he claims that Vorontsov refused to introduce Russian conditions of serfdom into the Caucasus); the following materials would also seem to bear out this conclusion: 'Kavkazskii Komitet,' TsGIIASSSR, f. 1268, op. 2, d. 272, listy 1-120; d. 477, 1-sty 1-70; d. 683, listy 9-11; op. 4, d. 323, list 6.

60. Cf. Baramidze, 168.

61. 'Kavkazskii Komitet,' TsGIIASSSR, f. 1268, op. 7, d. 415, list 79ob.

62. The last verse of one of Akaki Tsereteli's most popular poems, 'The Bat,' written around 1870, runs: 'Krulia misi khseneba,/ vints dagmobs deda enasa,/ i'vis toms hghalatobs da miti/tvit p'ikrobs maghla p'renasa!' -- 'Shame on him who would consider denying his mother tongue, betraying his own people, dreaming of flying high all on his own!'

63. Shamshiev, 'Vospominaniia Samshieva,' [unpublished manuscript, Instituut voor Sociale Geschiedenis, Amsterdam], 1-17.

64. See, for example, the speech delivered by Kulzhinsky to the graduating class of the Tbilisi Gimnaziia, printed in *Zakavskii Vestnik*, 7 January 1846, No. 1, p. 11.

65. Berdzenishvili; cf. W. B. Lincoln's remarks on the blunting of nationalistic aspirations among the Polish *szlachta* because of Gorchakov's more moderate policy after he took over from Paskevich in 1856: W. B. Lincoln, *Nikolai Miliutin: An Enlightened Russian Bureaucrat* (Newtonville, 1977), 76.

66. DanM. Lang, *A Modern History of Soviet Georgia* (New York, 1962), 103-4.

67. LeDonne, 'La Réforme,' 21-35.

68. *Ibid.*, 24.

69. Lang, *A Modern History*, 119.

70. Quoted in W. H. Roobol, *Tsereteli: A Democrat in the Russian Revolution* (The Hague, 1976), 8.