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THE RUSSIAN COMMITTEE OF MINISTERS, 1802 TO 1905:  
A PROSOPOGRAPHICAL STUDY

by

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## ABSTRACT

This study is a prosopographical analysis of the Russian Committee of Ministers during the entire period of its existence, 1802 to 1905. Because the Committee was comprised of the highest officials within the Russian bureaucracy, its membership constituted a precisely defined elite group. Examination of the social and career backgrounds of the Committee's members allows for quantitatively grounded descriptions of the administrative elite of the Russian Empire and the changes it underwent through the course of the nineteenth century.

On the whole, the members of the Committee of Ministers are found to have been largely of Russian nationality, while Germans composed a sizable minority. The social class which dominated the Committee was the nobility, with few ministers not of noble or royal birth. Relative to the general population, the ministers also formed an educational elite, a majority of whom were schooled in an institution of higher learning.

As a group the ministers had no other occupational activity than service to the Russian state, with ninety per cent of the ministers having entered state service immediately upon finishing their education. In their official careers the ministers spent over three decades in service before attaining membership on the Committee of Ministers, and most

of them served in the military as well as the civil area of Russian government. While most of the ministers held only one position on the Committee of Ministers, a large minority held more than two, either simultaneously or consecutively; and the overall average for tenure in membership in one position was six years.

While these features were determined for the entire membership of the Committee of Ministers, pictures of the Committee as constituted under each of the five tsars of the nineteenth century differed from each other, with Nicholas I's ministers most resembling the portrait drawn above. Through the course of four reigns, the base of the Committee's social composition widened somewhat to include groups of more diverse backgrounds, and the career pattern of simultaneous military and civil service shifted towards one of solely bureaucratic service in the civil administration. The importance of higher education as a qualification for elite status worked to moderate the influence of inherited social position, and the groups who most benefitted from this tendency were ministers of foreign, non-noble, and German birth, whose generally high level of educational attainment was suited to the needs of the expanding Russian bureaucracy. Under Alexander III, these changes were most in evidence within the Committee's membership, but in the following reign, under Nicholas II, the old patterns reasserted themselves as the percentages of landed nobility and militarily trained ministers increased. This resurgence of traditionally dominant patterns reflects the

landed nobility's efforts to retain old privileges and to regain their former eminence, which had been undermined in 1861 by the emancipation of the serfs.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	
I. INTRODUCTION . . . . .	1
II. THE COMMITTEE OF MINISTERS . . . . .	9
III. SOCIAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE OF MINISTERS . . . . .	17
Age . . . . .	18
National Origins . . . . .	20
Social Origins . . . . .	33
Education . . . . .	51
IV. CAREER CHARACTERISTICS OF THE MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE OF MINISTERS . . . . .	69
Military and Civil Careers . . . . .	71
Service on the Committee . . . . .	92
V. CONCLUSION . . . . .	109
POSTSCRIPT . . . . .	117
BIBLIOGRAPHY . . . . .	118
APPENDIX. POSITIONS INCLUDED ON THE COMMITTEE OF MINISTERS . . . . .	124

## LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
1. National Origins of Members of the Committee of Ministers . . . . .	25
2. Russian and German Representation on the Committee of Ministers, Arranged by Post and Reign . . . . .	27
3. Class Representation on the Committee of Ministers, Arranged by Post and Reign . . . . .	36
4. Ministers' Fathers' Occupations, Arranged by Post and Reign . . . . .	41
5. Inherited and Bestowed Titles Held by Members of the Committee of Ministers . . . . .	45
6. Title-Holding on the Committee of Ministers, Arranged by Post and Reign . . . . .	47
7. Final Educational Experience of the Ministers, Arranged by Date of Completion of Education . .	53
8. Highest Level of Education Achieved, Arranged by Post and Reign . . . . .	57
9. Type of Educational Training, Arranged by Post and Reign . . . . .	61
10. Duration of Military Service of Ministers Holding Security and Non-Security Positions on the Committee of Ministers . . . . .	76
11. Duration of Military Service of the Ministers, Arranged by Date of Entry into State Service .	80
12. Duration of the Ministers' Military Service, Compared with Type of Education Attained . . .	83
13. Duration of the Ministers' Military Service, Compared with Level of Education Attained . . .	85
14. Duration of Military Experience on the Committee of Ministers, Arranged by Post and Reign . . .	88

Table	Page
15. Average Ages at Entry into State Service and at Entry onto the Committee of Ministers . . . . .	94
16. Ministerial Activity after Position, Arranged by Reign in which Position Ended . . . . .	103



## ERRATA

- page 23, footnote 35  
reads: Internal Affairs  
should read: Foreign Affairs
- page 74, bottom line  
reads: ninety were  
should read: eighty were
- page 75, top line  
reads: two hundred three  
should read: two hundred thirteen
- page 76, table 10  
reads: 87 security, 193 non-security  
should read: 77 security, 203 non-security

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

"Neither remoteness, nor historical traditions, nor differences of nationality set any limits to the domination of the St. Petersburg bureaucracy," so wrote an acutely perceptive visitor to Russia in the 1880's.<sup>1</sup> A massive apparatus, this bureaucracy assisted the tsar in governing the vast domain of Imperial Russia. While the importance of the Russian bureaucracy has always been asserted by historians of nineteenth century Russia, until comparatively recently the bureaucracy has seldom been the subject of detailed scholarly inquiry. And, despite the fact that this paucity of critical examination has begun to be remedied during the last decade, many aspects of administrative history in this period remain to be explored.

Only an indistinct picture has been afforded of the ruling elite of the Imperial bureaucracy heretofore. Much is known, of course, about the lives of particularly outstanding state servants. And historians have made judgments about the nature of the administrative elite, based largely on the

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<sup>1</sup>Anatole Leroy-Beaulieu, The Empire of the Tsars and the Russians (3 vols., New York, 1894), II, p. 61.

impressions presented by these prominent officials. Recent prosopographical work has begun to check these impressionistic views against detailed statistical information collected about the lives of numerous high-ranking bureaucrats. It is the aim of the present work, first, to provide an accurate description of the Russian bureaucratic elite, and, second, to serve as a further test of theories, both old and new, about the personnel of the Imperial state service.

This study is a prosopographical analysis of the Russian Committee of Ministers during the entire period of its existence, 1802 to 1905. Because the Committee was comprised of the highest officials within the Russian bureaucracy, its membership constitutes a precisely defined elite group. Thus, by examining the social and career backgrounds of the Committee's members, one may arrive at a quantitatively grounded description of the Imperial administrative elite and the changes it underwent through the course of the nineteenth century.

Although this study is similar to recent works by Walter M. Pintner<sup>2</sup> and Don Karl Rowney<sup>3</sup> in its use of prosopography as a methodological tool, it differs from them in several other respects. One fundamental difference concerns the use

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<sup>2</sup>Walter M. Pintner, "The Social Characteristics of the Early Nineteenth-Century Russian Bureaucracy," Slavic Review, XXIX, 3 (September, 1970), pp. 429-443.

<sup>3</sup>Don Karl Rowney, "Higher Civil Servants in the Russian Ministry of Internal Affairs: Some Demographic and Career Characteristics, 1905-1916," Slavic Review, XXXI, 1 (March, 1972), pp. 101-110.

of source material for the administrators' lives. While both Pintner and Rowney base their works on official personnel records kept by the Imperial bureaucracy, the sources used herein are published materials. Beyond this, Pintner and Rowney each focus on different areas of the Imperial bureaucracy during different periods of time.

Pintner examines the social and career backgrounds of civil servants who worked in both central and provincial administrative agencies. Drown from all fourteen chiny (ranks) of the Table of Ranks, his subjects served during two periods of time, 1798 to 1824 and 1846 to 1855. Thus, Pintner's generalizations are pertinent to the Russian bureaucracy as a whole in the early and mid-nineteenth century. In contrast, this study covers almost all of the nineteenth century and involves only the members of the highest central administrative institution, officials who held generally the top three chiny.<sup>4</sup> The data presented here bear upon a particular group within the Russian bureaucracy whose status is so high that one is tempted to call it a super-elite.

Rowney's subjects are similar to this elite ministerial group in that they were all high-level members of a defined institution. Rowney examines the social and career backgrounds of bureaucrats who served in only the central administration of the Ministry of Internal Affairs. Moreover, his analysis is

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<sup>4</sup>P. A. Zaionchkovskii, Rossiiskoe samoderzhavie v kontse XIX stoletia (politicheskaiia reaktsiia 80-x--nachala 90-x godov) (Moscow, 1970), p. 113.

confined to those officials who held the top five chiny. Yet, Rowney's work differs from this study in one crucial dimension, time. His study begins with the year 1905, and this one ends at precisely that date. Because Rowney's research and the present work are complementary rather than comparable, reference to his work is seldom made here.

One other recent work has used prosopography to investigate the Russian administration. John A. Armstrong, a political scientist, has compared career characteristics of tsarist and Soviet elite administrators.<sup>5</sup> Besides being concerned with Soviet rule, as this work is not, Armstrong's study focuses, during the Imperial period, primarily upon provincial governors rather than central agency bureaucrats. Unlike Pintner and Rowney, who employ extensive use of social variables, Armstrong chiefly analyzes career traits. Because of the great differences separating the subjects, there obviously can be few direct connections made between Armstrong's research and the present study. The method of career analysis, however, is similar in both works. Armstrong examines elite tenure and turnover statistics, and those concepts are used also in the fourth chapter of this study.

Among these recent statistical studies of Russian civil servants, Pintner's is most useful for this work, despite the differences in his subjects as noted above. Pintner carefully separates the bureaucrats who held the top five chiny, and so

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<sup>5</sup>John A. Armstrong, "Tsarist and Soviet Elite Administrators," Slavic Review, XXXI, 3 (March, 1972), pp. 1-28.

depictions of that group may be compared to descriptions of the ministers, who held the top three. Pintner discovers the trend of professionalization among his top bureaucrats early in the nineteenth century, but this trend is not evident among the more elite group of ministers until late in that century. Consequently, the components of bureaucratic professionalization and their time lag in reaching the Committee of Ministers are explored within this study.

The Committee of Ministers is well suited to study by the prosopographical method, which "works best when it is applied to easily defined and fairly small groups over a limited period of not much more than a hundred years, when the data is drawn from a very wide variety of sources."<sup>6</sup> Indeed, the Committee was in existence for one hundred three years, and its membership of two hundred eleven ministers may be considered small, especially when compared to Pintner's sample of nearly five thousand officials. Moreover, the Committee's membership is exactly defined, and the sources for biographical data on the ministers are varied, including biographical dictionaries, encyclopedias, and individual memoirs and biographies written in both the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>Lawrence, Stone, "Prosopography," Daedalus, C, 1 (Winter, 1971), p. 69.

<sup>7</sup>The composition of the Committee's membership is given in the Committee's official history, S. M. Seredonin, ed., Istoricheskii obzor deiatel'nosti komiteta ministrov 1802-1902 (6 vols.; St. Petersburg, 1902). An additional source was private correspondence with Professor Erik Amburger, who kindly supplied information about the ministers' lives from his private files.

The use of prosopography has involved asking a standard set of questions about each of the ministers--about date of birth, death, completion of schooling, entry into state service, about national and social origins and educational and career experiences. The answers to one such question are combined to present a picture of the entire group of ministers, and this picture then serves as a baseline against which the ministers belonging to the Committee during different reigns are viewed. Thus, the prosopographical method allows analysis of the ministerial elite's changes over time; it affords a glimpse of the dynamics of history.

Additionally, answers to two such questions are juxtaposed to discover correlations between the variables. For example, the ministers' social origins are related to the types of positions they held while on the Committee of Ministers. Regularly subjected to this kind of comparative analysis are three groups within the ministers as a whole whose differing social characteristics set them apart. The foreign-born ministers, non-noble ministers, and German ministers are singled out for detailed scrutiny throughout this study in order to establish correlations between their identifying features and their other social and career characteristics.

In general, some biographical data has been collected for each member of the Committee of Ministers. The few extensive lacunae in the information subjected to analysis are duly noted, but, with these few exceptions, it is assumed that the distribution of variables in known and unknown cases is

identical. This assumption can be made because the availability of information about the characteristics seemed in no way reflections of those characteristics but rather accidental to them.

The organization of this biographical information requires a word of explanation. Although prosopography gathers biographical information under distinct categories, there is a certain inherent artificiality in this method. In fact, all aspects of an individual's biography are interdependent, and they do not have the kind of tidy conceptual distinctness placed upon them by prosopographical categories. Thus, as this study proceeds through its descriptions of members of the Committee of Ministers within social and career characteristics, it must engage in anticipation and cross-referencing of other segments of description. There is no possible organization of this material which would not entail such cross-referencing of conceptually distinct but actually interdependent aspects of the ministers' lives.

Moreover, in using the method of prosopography, one does not begin with the explication of an historical process and from that vantage point see certain manifestations of the process that are countable. Rather, one begins with the counting itself, with the definition and application of a set of analytical categories which are thought to be reasonably well fitted to the description of certain aspects of the process--the process being in this case the passage of a select set of men into and through careers as elite administrators of Imperial Russia.



After statistical trends or regularities are established, one then tries to explain those findings and their significance by placing them within their proper historical context. Hence, alternation between prosopographical analysis and historical narrative is necessary and frequent in this work.

## CHAPTER II

### THE COMMITTEE OF MINISTERS

The Committee of Ministers was the highest administrative institution in the Russian Empire from 1802 to 1905, and its membership was comprised of the elite of the Imperial bureaucracy. The present study focuses upon this elite composition, rather than upon the Committee as an institution. Thus, what is of most significance in the Committee of Minister's history is the development of its elite membership, not its institutional authority. Of necessity, the Committee's functions are touched upon in relation to other Russian governmental institutions, but these descriptions are meant in no way to be definitive.

The elite membership of the Committee of Ministers and its expansion in conjunction with the growth of the Russian bureaucracy are the primary concerns of this chapter. The following brief history of the Committee thus stresses its inclusion of all the top-level positions within the Russian state apparatus.

The Committee of Ministers was an outgrowth of Alexander I's reorganization of the Russian state administration. The ministerial system of government was introduced to Russia by Alexander in 1802 to replace the collegial model surviving from the time of Peter the Great. In the statute decreeing the

establishment of ministries was one vague reference to a ministerial committee.<sup>8</sup> From that one legal allusion grew the Committee of Ministers, whose origin in 1802 was based more on administrative necessity than law.<sup>9</sup> Because the ministers were delegated extensive executive authority within their own domains, the need was great for a governmental body to coordinate their actions.<sup>10</sup> This function the Committee of Ministers fulfilled, although imperfectly.

In order to serve this coordinating function, the ministers were empowered to bring to the Committee of Ministers the following general types of administrative concerns: (1) affairs needing the general consideration or assistance of various ministries; (2) affairs on which a minister was in doubt; (3) affairs whose authorization exceeded the authority of each minister and demanded Imperial approval.<sup>11</sup> The remaining

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<sup>8</sup>Maxime Kovalevsky, Russian Political Institutions: The Growth and Development from the Beginnings of Russian History to the Present Time (Chicago, 1902), p. 177.

<sup>9</sup>N. M. Korkunov, Russkoe gosudarstvennoe pravo, (2 vols., 6th ed.; St. Petersburg, 1909), II, p. 235.

<sup>10</sup>M. V. Dovnar-Zapol'skii, Zarozhdenie ministerstv v Rossii (Moscow, 1905), p. 57.

<sup>11</sup>George V. Vernadskii, Ocherk istorii prava russkago gosudarstva XVIII-XIX vv. (period imperii) (Prague, 1924), p. 75. Under these broad guidelines, it became the habit for ministers to bring to the Committee those decisions for which they chose to evade complete responsibility, as well as a great deal of minutiae. Consequently, one of the themes stressed throughout the six volumes of the Committee's official history was the endlessness of trivial affairs which choked the Committee, inhibiting attention to more essential concerns, and the Committee's desperate but largely unsuccessful attempts to excise trivia from its agendas.

affairs brought to the Committee by the ministers were those specifically designated as being within its competence. Of the twenty-two types of affairs enumerated in Imperial law, the first was most important: "affairs relating to the general tranquillity and safety, to national provisions, and to any extraordinary event."<sup>12</sup> This generally defined authority was broadly construed by the Committee, and under it were made the numerous political acts of an executive nature taken by the nominally administrative Committee.<sup>13</sup>

The membership of the Committee of Ministers in 1802 comprised fifteen elite administrative officials. Included on the Committee were the eight ministers who directed the initially established Ministries of War, Navy, Internal Affairs, Foreign Affairs, Finance, Justice, Education, and Commerce.<sup>14</sup> Joining these ministers on the Committee were the five assistant ministers and two additional officials of ministerial rank. (Only five of the eight ministers had assistants; these and all positions included on the Committee of Ministers are enumerated in full in the Appendix.) The number of high officials belonging to the Committee remained at fifteen until 1809. Thereafter, newly created ministerial level posts

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<sup>12</sup>Quoted from the regulations of the Committee of Ministers by A. D. Gradovskii, Nachala russkago gosudarstvennago prava, Vol. VIII of Sobranie sochinenii (St. Petersburg, 1907), p. 248.

<sup>13</sup>Seredonin, Komitet Ministrov v tsarstvovanie Imperatora Aleksandra Tretiago, p. 16.

<sup>14</sup>Baron B. E. Nol'de, Ocherki russkago gosudarstvennago pravo (St. Petersburg, 1911), p. 92.

augmented the Committee's numbers at frequent intervals.<sup>15</sup>

After 1809 the Russian ministerial system became increasingly complex, as a result of the establishment of new ministries and of separate departments equivalent to ministries. As the ministries and departments grew in number, so too did the number of elite administrative positions. And all the new ministers and heads (glavnoupravliaiushchii) of independent departments took their respective places on the Committee of Ministers.

Moreover, in 1810 the establishment of a new governmental institution, the State Council, resulted in further additions to the Committee's membership. A consultative legislative body, the State Council was divided originally into four departments to facilitate the review of different types of legislative projects.<sup>16</sup> After the creation of the State Council, the chairmen of its four departments were appointed in 1812 to the Committee of Ministers. Concurrently, the Committee received for the first time a permanent chairman, who also served as head of the State Council.<sup>17</sup> The addition of five positions

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<sup>15</sup>Seredonin, Komitet Ministrov v tsarstvovanie Imperatora Aleksandra Pervago, Part I, p. 602.

<sup>16</sup>G. V. Sliozberg, Dorevoliutsionnyi stroi Rossii (Paris, 1933), p. 109.

<sup>17</sup>In 1865 this practice was changed so that the heads of the State Council and the Committee of Ministers were two different men. Selected from the ranks of high officials not currently holding membership on the Committee, the chairman of the Committee of Ministers was a presiding officer with no special powers, not a prime minister. Marc Szeftel, "The Form of Government of the Russian Empire prior to the Constitutional Reforms of 1905-6," in Essays in Russian and Soviet History, ed. by John Shelton Curtiss (New York, 1963), p. 107.

related to the State Council was offset by the exclusion of the assistant ministers from membership in the Committee of Ministers, although they retained the right to represent their respective ministries on the Committee when their superiors could not attend.<sup>18</sup> In short, from 1812 until the end of Alexander I's reign in 1825, the membership of the Committee of Ministers was approximately eighteen, three more than the number originally appointed to serve on the Committee.

During the reign of Nicholas I, the Committee grew to include twenty-three officials. This increase was partially the result of the expansion of yet another governmental institution. Motivated by a desire to have greater personal control over the state administration, Nicholas I established three additional sections of His Majesty's Own Imperial Chancery.<sup>19</sup> In existence since 1812, when it consisted of only one section related to management of the tsar's household, the Imperial Chancery was outside the regular ministerial structure and tied closely to the tsar. Yet the heads of its new sections had rights approximately equivalent to those of a minister, and they also were appointed to serve on the Committee of Ministers.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>18</sup>Erik Amburger, Geschichte der Behördenorganisation Russlands von Peter dem Grossen bis 1917, Vol. X of Studien zur Geschichte Osteuropas, ed. by W. Philipp and P. Scheibert (Leiden, 1966), p. 123.

<sup>19</sup>Mikhail Aleksandrovich Polievktov, Nikolai I. Biografiia i obzor tsarstvovaniia (Moscow, 1918), p. 84. One additional section was created by Alexander II.

<sup>20</sup>S. V. Iushkov, Istoriia gosudarstva i prava S.S.S.R. (2 vols.; Moscow, 1950), I, p. 502. In Imperial Russia the most important prerogative of a minister was his right to make a direct personal report (doklad) to the autocrat.

After Nicholas I's expansion of the Imperial Chancery, no further administrative additions were made on such a wide scale. Among the organs of central administration there were of course some additional ministries and departments created; others were abolished. While abolition of a ministry or an independent administrative department necessitated the removal of its head from the Committee's membership, the creation of a new ministry did not automatically result in the appointment of its minister to the Committee of Ministers. Because membership on the Committee had to be designated by the emperor, appointments to the Committee awaited his pleasure. For individuals heading the surviving seven of the original ministries, this proved to be no difficulty. For the holders of newly created offices of ministerial rank, however, there could sometimes be a lag of two or more years between the assumption of a position and appointment to the Committee of Ministers. For newer positions, the official's right to membership seemed to hinge mainly on the establishment of a precedent. Once there was a breakthrough, the official's successors were appointed members of the Committee with due dispatch.<sup>21</sup> Throughout the remaining years of the Committee's existence--under Alexander II, Alexander III, and Nicholas II--the number of officials who belonged to the Committee of Ministers was, on the average, twenty-six.

Besides all civil officials of ministerial rank, the

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<sup>21</sup>Seredonin, Komitet Ministrov v tsarstvovanie Imperatora Nikolaia Pervago, Part I, pp. 43-44.

Committee of Ministers included leaders of the military hierarchy as well. From its inception in 1802, the Committee had contained two military posts, the ministers of War and of Navy, always filled by men active in the military service. During the reigns of Alexander I and Nicholas I, four other high-level military positions were added to the Committee of Ministers, although their inclusion was neither simultaneous nor continuous. Nevertheless, from 1810 the Committee never had fewer than three high-ranking officials from within the military hierarchy.<sup>22</sup>

From Nicholas I's reign dated the custom of naming special members to the Committee of Ministers. No special members were appointed until 1840, when the heir to the throne, Grand Duke Alexander Nikolaevich, was designated to serve on the Committee. Thus a tradition was established that the reigning emperor appoint his heir to the Committee of Ministers. There were eleven other special members assigned to the Committee from 1855 to 1905. Of these, nine were also grand dukes, and most of them held high military positions. The remaining special members were Iakov Rostovtsev, confidant of Alexander II and head of the Editing Commission for the emancipation of the serfs, and Konstantin Pobedonostsev, close adviser both of Alexander III and of Nicholas II and Over Procurator of the Holy Synod.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Amburger, Geschichte der Behördenorganisation Russlands, p. 123.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid. The office of Over Procurator itself entitled its holder to attend the Committee of Ministers when matters related to church affairs were to be discussed.



Thus, even influential servants of the tsar and the Russian state who held no position regularly included within the Committee's composition were appointed to sit on that body. Without exception, furthermore, all the most famous names within the highest governmental circles throughout the nineteenth century are to be found on the Committee of Minister's roster-- Speranskii, Arakcheev, Loris-Melikov, Witte, to mention but a few. And even when Arakcheev and Loris-Melikov acted, respectively, as "grand vizier" and "sub-emperor" of the Russian Empire, they did so while serving on the Committee of Ministers.<sup>24</sup>

In total, two hundred eleven officials holding the most elite governmental positions within the Empire sat on the Committee of Ministers from its establishment in 1802 until its functional demise in 1905.<sup>25</sup> Drawn from both the civil bureaucracy and the military hierarchy, this varied group of officials was an all-encompassing elite. With the elite credentials of this ministerial group verified and with its patterns of growth charted, a consideration of the aggregate social characteristics of the members of the Committee of Ministers becomes the next concern of this study.

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<sup>24</sup>Michael Jenkins, Arakcheev: Grand Vizier of the Russian Empire (London, 1969); P. A. Zaionchkovskii, Krizis samoderzhavii na rubezhe 1870-1880 godov (Moscow, 1964), p. 156.

<sup>25</sup>As part of the Russian government's response to the 1905 Revolution, the Council of Ministers was created on October 19, 1905 (N. S.). The Committee of Ministers' functions were largely taken over by that new institution, and the Committee was formally abolished on April 23, 1906. The Council's membership and powers were both broader than those of the Committee. Nikolai Petrovich Eroshkin, Ocherki istorii gosudarstvennykh dorevoliutsionnoi Rossii (2nd ed.; Moscow, 1968), pp. 277-278.

### CHAPTER III

#### SOCIAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE OF MINISTERS

Information on the individual members of the Committee of Ministers has been divided into two main classifications, social characteristics and career traits. This division facilitates analysis of the immense amount of data available on the ministers' lives. While the present chapter investigates social characteristics, the following one examines career traits. In this chapter the social characteristics of the members of the Committee of Ministers are subdivided into four broad areas: age, national origins, social origins, and education. Within each area, ministerial attributes are described and shown in contrast to the respective characteristics of the population of the Russian Empire as a whole; such comparisons illustrate the wide social differences which separated the Russian governmental elite from the remainder of the Imperial population. Also, social characteristics are determined for the members of the Committee of Ministers as constituted under the different tsars. Contrasted with each other and pictured against the historical backdrops of their respective ages, these five ministerial groups are seen to have reflected economic and social changes which occurred in

the Russian Empire during the course of the nineteenth century.

### Age

The most striking demographic characteristic that set the two hundred eleven ministers apart from the rest of their fellow countrymen was their longevity. Seventy years was the average age at death for the ministers as a whole.<sup>26</sup> In contrast, thirty-one years was the average life expectancy for a male inhabitant of European Russia.<sup>27</sup> For the ministers of each of the five tsars, the average life expectancies were high consistently, and they were found to be: Alexander I's ministers, sixty-two years; Nicholas I's, seventy years; Alexander II's, seventy-two years; Alexander III's, seventy-one years; Nicholas II's sixty-nine years. Thus, even if one considers the lowest figure, that of Alexander I's ministers, the life expectancy of a Russian minister in the first decades of the nineteenth century was double that of an Imperial subject living at the end of the century.

Not only did these ministers lead long lives, but they did not begin to serve on the Committee of Ministers

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<sup>26</sup>For the sake of brevity, the term "minister" is hereafter used to designate all members of the Committee of Ministers, even those who were not officially called ministers.

<sup>27</sup>A. G. Rashin, Naselenie Rossii za sto let (1811-1933 gg.): Statisticheskii ocherki (Moscow, 1956), p. 205. This life expectancy figure was derived from the 1897 census. Its lowness is attributable to the high rate of infant mortality in Russia. Obviously, there is some bias in the comparison of this figure with that of the ministerial group, but no figure was obtainable that was more accurately analogous.

until late in their lives. The average age at initial entry onto the Committee for all ministers is fifty-two years, and the averages for the ministers of each reign do not deviate from that figure by more than two years. The general advanced age of the officials serving on the Committee of Ministers indicates that the Russian Empire was ruled by a gerontocracy.<sup>28</sup> A minister born and educated in the early nineteenth century did not, as a rule, achieve elite status until late in that century; one possible implication of gerontocracy is that the men governing the Russian state were guided by ideas originating in and more suitable to earlier age.

Because of the ministers' seventy year life expectancy, the temporal boundaries of this study are extended. Although the Committee of Ministers itself existed from 1802 to 1905, the life spans of its members reach from the early part of the eighteenth century to the 1940's. Ministerial births occurred as early as the reign of Empress Anne and as late as that of Tsar Alexander II, although ninety per cent of the births were concentrated between 1750 and 1849. Moreover, many ministers serving under the last two Romanovs lived into the twentieth century and some even into the age of Soviet rule. There is no consideration of ministers' lives beyond 1905, as they are not relevant to the Committee of Ministers itself. However, the evolution of the ministers' social and career

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<sup>28</sup> Armstrong convincingly argues that men achieving elite status past fifty constitute a gerontocracy, "Tsarist and Soviet Elite Administrators," p. 19.

patterns are followed from 1740 to 1905, through the course of almost two centuries.<sup>29</sup>

### National Origins

As might be expected of the ruling elite of the polyglot Russian Empire, the members of the Committee of Ministers were of diverse national backgrounds. Of the two hundred eleven ministers, two hundred one were of native birth; included within this category were two ethnic Russians born abroad. Table 1 provides a breakdown of the national origins of the ministers, both native and foreign born. But before one begins to examine this table, an excursus is needed to discuss the difficulties involved in the identification of the ministers' nationalities, notably among the Slavs.

A twentieth century writer's concern to ferret out the precise Slavic nationality of an individual was unhappily not shared by compilers of nineteenth century publications. Most Imperial sources consistently do not distinguish among the various Slavic groups, and Soviet sources do little better. Possibly the dissimilarities among Great, White, and Little Russians may have seemed minor in the face of much greater differences between, for example, Russians and Finns.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>29</sup>Stephen Thernstrom, "Notes on the Historical Study of Social Mobility," Comparative Studies in Society and History, X (1968), p. 163.

<sup>30</sup>Even more speculatively, perhaps, since Russkii biograficheskii slovar' and Entsiklopedicheskii slovar' were compiled when Russification was a high priority for the Russian government, their writers minimized distinctions among Slavs which did not bolster the sense of Russian unity within the tsar's realm.

Whatever the reasons for this failure to differentiate among Slavic groups in Imperial sources, it hampers research into the history of national groups and their representation on the Committee of Ministers. Despite the fact that great care was taken to assign the appropriate ethnic origin to a minister, the chance still remains that there may be some White Russians hiding within the ranks of the Russian ministers. Because the Ukrainians proved easier to identify than the Belorussians, the probability of concealed Ukrainians is less.<sup>31</sup>

Great discrepancies between the proportions of nationalities in the Empire as a whole and their representation on the Committee of Ministers are observable in the statistics for the Russian Empire's population provided in the 1897 census.<sup>32</sup> Although Great Russians comprised seventy per cent of the total membership of the Committee of Ministers, their proportion of the Imperial population in 1897 was only forty-four per cent

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<sup>31</sup> Examination of the information on the ministers' birthplaces indicates the possibility of more than five Ukrainians and of some Belorussians among the Committee's members. Data on birthplaces was available for only one hundred two ministers, but, although sketchy, this information shows that nine ministers were born in the Ukraine and six in Belorussian guberniia. This indication of concealed Ukrainians and Belorussians is doubly tenuous because, of course, a person could have been born in the Ukraine and still have been of another nationality. For example, N. Kh. Bunge, Minister of Finance, 1881 to 1887, and Chairman of the Committee of Ministers, 1887 to 1895, was born in the Ukraine, and he was a Baltic German.

<sup>32</sup> The only accurate statistics for the Imperial population are those based on the 1897 census, and, as the census describes the population at only one point in time, the growth of national groups during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries regrettably cannot be traced precisely or compared to the national composition of the Committee of Ministers in different eras.

(see table 1). Even if the percentage of White Russians in the population is added to that of the Great Russians--as compensation for their possible inadvertent inclusion in my figures--the combined total of forty-nine per cent is still far below the seventy per cent Russian representation on the Committee of Ministers. Furthermore, the census listed the Ukrainians as eighteen per cent of the entire population in 1897, a figure again widely divergent from the two per cent Ukrainian composition of the Committee.<sup>33</sup>

Comparison of Slavic national groups such as those above must be made on a basis of informed inference because the groups are not well differentiated in the available data. But with one Slavic group, the Poles, there was absolutely no difficulty in identification. The Polish population of the Empire, of more recent acquisition than the other Slavic minorities, distinguished itself by its assertive nationalism and longings for past freedoms. Recorded in the census as six per cent of the Imperial population, as indicated in table 1 the Poles composed two per cent of the Committee of Ministers.<sup>34</sup> Of the six ministers of Polish nationality, two served on the Committee during Alexander I's reign in positions not directly related to Polish affairs; however, the four

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<sup>33</sup>Richard Pipes, The Formation of the Soviet Union: Communism and Nationalism (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1964), p. 2. Because the census' figures were based on language, not on nationality, its estimate of Great Russians is actually slightly inflated, since many non-natives used Russian as their primary language. Indeed, Pipes suggests that the proportion of Great Russians in the Empire in 1897 was probably nearer forty per cent than forty-four.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid.

ministers serving on the Committee after that period held only those positions directly involved in the governing of Poland. The intervening Polish revolt of 1830 to 1831 galvanized Russian chauvinism and called into question the political loyalties of the Polish bureaucrats in the Imperial bureaucracy. The revolt seems to have limited the type of governmental position to which Poles were appointed.<sup>35</sup>

To summarize the representation of Slavic nationalities on the Committee of Ministers, the Great Russians easily dominated the Committee, even though they made up a minority of the Empire. Governing a population at least fifty-five per cent of which was not Russian, the Committee of Ministers consisted of seventy per cent Russians. If the Great Russians' segment of the Committee was larger than their share of the total population, then in turn the other Slavic groups were under-represented. While the Ukrainians and Poles each had a tiny share of the Committee's membership, the Belorussians seem not to have been represented at all. Even when one takes into consideration the reservations noted above concerning the comparability of statistics, the differences are so large that such conclusions are warrantable.

The second largest ethnic group on the Committee of Ministers was German. Subdivisions among this group are given

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<sup>35</sup>Eroshkin, Ocherki istorii gosudarstvennykh uchrezhdenii dorevoliutsionnoi Rossii, p. 198. Even the illustrious Prince Adam Czartoryski, assistant minister of Internal Affairs under Alexander I and a member of the Committee during that time, lent his support to the revolt in Tsarist Poland; this decidedly quashed all his political influence in Russia.



in detail in table 1 so that the diversity of the Germans may be appreciated. Ministers who were raised outside of the Baltic guberniia and attended Russian schools are classed as Russified Baltic Germans, distinguishing them from those Baltic Germans who were brought up in the Baltic provinces and who received German schooling. One man, Minister of Foreign Affairs Giers, is listed as Baltic German and Swedish because of the importance his memoirs attached to his Swedish ancestors.<sup>36</sup> The six ministers of German descent were either two or three generations removed from their families' immigration to the Russian Empire. As with the other nationality groups, the distinctions among the ethnic backgrounds are kept as fine as possible for the sake of accuracy.

The differences among them having been duly noted, however, the "Germanic" ministers may all be lumped together. This is historically justifiable because of the great national fervor aroused among Russians over the large number of Germans in influential positions within the government and at court. Beginning in the reign of Nicholas I, the presence of Germans in high governmental places became a point of heated controversy, and it remained so until the end of the Empire.<sup>37</sup> In the

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<sup>36</sup>N. K. Giers, The Education of a Russian Statesman: The Memoirs of Nicholas Karlovich Giers, ed. by Charles and Barbara Jelavich (Berkeley, California, 1962), p. 4. Indeed, Giers was at great pains to diminish his Germanic and Lutheran background and to accentuate his love for the Russian people and the Orthodox church; surely this was a defense against Russian assaults on his Germanic nationality.

<sup>37</sup>Nicholas Riasanovsky, Nicholas the First and Official Nationality in Russia, 1825-1855 (Berkeley, California, 1961), p. 144; V. I. Gurko, Features and Figures of the Past: Government and Opinion in the Reign of Nicholas II, trans. by Laura Matveev (Stanford, California, 1939), p. 101.

TABLE 1

NATIONAL ORIGINS OF MEMBERS OF THE  
COMMITTEE OF MINISTERS

Natives of the Russian Empire	Number of ministers
Russian . . . . .	148
Russified Baltic German . . .	19
Baltic German . . . . .	9
German descent . . . . .	6
Polish . . . . .	6
Ukrainian . . . . .	5
Armenian . . . . .	2
French descent . . . . .	1
Tatar descent . . . . .	1
Scotch descent . . . . .	1
Baltic-German and Swedish . .	1
Moldavian . . . . .	1
Serbian . . . . .	1
	<hr/> 201
Foreign born	
German . . . . .	5
French . . . . .	2
Belgian . . . . .	1
② Greek . . . . .	1
Italian . . . . .	1
	<hr/> 10
	<hr/> 211
	<hr/> <hr/>

early 1860's, for example, the newly freed Russian press raised an outcry about the inordinate number of Germans holding high civil and military posts.<sup>38</sup>

The Russians' concern is understandable. When all the categories of the German ethnic groups on the Committee of Ministers are combined, their number is remarkable indeed. There were thirty-five Germanic ministers born within the Russian Empire, and five German ministers born abroad; their total, forty, makes up nineteen per cent of the membership of the Committee of Ministers (see table 1). When one notes that only one per cent of the Imperial population was German in 1897, traditional Russian xenophobia seems almost vindicated.<sup>39</sup> In the face of a German presence of nineteen per cent on the Committee, it might have seemed beside the point to a nineteenth century Russian nationalist that differences in nationality could be moderated by common class interests or common cultural and educational backgrounds.

The number of posts attained by Germans actually rose during the five reigns of the Committee's existence, and this increase is illustrated in table 2. (In this table, and in all similar tables employing arrangement by post and reign, an individual is counted more than once if he served under more than one tsar or held more than one position on the

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<sup>38</sup>Forrestt A. Miller, Dmitrii Miliutin and the Reform Era in Russia (Nashville, Tennessee, 1968), p. 166.

<sup>39</sup>Hugh Seton-Watson, The Decline of Imperial Russia 1815-1914 (New York, 1965), p. 31.

TABLE 2  
RUSSIAN AND GERMAN REPRESENTATION ON THE  
COMMITTEE OF MINISTERS, ARRANGED  
BY POST AND REIGN

Reign in which post was held	Total number of positions	Russian	German	Other
Alexander I, 1801-1825	78	77%	10%	13%
Nicholas I, 1825-1855	74	73%	20%	7%
Alexander II, 1855-1881	97	72%	18%	10%
Alexander III, 1881-1894	49	63%	27%	10%
Nicholas II, 1894-1905 <sup>a</sup>	51	67%	27%	6%
	349	71%	19%	10%

<sup>a</sup>Although the reign of Nicholas II continued to 1917, this study does not go beyond 1905.

Committee. The unit utilized is thus an individual's holding of a ministerial post under one tsar.) Referring to table 2, one notes that the percentage of positions held by Germans doubled from the reign of Alexander I to that of Nicholas I. As mentioned above, it was under Nicholas that the cry was first raised against the politically influential Germans; it was also under Nicholas that the Russian name of Siniavin was needed to "shield" the German one of Nesselrode.<sup>40</sup> The demands of Russian nationalists to rid the governmental apparatus of Germans were certainly not catered to, either under Nicholas I or the later tsars, since Alexander III and Nicholas II each awarded more than one-quarter of their ministerial positions to Germans (table 2). It seems anomalous that while under these two tsars the Russian share of ministerial positions actually declined, at the same time Russification became an official policy, even in the Baltic German guberniia where the German nobility had been allowed two centuries of domination over the peasant majority of Lithuanians and Estonians.<sup>41</sup>

The increased percentage of ministerial positions held by Germans under Nicholas I as compared to their share under Alexander I is no surprise because the predilection of Nicholas I

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<sup>40</sup>Theodor Schiemann, Kaiser Nikolaus vom Höhepunkt seiner Macht bis zum Zusammenbruch im Krimkriege 1840-1855, Vol. IV of Geschichte Russlands unter Kaiser Nikolaus I (Berlin, 1919), p. 244.

<sup>41</sup>Robert F. Byrnes, Pobedonostsev: His Life and Thought (Bloomington, Indiana, 1968), p. 187.

for German advisers has been adequately documented.<sup>42</sup> What is a surprise is the increased share of Committee positions held by the Germans in the final decades of the nineteenth century, especially in the face of growing Russian nationalism.<sup>43</sup> An explanation for the seeming indispensability of the services of Germans in the bureaucracy can be sought for in their educational and career patterns. In fact, the Germans themselves asserted that bureaucrats of their nationality were better educated and more administratively adept than the Russians.<sup>44</sup> This assertion deserves careful scrutiny. The Russians assumed that it made a difference politically whether a Russian or a German held an influential administrative post, and this assumption deserves close attention as well. If Russian nationalists impugned the loyalty of the German bureaucrats, the tsars themselves never did so, always stressing the faithfulness of their high German servants.<sup>45</sup> "The Russian nobles serve the state, the German ones serve us," declared

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<sup>42</sup>Sydney Monas, "Bureaucracy in Russia under Nicholas I," in The Structure of Russian History: Interpretive Essays, ed. by Michael Cherniavsky (New York, 1970), p. 274; Riasanovsky, Nicholas the First and Official Nationality in Russia, 1825-1855, p. 144; Schiemann, Kaiser Nikolaus vom Höhepunkt seiner Macht bis zum Zusammenbruch im Krimkriege 1840-1855, p. 247.

<sup>43</sup>Leroy-Beaulieu, The Empire of the Tsars and the Russians, I, p. 125.

<sup>44</sup>Baron Sergei A. Korf, Autocracy and Revolution in Russia (New York, 1923), p. 17.

<sup>45</sup>B. H. Sumner, Survey of Russian History (London, 1961), p. 308.

Nicholas I.<sup>46</sup> Thus, the establishment of similarities or differences between the Russian ministerial group and the German one is a key issue for this work, and consequently throughout this study, the social and career characteristics of these two groups are regularly compared.

The remaining native ethnic groups listed in table 1 are not disproportionate to their numbers in the total population. Not represented on the Committee of Ministers at all, however, were the Finns, Jews, and various Asiatic nationalities; and each of these groups claimed a larger share of the Imperial population than did the Germans. Differing explanations may be ventured for the exclusion of these ethnic groups from the elite of Russian government. Allowed considerably more local autonomy than other non-Russian segments of the Empire, the Finns never tried to enter Russian political life in significant numbers.<sup>47</sup> The Jews' exclusions from the Committee of Ministers is not unexpected, burdened as they were with countless governmental restrictions regulating their every action.<sup>48</sup> While

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<sup>46</sup>Riasanovsky, Nicholas I and Official Nationality in Russia, 1825-1855, p. 144.

<sup>47</sup>Seton-Watson, The Decline of Imperial Russia 1815-1914, p. 39. Actually, within the Grand Duchy of Finland the Swedish minority predominated among the upper class; neither these Swedes nor the upper class Finns sought service in the Imperial bureaucracy outside Finland.

<sup>48</sup>As a point of curiosity, there was one minister whose maternal lineage was Jewish. Professor Erik Amburger revealed in private correspondence the fact that the mother of State Secretary Uexkull-Guldenbandt was of Jewish descent; Uexkull-Guldenbandt is coded as a Russified Baltic German in the data.

the Jews were politically handicapped, the Asiatic tribes were economically and educationally disadvantaged, and the climb to the top of the Russian governmental structure for their representatives would indeed have been arduous.

The remaining ministers listed in table 1 were those of foreign birth. Representing five per cent of the Committee's composition, the foreigners merit special consideration because their service on the Committee reveals a pattern significant in the development of the Russian bureaucracy and of the Committee of Ministers. Drawn from five Western European nationalities (see table 1), all ten foreigners entered Russian state service within a two decade period, from 1787 to 1808. Four foreign ministers entered Russian service during Catherine II's reign, two during Paul's, and four during Alexander I's. These ministers of foreign birth sat on the Committee of Ministers only in the reigns of Alexander I and Nicholas I. Hence, no one born outside the reaches of the Russian Empire held its highest positions after the Nicholaevian period.

This exclusion of foreigners from ministerial posts after the reigns of Alexander I and Nicholas I marks a distinction between the earlier and later nineteenth century Russian administrations. Several interrelated factors may account for this division. The transfer of European nobility from state service in one country to service in another was common during the eighteenth century, especially in the aftermath of the French Revolution.<sup>49</sup> Such movement had a special

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<sup>49</sup>Marc Raeff, "Russian Autocracy and Its Officials," Harvard Slavic Studies, IV (1957), p. 85.



significance for Russia, since Alexander's and Nicholas' use of foreigners to fill high administrative positions may be viewed as a continuation of similar practices initiated by Peter the Great as a means of improving the personnel of the Russian state. The advent of romantic nationalism in the nineteenth century may have diminished both the willingness of Western European nobles to immigrate to Russia and the eagerness of Russian sovereigns to select them for high office. Moreover, the actual need for governmental administrators trained abroad may have been reduced by the expansion of educational facilities within Russia from the reign of Alexander I.<sup>50</sup> This latter argument seems to be corroborated by the increasing numbers of native born ministers trained in Russian higher educational institutions dating from Alexander I's reign. Consequently, within a later discussion of the ministers' educational backgrounds, documentation of this increase and further exploration of the issue are provided.

The composite portrait of nationalities on the Committee of Ministers, then, is one dominated by two groups, the Russians and the Germans. The Russian proportion of ministers was larger than their share of the total population, while the Germanic group was even more incommensurate with the number of Germans in the Empire. While all of the smaller Slavic nationalities were under-represented in the Committee's

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<sup>50</sup>Nicholas Hans, History of Russian Educational Policy (1701-1917), p. 35.

membership, other ethnic groups comprising sizable minorities of the Imperial population were not represented at all.

The sharing of hegemony of the Committee of Ministers by the Russian and German officials was continuous throughout the course of the nineteenth century. Together the Russians and Germans controlled ninety per cent of the Committee's total number of positions, and their combined share was never less than eighty-seven per cent in any reign (table 2). Particularly when one considers the large number of Russification projects which were authorized by the Committee of ministers,<sup>51</sup> it is clear that interests other than national ones united these two dominant ethnic groups. The fact that equally high proportions of the Russian and the German ministers belonged to the nobility suggests that class interests provided the unifying force. Thus, the important area of the ministers' social origins becomes the next concern of this chapter.

### Social Origins

The class which clearly dominated the Committee of Ministers was the nobility. Of the two hundred five ministers for whom there was information, one hundred eighty-six were members of the nobility, and nine were members of the royal family; these two groups comprised, respectively, ninety-one per cent and four per cent of the Committee's total membership during the nineteenth century. Only ten ministers were of

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<sup>51</sup>Seredonin, Komitet Ministrov v tsarstvovanie Imperatora Aleksandra Tret'iago, p. 23.

non-noble birth, and they made up the remaining five per cent of the Committee's composition. When one notes that ninety-eight and one-half per cent of the population of the Russian Empire was listed as non-noble in the Tenth Revision of 1858, the picture of the nobility's predominance on the Committee of Ministers is made more vivid.<sup>52</sup> Comprising only a tiny minority of the Imperial population, the nobility composed a ninety-one per cent majority on the Committee of Ministers.

Before the Emancipation Edict of 1861, the hereditary landed nobility held sway in the Russian Empire. There was no question of their economic, political, or social supremacy, and the cornerstone upon which this ascendancy rested was the nobility's legal right to ownership of serfs. When the Emancipation Edict took away the basis of the nobility's strength, the economic position of the nobles as a class began a precipitate decline. One indication of the nobles' straitened financial circumstances was the massive sale of land by the nobility, which from the Emancipation into the twentieth century occurred with increased frequency. From 1877 to 1905, nearly one-third of the nobility's lands were sold outright.<sup>53</sup> While movement of the nobility away from their landed estates had begun prior to 1861, this trend was greatly accelerated

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<sup>52</sup>A. Romanovich-Slavatinskii, Dvorianstvo v Rossii ot nachala XVIII veka do otmeny krepostnago prava (St. Petersburg, 1870), p. 509.

<sup>53</sup>Geroid Tanquary Robinson, Rural Russia under the Old Regime: A History of the Landlord-Peasant World and a Prologue to the Peasant Revolution of 1917 (London, 1932), p. 131.

by the Emancipation. The economic decline of the nobility and their movement from the land were part of the vast economic and social changes occurring in Russia in the nineteenth century. One might anticipate that these major changes in the Russian economic and social structure would be reflected in the social origins of members of the Committee of Ministers.

Seeking such reflections, one first inquires whether the nobility's dominance on the Committee of Ministers diminished through successive reigns during the nineteenth century. In an effort to explore this issue, table 3 illustrates the class composition of the Committee of ministers grouped by post and reign. By reference to this table, one can see that the percentage of posts held by nobles on the Committee did indeed decline conspicuously after 1881, from ninety-six per cent under Alexander II to eighty per cent under Alexander III. But because the nobility's lost ministerial positions were divided equally among non-noble members and members of the royal family, the result was hardly an unalloyed victory for the common people of the Empire.

In itself, this breakdown of the composition of the Committee of Ministers into nobility, royalty, and commoners is not an adequate analysis of the social differences existing among the Committee's members. Most notably, it neglects the important distinction between the hereditary and service nobility. This distinction proved difficult to investigate, but should be discussed to the extent possible. Before the time of Peter the Great, the precedence of a Russian noble

TABLE 3

CLASS REPRESENTATION ON THE COMMITTEE OF  
MINISTERS, ARRANGED BY POST AND REIGN

Reign in which post was held	Number of positions with known data	Nobles	Royalty	Non-nobles
Alexander I	78	94%	. .	6%
Nicholas I	74	96%	1%	3%
Alexander II	95	96%	2%	3%
Alexander III	48	80%	10%	10%
Nicholas II	48	84%	8%	6%
	343	92%	3%	5%

derived from his ancestry, not from his service to the state.<sup>54</sup> Peter the Great, however, wished to wed social distinction to state service, and to that end in 1771 he established the Table of Ranks, which divided military and civil service into fourteen levels. Upon attainment of the necessary chin (rank), an official was granted nobility which could be inherited by his descendants.<sup>55</sup> After Peter's time the two types of nobility, pre-Petrine hereditary and post-Petrine service, coexisted, with the former connoting higher social status and the latter greater dependence on the state for subsistence and rewards.

Consequently, an effort was made to discover, by a careful reading of the various biographies, whether the ministers' families attained their nobility originally through inheritance or service and from what ages ennoblement dated. Forty-one of the noble ministers were found to be descendants of pre-Petrine noble families, and only seven were identifiable as descendants of post-Petrine service nobility. For the remaining one hundred thirty-eight noble officials, however, the nature of the families' ennoblement could not be ascertained. Although in the known cases there were almost six times as many pre-Petrine nobles as post-Petrine, this does not unam-

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<sup>54</sup>Romanovich-Slavatinskii, Dvorianstvo v Rossii ot nachala XVIII veka do otmeny krepostnago prava, p. 3.

<sup>55</sup>Jerome Blum, Lord and Peasant in Russia from the Ninth to the Nineteenth Century (New York, 1964), p. 347. Prior to 1845, attainment of the fourteenth military chin or the eighth civil chin brought conferral of hereditary nobility. Thereafter, hereditary nobility was granted with the eighth military chin or the fifth civil chin.

biguously indicate such a ratio of these groups on the entire Committee of Ministers. There is quite likely a systematic bias in the sample, as it was precisely those families whose histories were longest and most illustrious which were most readily classifiable.<sup>56</sup> Regrettably, identical lacunae on the nature of ennoblement exist even in similar studies based on official tsarist personnel records.<sup>57</sup>

If it cannot be determined how the majority of the ministers' families were ennobled, another method useful for the depiction of ministerial social backgrounds is classification of the Committee's members according to their fathers' occupations. Of necessity, the term "occupation" has been used loosely so that it stretches to include both civil servant and tsar. Also, because many of the ministerial fathers could not be neatly pidgeon-holed into a single occupational category, they were coded for as many as three occupations, if necessary.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>56</sup>To consider but examples: officials belonging to renowned families of the pre-Petrine nobility included Prince V. A. Dolgorukov, Minister of War from 1852 to 1856, and Prince A. N. Golitsyn, the only man to head the Ministry of Education when it also included "Spiritual Affairs" in its title.

<sup>57</sup>Pintner, "Early Nineteenth-Century Russian Bureaucracy," 438.

<sup>58</sup>A grand duke was coded only as the son of a tsar, not also of a landowner. Even though the grand dukes were sons of the largest landowners in Russia, to list them as sons of landowners would confuse analysis of the statistics for the noble landowners, the class in whose growth or decline this study is interested. The entry of many grand dukes onto the Committee of Ministers under Alexander III occurred at exactly the time that the sons of noble landowners might be expected to decline.

For example, for a nineteenth century Russian noble, being a landowner and a civil servant were not mutually exclusive. It was, in fact, common to be both, and often a landholding bureaucrat served simultaneously in the military as well. Although information on fathers' occupations was not attainable for all of the two hundred eleven ministers, it was for seventy-one per cent, enough to provide a more fully delineated picture of social backgrounds of the Russian administrative elite.<sup>59</sup>

A majority of the fathers of the ministers were landowners. Sons of military officers and civil servants were also common but much less frequent. Among all the fathers there were eighty-eight landowners, sixty-one military officers, forty-six civil servants, nine tsars, four priests, four educators, two physicians, and one merchant. Having a landowner as a father, therefore, was a characteristic shared by sixty per cent of the ministers on the Committee. In turn, forty-one per cent of the ministers had fathers who were military officers, and thirty-one per cent fathers who were civil servants. For the Russian members of the Committee, the most common father's occupation was landowner, whereas for the German ministers it was military officer. Sons of bureaucrats were about equally common within each national group.

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<sup>59</sup>In the group of one hundred forty-nine ministers for whom information could be obtained, sixty-six fathers were listed with more than one occupation.



Although the total number of sons of landowners on the Committee was very high, their ranks did decrease sharply two decades after the abolition of serfdom. The figures in table 4 document this decline. During the first three reigns of the nineteenth century, over half of the positions were held by sons of landowners, while this figure drops below one-third for the final two reigns. The share of posts held by sons of military officers also shows a steady decline through the nineteenth century, whereas the sons of civil servants increase their percentage of posts, after a low period during Nicholas I's reign. The entry onto the Committee in Alexander III's reign of more members from outside the ranks of the nobility, first indicated in table 3, is shown again in more detail in table 4. Indeed, the Committee of Ministers under Alexander III was more socially heterogeneous than under any of the other tsars.

Hereditary landholding as a shared characteristic of the members of the Committee of Ministers, therefore, markedly declined, beginning in the 1880's. By examining all holders of the top three civil chiny, Zaionchkovskii has shown that the percentage of landed nobility declined among top officials from the mid-nineteenth century. According to Zaionchkovskii, fifty-three per cent of the officials holding the top three civil chiny in 1854 were from the landed nobility; however, in 1888 only thirty per cent holding the top three ranks of the Empire were of such origins.<sup>60</sup> The evidence presented here

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<sup>60</sup> Zaionchkovskii, Rossiiskoe samoderzhavii v kontse XIX stoletia, pp. 113-117.

TABLE 4

## MINISTERS' FATHERS' OCCUPATIONS, ARRANGED BY POST AND REIGN

Reign in which post was held	Number of posts with known data	Land-owners	Military	Civil servants	Tsars	Clergy	Educators	Physicians	Merchants
Alexander I	56	64%	55%	23%	. .	5%	. .	. .	. .
Nicholas I	57	72%	42%	19%	2%	3%	2%	. .	. .
Alexander II	70	70%	40%	36%	3%	. .	3%	3%	. .
Alexander III	32 <sup>a</sup>	25%	28%	34%	16%	3%	6%	6%	3%
Nicholas II	34 <sup>a</sup>	32%	32%	44%	12%	. .	3%	. .	3%
	249	58% <sup>b</sup>	41%	30%	5%	2%	2%	2%	1%

<sup>a</sup>The small base figure should be noted and the percentage figures used with caution. Nevertheless, percentage distribution still provides the most graphic means of comparison among the different reigns.

<sup>b</sup>When the percentages in one horizontal row are added, they will exceed 100% because some officials' fathers were coded with more than one occupation.

establishes that this decline in the prominence of the landed nobility was also manifest in the Committee of Ministers in the later part of the nineteenth century.<sup>61</sup>

One additional means of establishing social divisions among the members of the Committee exists. The ministers may be grouped according to ownership of titles, either inherited or bestowed. This type of information has not been provided in any of the other recent studies of the nineteenth century administrative elite. Because information on title-holding was completely available for all of the members of the Committee of Ministers, however, it was analyzed to see if any interesting trends could be discerned. And inquiry into title-holding did prove rewarding.<sup>62</sup>

The number of noble families in the Russian Empire has already been demonstrated to be small, and the number of titled families was even smaller. The most commonly held titles were count and prince, with the latter denoting the greater eminence. In 1893 a total of one hundred thirty-one

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<sup>61</sup>Zaionchkovskii's figures and those in table 4 are not, of course, directly comparable because they measure different things. Yet, both sets of figures do mark out the same pattern. Even though the information on fathers' occupations is less complete for Alexander III's and Nicholas II's reigns than for earlier periods, the decline is so sharp that this reading of the table is justifiable.

<sup>62</sup>This information is provided in Amburger, Geschichte der Behördenorganisation Russlands von Peter dem Grossen bis 1917, in which the index of administrative personnel of the Russian Empire lists the titles held by each official and the dates of their bestowal, if not inherited.

families had been awarded the title of count, and some of these families had died out.<sup>63</sup> The number of Russian families of princely rank was much smaller. Within their orders were descendants of Rurik, Asiatic and Lithuanian princes, princes of the Holy Roman Empire, as well as sixteen families awarded the title of prince from the time of Peter the Great.<sup>64</sup> Also dating from Peter's age, the title of baron was given, though infrequently. Because it mainly was bestowed upon successful merchants, the title baron and its holders were scorned by the hereditary nobility. After the Baltic provinces were annexed to the Russian Empire, in 1710 and 1712, formal agreements between the Russian government and the Baltic German nobility allowed the German nobles to retain their privileges, and many of them also held the title of baron.<sup>65</sup>

Title-holding, an occasional and privileged distinction among the Empire's noble families, was a prevalent feature among the members of the Committee of Ministers. Slightly over one-half of the members of the Committee were favored with titles as a mark of social status. A total of one hundred twenty titles were held by one hundred eight of the ministers, while a minority of the ministers, one hundred three, held no

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<sup>63</sup>I. E. Andreevskii, ed., Entsiklopedicheskii slovar' (82 vols.; St. Petersburg, 1890-1904), LIV, p. 577.

<sup>64</sup>Romanovich-Slavatinskii, Dvorianstvo v Rossii ot nachala XVIII veka do otmeny krepostnago prava, p. 39.

<sup>65</sup>Blum, Lord and Peasant in Russia from the Ninth to the Nineteenth Century, pp. 348-349. Most of the ministers who held the title of baron were from the Baltic German nobility.

titles at all. Inherited titles would seem to have been more prestigious than bestowed, since the former served as an indication that the official's family had a tradition of prominence. A minister upon whom a title was bestowed could, in principle, have been of the most common social background. Bestowed titles served to signify the immediate worth of an individual minister to a tsar, rather than to denote his family's status.

Among titles held by members of the Committee of Ministers, sixty-four were inherited and fifty-six bestowed (see table 5). The percentage of posts held by ministers with inherited titles and ministers with bestowed titles were equal, as indicated in table 6. Of the fifty-six bestowed titles, twelve were granted to officials who already had another title. Seven ministers held two bestowed titles, and five second titles were bestowed upon ministers who were hereditary title-holders.

Title-holding was equally common among the ministers of foreign birth and of native birth and also equally common among Russian and German ministers. It was not prevalent among the small non-noble group of ministers. Obviously, the non-nobles did not inherit titles, but neither did they garner many bestowed ones. Only two non-nobles acquired this singular distinction, and both played quite distinguished roles in the history of the Russian bureaucracy, the Russian Speranskii and

TABLE 5

INHERITED AND BESTOWED TITLES HELD BY MEMBERS  
OF THE COMMITTEE OF MINISTERS

Title	Number inherited	Number bestowed
Grand duke-heir	3	. .
Grand duke	6	. .
Prince	23	9
Count	23	46
Baron	8	. .
Marquis	1	. .
	64	56

the German Kankrin.<sup>66</sup> While twenty per cent of this admittedly small sample of non-nobles were granted titles, twenty-eight per cent of the noble ministers were thus favored.

Table 6 shows the relative frequency of title-holding on the Committee of Ministers under the last five tsars. The proportion of posts held by non-titled men grew steadily throughout the nineteenth century. By the reign of Alexander II, a majority of the Committee's members were non-titled. Under Alexander I, Nicholas I, and Alexander II, however, approximately one-third of the Committee's positions were held by members with hereditary titles, an indication of belonging to families of long-standing prominence. The proportion of positions held by ministers with hereditary titles fell sharply with the advent of Alexander III, then rose again slightly under Nicholas II.

This consideration of title-holding in the various reigns again confirms a widening of the Committee's membership to include officials from families of more varied backgrounds. This pattern has been repeatedly indicated in each of the three temporally arranged tables describing social distinctions among the Committee's members (tables 3, 4, and 6). The information in these three tables on nobility, fathers' occu-

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<sup>66</sup>Speranskii served on the Committee of Ministers under Alexander I in two capacities of Assistant Minister of Justice and State secretary; under Nicholas I he sat on the Committee as chairman of the State Council Department of Law. During the early part of his career Speranskii assisted Alexander I in rationalizing and reorganizing the state administration, while in the 1830's he oversaw the codification of Imperial law. Kankrin served on the Committee of Ministers from 1823 to 1844, during which time he was Minister of Finance and responsible for numerous important financial reforms.

TABLE 6  
TITLE-HOLDING ON THE COMMITTEE OF MINISTERS,  
ARRANGED BY POST AND REIGN

Reign in which post was held	Number of total positions	Inherited titles	Bestowed titles	No titles
Alexander I	78	30%	45%	25%
Nicholas I	74	32%	42%	26%
Alexander II	97	30%	18%	52%
Alexander III	49	18%	10%	72%
Nicholas II	51	22%	12%	66%
	349	27%	27%	46%



pations, and title-holding is remarkably consistent. Under Alexander I, Nicholas I, and Alexander II, the Committee of Ministers was quite homogeneous in its social composition. Almost all of its members were nobles, most were sons of land-owners, and one-third were from titled families. The percentages of offices held by these three groups were all highest under Nicholas I. With Alexander III a major change occurred. Under his aegis, the Committee of Ministers opened up to include more members of non-noble birth, sons of fathers of more varied occupations, and more non-titled officials. Under Nicholas II, however, this widening of the Committee's narrow social composition was reversed. The old patterns were reasserted somewhat, on all three of the dimensions considered here.

Viewed against the changing backdrop of Russian history, the social composition of the Committee of Ministers reflected the economic and social changes occurring during the course of the nineteenth century. In the first three reigns of the century, the Committee of Ministers' homogeneous social origins accurately reflected the political and economic preeminence of the landed nobility. Yet, two decades after the abolition of serfdom, the landed gentry's unchallenged political and economic ascendancy was ending, as industrialization began in earnest.<sup>67</sup> As the Russian bureaucracy in general received

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<sup>67</sup>Theodore H. Von Laue, Sergei Witte and the Industrialization of Russia (New York, 1963), p. 19.

ever greater numbers of non-landed nobility into its midst, so too it began to be staffed with more members of the non-noble classes of the Empire.<sup>68</sup> And these processes have been shown to have begun to occur among the highest administrative levels, among the members of the Committee of Ministers. In the existence of the Committee, the apogee of these interrelated phenomena has been demonstrated to have occurred during the years of Alexander III. In the 1890's, a resurgence of the landed gentry took place, as they fought the requirements of industrialization and clamored for a return to old privileges and protection.<sup>69</sup> This, too, is indicated in the social composition of Nicholas II's Committee of Ministers, noticeably different from that of Alexander III's.

The varying social composition of the bureaucratic elite under the five tsars is further illustrated by an examination of the periods in which the ten ministers of non-noble birth served. Four of the non-nobles began their Russian service careers during Alexander I's reign, one during Alexander II's, and five during Alexander III's.<sup>70</sup> Evidently, then, the age of Nicholas I was a very difficult time for a man of common birth to achieve the topmost positions in the Russian bureaucracy.<sup>70</sup> This is indicated in two ways by the data on

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<sup>68</sup>Zaionchkovskii, Rossiiskoe samoderzhavie v kontse XIX stoletia, p. 112.

<sup>69</sup>Iu. B. Solov'ev, "Pravitel'stvo i politika ukrepleniia klassovykh pozitsii dvorianstvo v kontse XIX veka," in Vnutrenniaia politika tsarizma (seredina XVI-nachalo XX v.), ed. by N. E. Nosov (Leningrad, 1967), p. 280.

<sup>70</sup>Sydney Monas, "Bureaucracy in Russia under Nicholas I," p. 274.

the lives of the non-noble ministers: first, no ministers of common birth originally began service careers under Nicholas I; second, only two ministerial positions were held by men of non-noble birth during Nicholas' reign (table 3), the above-mentioned Speranskii and Kankrin, both of whom initially achieved elite bureaucratic status under Alexander I.

The reigns during which it was easiest, comparatively, for a commoner to achieve high administrative status were those of Alexander I and Alexander III. This relative ease of advancement for non-nobles is apparent both in terms of the numbers of non-nobles beginning service and in terms of the numbers serving on the Committee of Ministers. The evidence on Nicholas II's reign is less complete since only one future minister began service in that reign; however, the diminished percentage of posts held by non-nobles and the increased percentage of posts held by nobles, shown in table 3, together suggest that for officials of non-noble birth advancement to high administrative offices was more formidable under Nicholas II than during his father's reign.

These ten ministers' lives, then, help in indicating the varying degrees of ease in service advancement under the five tsars. Also within the lives of the ten non-noble ministers is another salient feature, relatively high educational attainment, that helps to explain their rare social mobility. Thus, one turns finally in this examination of the backgrounds of the ministers to a discussion of educational experience.

Education

The members of the Committee of Ministers have been characterized as drawn largely from socially elite groups within the Russian Empire. One might expect, similarly, that the ministers were recruited from an educational elite also. A consideration of the ministers' educational experiences reveals that such is indeed the case.

For all of the members of the Committee, the average age upon completion of education was eighteen years. If the ministers are grouped according to the reign in which they first served on the Committee of Ministers, it can be seen that the average age increased throughout the nineteenth century. These average ages were established for ministers entering the Committee during the following reigns: Alexander I, fifteen years; Nicholas I, sixteen years; Alexander II, eighteen years; Alexander III, twenty-one years; Nicholas II, twenty years. Thus, the only group of ministers which did not show an increase was that of Nicholas II. This overall increase in time spent in educational activities points to an advancing level of education among ministers throughout the nineteenth century.

Such an increase in educational attainment among the ministers can be documented by scrutinizing their educational experiences. Accordingly, in table 7 information on the ministers' schooling is presented in detail. A minister's education is categorized according to the final educational institution attended and the half century in which it was completed. All those receiving private tuition were placed

under the heading of home education.

Table 7 shows that for future ministers in the eighteenth century, home education was the rule. Fifty per cent of the fifty-two officials educated in that century were instructed at home. Home tuition among the future ministers was much less common in the nineteenth century, however. Table 7 indicates that of those educated in the first half of the nineteenth century, only fourteen, or nineteen per cent, received private tuition; for the last half of the century this group declined to fifteen per cent. Conversely, over this same span of one hundred fifty years, the percentages of university educated ministers increased. While only seventeen per cent of future ministers attended universities in the eighteenth century, twenty-one per cent did so in the first half of the nineteenth century, and thirty-two per cent in the second half. Put another way, this information shows that while half of the eighteenth century ministers received no institutional instruction at all, one-third of those schooled from 1851 to 1900 attended universities.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>71</sup>Of the total forty-two ministers who attended universities, thirty-one went to Russian universities, nine to German and two to Italian. The latter two ministers were from Italian and Greek aristocratic families. Information on the faculties of universities attended was sparse; eight attended faculties of law and two faculties of philosophy. Of those with detailed information, twenty-three ministers received candidate degrees (equivalent to Honors bachelor degrees), four earned doctoral degrees, and five did not complete their studies. Of this latter group, four had their university studies interrupted by the war with the French in 1812. Of the three holders of doctorates for whom service dates are known, one entered service under Tsar Paul, one under Alexander I, and one under Alexander II.

TABLE 7

FINAL EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE OF THE MINISTERS,  
ARRANGED BY DATE OF COMPLETION OF EDUCATION

Educational institution	Number of ministers completing education			
	1750-1800	1801-1850	1851-1900	No dates
Home education	26	14	6	. .
Private secondary school	2	4	. .	. .
Private academy	2	. .	. .	. .
<u>Gymnasia</u> , Russian	2	1	. .	. .
Seminary	1	1	. .	. .
Tsarskoe Selo Lyceum	. .	12	5	. .
St. Petersburg University	. .	3	9	. .
Moscow University	1	10	1	4
Kazan University	. .	1	. .	. .
Kiev University	. .	1	. .	. .
Odessa University	. .	. .	1	. .
Military school, unspecified	1	1	. .	6
Cadet corps	3	8	. .	8
Imperial Corps of Pages	4	7	1	. .
Academy of the General Staff	. .	2	7	. .
Military institute	. .	1	. .	. .
Agricultural institute	. .	. .	1	. .
Main Pedagogical Institute	. .	. .	1	. .
School of Jurisprudence	. .	2	6	. .
Technical institute	. .	4	1	. .
Polish academy	1	. .	. .	. .
German gymnasium	1	. .	. .	. .
Prussian cadet corps	. .	1	. .	. .
German university	6	1	2	. .
Italian university	2	. .	. .	. .
Unknown	. .	3	. .	23
	52	77	41	41

The large number of future ministers educated at home in the eighteenth century reflects the unorganized state of Russian education during that time. "In fact," noted one historian, "there was no such thing as a school system before Alexander I; there were schools but no system."<sup>72</sup> From Alexander I's reign dated the greatest growth of Russian educational facilities. In the realm of higher education, the opening of five new universities and the enlargement of the one in Moscow occurred at the behest of Alexander I, who intended that these universities produce better qualified personnel to staff the Russian administration.<sup>73</sup> Similar motivations prompted the establishment of the Lyceum at Tsarskoe Selo in 1810 and, under Nicholas I, the School of Jurisprudence in 1835.<sup>74</sup> Also under Nicholas I, the Academy of the General Staff was established in 1834 in order to provide better trained personnel for the military service.<sup>75</sup> The original purpose of all these higher institutions was to provide better training for future servants of the Russian state; that these schools served this function is

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<sup>72</sup>Vladimir G. Simkhovich, "History of the School in Russia," The Educational Review (May, 1907), p. 489, cited by William H. E. Johnson, Russia's Educational Heritage (Pittsburg, Pennsylvania, 1950), p. 65.

<sup>73</sup>James T. Flynn, "The Universities, the Gentry, and the Russian Imperial Services, 1815-1825," Canadian Slavic Studies, II, 4 (Winter, 1968), p. 487.

<sup>74</sup>Edward C. Thaden, Conservative Nationalism in Nineteenth-Century Russia (Seattle, Washington, 1964), p. 12.

<sup>75</sup>John Shelton Curtiss, The Russian Army under Nicholas I, 1825-1855 (Durham, North Carolina, 1965), p. 105.

indicated by the fact that some of their earliest graduates became members of the Committee of Ministers.

As soon as these higher institutions were established, they became part of the educational backgrounds of the future ministers. For example, Minister of Foreign Affairs Prince A. M. Gorchakov graduated from Tsarskoe Selo Lyceum in 1816, Minister of War D. A. Miliutin from the Academy of the General Staff in 1836, and Over Procurator Pobedonostsev from the School of Jurisprudence in 1846. Despite the proliferation of Russian universities, the oldest one, Moscow University, continued to produce the most future ministers during the first half of the nineteenth century, but after 1850 St. Petersburg University took the lead by graduating nine of the eleven future ministers who attended Russian universities during that period (see table 7). Undoubtedly, the universities at Moscow and St. Petersburg, located near the seats of Imperial power, enjoyed a prestigious advantage over the universities in provincial capitals.

It has been suggested from a reading of table 7 that ministers schooled during the first half of the nineteenth century received more formal education than those schooled during the eighteenth, and that ministers educated during the last half of the nineteenth century attained the highest level of formal education of all. This has been indicated in a general way by the falling percentages of future ministers educated at home and the rising percentages educated at universities during these three fifty-year periods. The point is



made more clearly by grouping the numerous schools attended by the ministers into levels. Therefore, table 8 arranges the educational experiences of the ministers holding positions on the Committee during different reigns into three levels--home, secondary, and higher education. Some explanation is required for each of these.

In table 8 home education is kept as a separate level because it is impossible to relate it to attendance at any formal educational institution. Sons of emperors and sons of provincial gentry alike received home education, and this means that the category is far from definitive as regards the duration or sophistication of educational experience. So, when one says that the level of schooling among the ministers increased throughout the nineteenth century, one means, literally, the level of institutionalized schooling.

No ministers received formal schooling of an elementary nature, and therefore the study of levels of schooling actually begins with secondary education. The category of secondary education in table 8 includes the following schools: private secondary, both Russian and German gymnasia, both Russian and German cadet corps, and unspecified military schools. All the remaining educational institutions listed in table 7 are categorized in table 8 as higher education, as entrance to each of them required certification of secondary level education. Included in the higher education category is Tsarskoe Selo Lyceum, whose courses of instruction were divided into two parts. Pupils entered the junior section from the ages of ten

TABLE 8  
HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION ACHIEVED,  
ARRANGED BY POST AND REIGN

Reign in which post occurred	Number of posts with known data	Home education	Secondary education	Higher education
Alexander I	73	44%	26%	30%
Nicholas I	68	46%	34%	20%
Alexander II	83	23%	34%	43%
Alexander III	46	11%	13%	76%
Nicholas II	46	7%	13%	80%
	316	28%	26%	46%

to twelve and received secondary level education when they advanced to the senior section, they received instruction from university professors on advanced subjects.<sup>76</sup>

The transition from the predominance of home education to that of higher education is again documented in table 8, which also reveals that the Committee of Ministers in each successive reign had ministers more highly schooled than those of the previous reign. This is indicated by the declining percentage of positions held by home tutored ministers and the rising percentage of positions held by ministers with higher education. The sole exception to this rule was the ministerial group of Nicholas I, during whose reign the autonomy of institutions of higher learning, especially the universities, was severely curtailed by restrictive governmental regulations of 1835 and 1848.<sup>77</sup> Even in Nicholas' group of ministers, however, the increase in secondary schooling almost offset the decline in higher education.

The significance of the ministers' generally high level of formal education is threefold. First, the ministers were recruited from an educational elite. This point is reinforced by noting the rate of enrollment in all Russian higher educational institutions. During the entire existence of the Committee of Ministers, enrollment in all higher educational institutions, expressed as a proportion of the total Imperial

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<sup>76</sup> Andreevskii, ed., Entsiklopedicheskii slovar', XXXIV, p. 859. Students at the Lyceum spent three years in each of the two sections.

<sup>77</sup> Johnson, Russia's Educational Heritage, pp. 96-99.

population, increased from one-tenth of one per cent in 1801 to three and one-half per cent in 1905.<sup>78</sup> In Russia in the nineteenth century, therefore, higher education was a rare privilege. In the Committee of Ministers it was a commonly shared trait.

Second, it was noted above that foreigners served on the Committee of Ministers only during the early nineteenth century, and an increase in the number of better educated native personnel was proposed as a possible explanation for foreigners' exclusion from the Committee in later years. This argument is corroborated by the increased percentages of ministers trained in Russian higher institutions, as indicated in tables 7 and 8. After the growth in Russian higher education in the early nineteenth century, it seems to have been no longer necessary to look abroad for well educated bureaucrats.

Third, because the Committee of Ministers was made up primarily of the most highly educated men Russia could offer, the dismal picture of poorly trained high Imperial officials painted by some needs retouching.<sup>79</sup> There seem to be two bases for the argument that even highly placed Russian administrators were poorly educated. First, there is the question of the quality of a minister's education, whether good or superficial; such a topic cannot be explored within the scope of this study. Second, the argument may be made that a general

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<sup>78</sup>Hans, History of Russian Educational Policy (1701-1917), p. 242.

<sup>79</sup>Raeff, "Russian Autocracy and Its Officials," p. 87.

education was not the best training for a bureaucrat.<sup>80</sup> While the biographical data available cannot indicate what kind of education was best for a Russian civil servant, it can at least shed some light on this issue by demonstrating the types of educational training the ministers actually received.

In order to illustrate the nature of Russian ministers' educational emphases, table 9 divides the institutions they attended into the three categories of general, military, and technical and professional education. This latter rubric subsumes training of a legalistic or applied scientific type, and includes the School of Jurisprudence, the agricultural and technical institutes, and the few known faculties of law. Of the military schools named in table 7, only His Majesty's Own Corps of Pages needs explanation; it was an elite cadet corps which provided military schooling for the sons of the best families in Russia.<sup>81</sup> The Tsarskoe Selo Lyceum is classified as providing general education, even though in its senior section there was an emphasis on legal training. In the first place, this legal emphasis was not pronounced in the first two decades of the Lyceum's existence; and, in the second place, all the instruction in the junior section, as well as a large portion in the senior section, dealt with general educational

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<sup>80</sup> Flynn, "The Universities, the Gentry, and the Russian Imperial Services, 1815-1825," p. 501.

<sup>81</sup> Miller, Dmitrii Miliutin and the Reform Era in Russia, p. 124.

TABLE 9  
TYPE OF EDUCATIONAL TRAINING, ARRANGED  
BY POST AND REIGN

Reign in which post occurred	Number of posts with known data	General education	Military education	Technical and professional education
Alexander I	73	77%	22%	1%
Nicholas I	68	71%	28%	1%
Alexander II	83	61%	28%	11%
Alexander III	46	56%	15%	29%
Nicholas II	46	38%	28%	34%
	316	63%	25%	12%

subjects--languages, history, geography, mathematics.<sup>82</sup>

Universities were placed under the heading of general education, with the above noted exception of faculties of law known to have been attended.<sup>83</sup> The remainder of the schools enumerated in table 7 are gathered under general education--not excluding home education or the Main Pedagogical Institute.<sup>84</sup>

When the educational data is arranged under these three categories, as in table 9, the overall predominance of general education becomes evident. Of the total number of positions with known data, sixty-three per cent were held by ministers who had received general, non-technical, non-military education. While a sizable minority of the positions, twenty-five per cent, were held by militarily-trained ministers, the percentage of positions held by ministers technically or professionally trained was only half that of the military, twelve per cent.<sup>85</sup> Overall, general education was the norm, and few of the

<sup>82</sup> Andreevskii, Entsiklopedicheskii slovar', XXXIV, p. 859.

<sup>83</sup> For only one-quarter of those attending universities were the faculties of specialization determinable. Of this group of ten, eight ministers attended legal faculties. Because of this lacuna in the biographical data the figures for professional and technical training probably tend to be conservative.

<sup>84</sup> Johnson, Russia's Educational Heritage, p. 112.

<sup>85</sup> Armstrong, in "Tsarist and Soviet Elite Administrators," p. 18, reports that twenty-three per cent of his tsarist provincial governors attended military schools; he argues that technological training is concealed in that group. Similarly within the Committee of Ministers, the twenty-five per cent who studied at military institutions undoubtedly also included some technologically trained.

ministers received training of a nature directly related to legal or technical governmental work.<sup>86</sup>

As shown in table 9 the percentage of positions held by ministers with professional or technical training did increase during the nineteenth century. The increase began on the Committee under Alexander II, two generations after the proliferation of higher professional and technical schools. There was an even larger increase under Alexander III, two decades after the reform of the Russian legal system in 1864 and the consequent surge in legal faculty enrollments.<sup>87</sup> By the reign of Nicholas II, one third of the positions represented on the Committee of Ministers were held by ministers with technical or professional training and, as has been noted, there is an undoubted conservative bias in this figure.

Table 9 also evidences a pattern similar to that found in earlier temporally arranged tables (3, 4, and 6). During Alexander III's reign, when the Committee's membership was most socially heterogeneous, the greatest increase in technical and

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<sup>86</sup>The educational background of Count D. N. Bludov is illustrative of how lack of formal legalistic training did not hamper a bureaucrat's service career in the first half of the nineteenth century. One of the two men ever to hold six positions on the Committee of Ministers, Bludov was educated at home but rose to be the foremost jurist of his time. For over twenty years, from 1839 to 1861, Bludov headed both the Imperial Chancery Section on Codification and the State Council Department of Law. In 1861 he was appointed chairman of the Committee of Ministers, a post he held until his death in 1864. Certainly lack of professional training did not impede Bludov's career as a bureaucrat.

<sup>87</sup>Samuel Kucherov, Courts, Lawyers, and Trials under the Last Three Tsars (New York, 1953), p. 122.



professional training occurred, together with a corresponding decline in military education. Under Nicholas II, however, the trend towards more professional training was slowed, and the trend towards less military training was reversed, just as the old homogeneity of social origins was reasserted. One can surmise that the tables~~es~~ showing social origins and educational training indicate interrelated phenomena. Under Alexander III, that is, social origins were losing some of their former significance for the attainment of high office, and, correspondingly, professional training was increasing in importance. This apparent trend towards the selection of ministers on a basis of formal qualifications rather than traditional ties was reversed under Nicholas II.<sup>88</sup>

The connection of education with the social and national origins of the ministers deserves additional exploration. The suggestion has been made that the key to the high social mobility of the ten non-noble ministers might be found within their educational backgrounds. Similarly, the proposal has been made that foreigners served on the Committee of Ministers in the early decades of the nineteenth century because of their superior training by contemporary Russian standards. Both of these arguments are supported by examining each group's level of educational attainment.

Both the group of ten non-noble ministers and the group

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<sup>88</sup> Further substantiation of these differences between the periods of Alexander III and Nicholas II are seen in the career traits characterizing the ministers during these two reigns, an issue taken up in the next chapter.

of ten foreign ministers were quite well educated, if attainment of higher education is used as an indication of superior training. Eight of the non-noble ministers attended higher educational institutions and two attended secondary schools; none were home tutored. Of the foreign born ministers, five attended secondary schools, three went to higher institutions, and one was tutored at home.<sup>89</sup> The outstanding educational achievement of the non-noble group is self-evident. And, within the context of the years 1878 to 1808, when all the foreigners entered Russian state service, the level of their training is high, too. For these two groups, indeed, "education had become the route to a successful career."<sup>90</sup>

If education was the key to unlocking high administrative doors for the non-nobles and the foreigners, it does not seem unreasonable that the Germans opened doors in the same manner. Some historians have explained the large numbers of Germans in high Imperial offices largely on the basis of tsar's personal preferences, while others have stressed the political loyalty of the Germans to autocracy.<sup>91</sup> As noted earlier, the Germans themselves asserted the superior educational achievement of their national group, relative to the Russian bureaucrats.

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<sup>89</sup>Educational data was not available for one minister of foreign birth.

<sup>90</sup>Pintner, "The Social Characteristics of the Early Nineteenth-Century Russian Bureaucracy," p. 443.

<sup>91</sup>Riasanovsky, Nicholas I and Official Nationality in Russia, p. 144.

Certainly this German assumption of superiority is lent credence by the comparison of the educational backgrounds of the German and of the Russian ministers.

Again if one assumes that attainment of higher education indicates superior training, the German ministers were better educated than their Russian colleagues. Sixty-two per cent of the Germans had attended institutions of higher learning, as opposed to only forty-two per cent of the Russians. Within the higher education category itself, thirty-eight per cent of the Germans had attended universities, as opposed to only seventeen per cent of the Russians. Conversely, while only five per cent of the Germans received private tutoring, thirty-two per cent of the Russians were educated at home.<sup>92</sup>

The high educational attainment shared by these three groups--the non-nobles, foreigners, and Germans--indicates that educational success helped, in turn, to bring success in a service career. The high educational attainment of the ministers as a group indicates again that advancement in state service was facilitated by the achievement of a high level of education. Indeed, government regulations themselves institutionalized the boost up the service ladder given by attainment of higher education. A university student's attainment of a candidate's

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<sup>92</sup>It is notable that only Russian and German ministers attended Tsarskoe Selo Lyceum and the Imperial Corps of Pages; these two elite schools were attended by future ministers of no other nationality. This fact underlines the favored position of the Russian and German nationalities within the Empire.

degree brought conferral of the twelfth civil chin,<sup>93</sup> and graduates of Tsarskoe Selo Lyceum were entitled to chin fourteen through nine, depending upon their final educational standing.<sup>94</sup>

To round out this examination of the ministers' educational backgrounds and to introduce the following discussion of career traits, activities pursued by future ministers upon completion of their studies are considered. Here the common model is quite definite. Ninety-two per cent of the ministers entered state service upon completion of their education. The remaining eight per cent were divided equally among teaching and travelling.<sup>95</sup>

Overall, however, the pattern of entry into state service upon completion of education was prevalent among members of the Committee of Ministers during all periods of its existence. Moreover, with but few exceptions, the ministers had no occupational experiences outside of state service. There exists a possibility that brief periods of time within a minister's official career were spent outside state service. Although

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<sup>93</sup>Flynn, "The Universities, the Gentry, and the Russian Imperial Services, 1815-1825," p. 491.

<sup>94</sup>Andreevskii, ed., Entsiklopedicheskii slovar', XXXIV, p. 859.

<sup>95</sup>While travelling was indicated by five ministers as a post-educational occupation in the 1770's and 1780's, four ministers taught before entering bureaucratic service in the 1840's and 1850's. These were the only periods when less than ninety per cent of the future ministers entered state service directly after completing education.

indications of such career breaks were few in the biographical information obtained for the ministers, it is conceivable that such leaves were taken but not recorded in the biographies.

Even with this chance of a minister's mid-career hiatus from service, the dominant pattern for the ministers as a whole was that of lifelong service to the state. The stage is thus set for an examination of these ministers' service careers and of relationships between career characteristics and the social attributes described within this chapter.

## CHAPTER IV

### CAREER CHARACTERISTICS OF THE MINISTERS

The career characteristics chosen for study bear primarily upon two periods during a minister's official life, his initial entry into state service and his service on the Committee of Ministers. In general, these traits involve the early and the final, most influential years of a minister's career. There is one partial exception to the exclusion of mid-career characteristics; certain attributes were selected for study which indicate the amount of military service the members of the Committee of Ministers performed, in order to disclose how many ministers served solely as civil bureaucrats and how many had careers of combined civil and military service. The following information, therefore, was assembled on each minister's career: date of entry into state service, area of state service first entered; duration of military service, military chin; post held on the Committee of Ministers with attendant dates; activity after post.

No detailed charting of positions held during the mid-career period is attempted for two reasons. First, coding of all the positions held by a successful bureaucrat over a lengthy period of time would be mechanically impracticable. Second, consideration of all positions held by an individual in order to map the vagaries of his career would involve, of

necessity, a scheme for ordering the importance of these positions, again nearly an impossible task. What this chapter undertakes is thus a description of certain areas of the path traversed by a minister's career, not an exploration of its total course.<sup>96</sup>

In the previous chapter, descriptions of ministerial social backgrounds were used to characterize both the ministers as a whole and the ministers separated into five groups according to the reign or reigns in which they held positions. In this chapter, descriptions of ministers' official careers are similarly utilized. The first concern is the relationship between civil and military service in ministerial careers, with the choice of service area being related to the ministers' positions on the Committee and to their social backgrounds. In the second part of the chapter, the period of ministerial careers spent in actual service on the Committee of Ministers is investigated. Career traits drawn from this examination are used to characterize the Committee as constituted during the five reigns of its existence. Such an arrangement of the data reveals prominent patterns both in the lives of the ministers and in the life of the Committee of Ministers.

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<sup>96</sup>Armstrong's study, "Tsarist and Soviet Elite Administrators," which deals extensively with career attributes, also omits consideration of officials' mid-career years.

### Military and Civil Careers

The extent of military service in the careers of the members of the Committee of Ministers has a double significance. First, historians of the Imperial period have traditionally emphasized the military's influence on all aspects of Russian government from the time of Peter the Great onward, with the age of Nicholas I the proverbial high point of military influence in the nineteenth century.<sup>97</sup> Since the Committee of Ministers was the highest administrative institution within the civil bureaucracy, a high proportion of members with military careers would represent one manifestation of such an extensive military influence on the direction of civilian affairs. Second, Marc Raeff maintains that in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, movement of servants of the Russian state from one area of government to another was common, as was the practice of simultaneous military and civil service.<sup>98</sup> Yet, Pintner, as stated earlier, emphasizes the predominance of exclusively civil careers in his sample of Imperial bureaucrats, even among his topmost group, by the early nineteenth century.<sup>99</sup> The data collected for this study can indicate whether the mixing of military and civil careers described by Raeff continued

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<sup>97</sup> Monas, "Bureaucracy in Russia under Nicholas I," p. 271.

<sup>98</sup> Marc Raeff, Plans for Political Reforms in Russia, 1730-1905 (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1966), p. 12.

<sup>99</sup> Pintner, "Early Nineteenth-Century Russian Bureaucracy," p. 431.



throughout the existence of the Committee of Ministers and when the trend towards professionalization identified by Pintner appeared within it.

It will be remembered that the Committee of Ministers at all times included within its membership heads of the military departments; their representation was never below two. Because the Ministers of War and Navy traditionally were military servants in Imperial Russia, these members of the Committee of Ministers at least may be expected to have had military careers. But, military men could have held high civil as well as military positions.

One measure of military prominence is the proportion of future ministers first entering Russian state service in the military. Data on service entry is available for one hundred ninety-eight of the ministers. Of that number, one hundred twenty entered military service. Only seventy-eight entered civil service, and, of those, three served in the military at some point during their official careers.<sup>100</sup> The total number of ministers who spent at least part of their lives in military service--one hundred twenty-three--is a clear majority, over sixty per cent of the total.

Fully one hundred ministers served continuously in the military throughout their service careers; moreover, some service in the civil bureaucracy was indicated in all of these

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<sup>100</sup>Of the three ministers who initially entered civil service and only later acquired military experience, two briefly left bureaucratic careers to serve in the Russian army against the invading French in 1812.

one hundred ministers' service histories. An additional twenty-three ministers spent from one to ten years in the military before switching to the civil bureaucracy and sole service in that area. Thus of the one hundred ninety-eight ministers for whom data is available, fifty per cent had military careers, and an additional twelve per cent had some military experience. Only thirty-eight per cent served solely in the civil bureaucracy before entering the Committee. One further measure of this military predominance is the fact that fully forty per cent of the Committee's members held a high military chin, from rank one to four.<sup>101</sup> An ostensibly civilian administrative body, the Committee of Ministers, included vast military representation.

To further investigate this military presence, it may be asked how many ministerial positions of a non-military character were filled by military leaders. To pursue this question, criteria were devised to separate all of the Committee of Minister's positions into two basic classifications, security and non-security. The term security designates the broadest set of positions on the Committee which could be thought of as most reasonably held by an official with military training. This classification, therefore, includes not only positions directly related to war and defense but also those dealing with the maintenance of order within the Empire.

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<sup>101</sup>This information, like the data on title-holding, is provided uniformly for the state personnel listed in Amburger, Geschichte der Behördenorganisation Russlands von Peter dem Grossen bis 1917.

Besides the above-mentioned ministers of War and Navy, offices dealing with external defense included chiefs of the Army and Naval Staffs, head of the Naval Ministry, and the chairman of the State Council Department of Military Affairs. The following offices were concerned with internal order: minister and assistant minister of Internal Affairs, minister of Police, St. Petersburg Military Governor, heads of Imperial Chancery Sections III and V (managing respectively the secret police and Polish affairs), chairman of the State Council Department of Affairs of Tsarist Poland, and minister-state secretary for Tsarist Poland. Of these positions, only the three dealing with Polish affairs need further explanation. A position related to Poland was first represented on the Committee of Ministers in 1832, immediately after the first Polish revolt. All three positions were included in the Committee's membership only during the mid-nineteenth century, the years of greatest unrest within the Polish part of the Empire.<sup>102</sup> All of this indicates that these positions were primarily concerned with internal security.<sup>103</sup>

Of the total two hundred ninety-three positions held during the Committee of Ministers' existence, ninety were classed

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<sup>102</sup>Of the three Polish posts on the Committee of Ministers, only two overlapped in tenure, from 1841 to 1861.

<sup>103</sup>The inclusion of so many offices related to internal security is one reflection of the Imperial government's authoritarian priorities, its intense concern with the control of its population.

as security and two hundred three as non-security. In table 10, which compares the military backgrounds of holders of security and non-security positions, the percentages are based on those two hundred eighty positions for which there was information.

There is an association between military experience and the holding of a security position. Military careers were twice as common among holders of security positions as among holders of non-security positions (see table 10). While eighty-one per cent of the ministers filling security offices had some military service, only half the holders of non-security positions did so. But, viewed from a slightly different perspective, this information reveals that fully half of the non-security positions on the Committee of Ministers were held by men who had had some military experience--over one-third by men who had made their careers in the military. While a military history may be seen as functional for holders of security positions, its relevance to non-security, totally civilian offices seems more questionable. Yet holders of certain civil positions quite commonly had military service.

The top four military chin<sup>104</sup> were commonly held by officials in the following non-security positions on the Committee of Ministers: minister of State Lands, Education, Imperial Court, and Means of Communication, chairmen of the Committee itself and of the State Council Department of State Economy, and the special members. Since technical and

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<sup>104</sup>High military chin is used as an indicator of sustained military careers.

TABLE 10

DURATION OF MILITARY SERVICE OF MINISTERS HOLDING  
SECURITY AND NON-SECURITY POSITIONS ON  
THE COMMITTEE OF MINISTERS

Type of position held	Number of positions with known information	No military service	Military career	1-10 years military
Security	87	19%	73%	8% <sup>5</sup>
Non-Security	193	50%	35%	15%
	280	41%	46%	13%

engineering training were available in the army,<sup>105</sup> military backgrounds may be seen to have provided practical knowledge useful for the heads of two agencies, Means of Communication and State Economy. Officials serving in both of these capacities handled affairs related to the technological development and modernization of the Russian Empire.<sup>106</sup> The military status of the special members, chairmen of the Committee, and ministers of State Lands and Imperial Court attest to the emperors' preferences for military advisers. The special members and chairman of the Committee of Ministers were named at the tsar's pleasure, regardless of their official capacities; and the ministers of State Lands and Imperial Court were more closely related to the tsar's personal affairs than to state administration.<sup>107</sup> The remaining position, minister of Education, was held by twenty officials during the Committee's existence, five of whom held high military chin.<sup>108</sup> At first glance, military training

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<sup>105</sup>Armstrong, "Tsarist and Soviet Elite Administrators," p. 18.

<sup>106</sup>Eroshkin, Ocherki istorii gosudarstvennykh uchrezhdenii dorevoliutsionnoi Rossii, p. 280.

<sup>107</sup>As a palace preserve, the Ministry of Imperial Courts was even outside the financial jurisdiction of the State controller. After the state serfs were freed in 1866, the Ministry of State Lands administered the remaining crown properties; in 1894 it became the Ministry of Agriculture and State Lands. Ibid., p. 214, 281.

<sup>108</sup>The combined tenures of ministers of Education holding high military rank equalled twelve years--nine years under Nicholas I, one under Alexander II, and two under Nicholas II. Five other education ministers had also had some service in the military, and their total tenure was twenty-seven years.

might seem irrelevant to educational matters. However, the Ministry of Education in tsarist Russia was concerned not only with the quality of education but also with the control of schools and their often obstreperous students. It is not far-fetched to assume that, from the government's point of view, a knowledge of security procedures was useful for an education minister.<sup>109</sup>

Conversely, the type of civilian positions in which military backgrounds were least common illustrates a significant pattern in the civilian bureaucracy. The holding of military chin by officials in the following positions was exceedingly rare: ministers of Finance and Justice, state secretary, state controller, head of Imperial Chancery Section II on codification, and chairman of the State Council Department of Law. All of these positions dealt with complex legalistic or financial areas. A degree of professionalization of the personnel filling these specialized offices is indicated by the fact that few of them were from the military elite.

The incidence of military service on the Committee of Ministers may also be considered along a temporal dimension. Simultaneous military and civil service has been described as

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<sup>109</sup>After the initial outbreak of student unrest in Kharkhov in 1858, student strikes became a prevalent feature of Russian life, with disorders in St. Petersburg in 1861, 1869, 1874, widespread disturbances in the early 1880's, and particularly notable ones in 1894, 1896, 1899, 1901, and 1904. Originally sporadic and accidental, the student revolts merged into an organized political movement by the 1870's. Hans, The History of Russian Educational Policy (1701-1917), *passim*.

characteristic of bureaucratic careers in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.<sup>110</sup> The question is thus raised whether military careers were more prominent among the administrative elite of the Empire in the early reigns of the nineteenth century than in later parts of the century.

Indeed, when the military experience of the ministers is arranged according to the half-century in which they entered state service, temporal distinctions in career patterns can be seen. Table 11 presents the ministers' military experience in this manner. The contrast between eighteenth and nineteenth century career patterns is striking. It was clearly more common for a future minister entering state service in the eighteenth century to serve in the military than it was for either his early or late nineteenth century counterpart. By the mid-nineteenth century, entry into state service in the civil bureaucracy characterized a majority of future ministers. At the same time, however, one must not underestimate the continued importance of the career pattern of simultaneous service among the administrative elite, since fully forty-two per cent of the officials entering state service even in the second half of the nineteenth century had combined military and civil careers.

The connections between social backgrounds and military or civil service may also be traced. By relating the social characteristics determined for the ministers in the last

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<sup>110</sup>Raeff, "Russian Autocracy and Its Officials," p. 82.



TABLE 11

DURATION OF MILITARY SERVICE OF THE MINISTERS,  
ARRANGED BY DATE OF ENTRY INTO STATE SERVICE

Period in which ministers entered state service	Number of ministers with known data	No military service	Military career	1-10 years military
1750-1800	50	20%	60%	20%
1801-1850	78	42%	48%	10%
1851-1900	33	58%	42%	. .
No dates	37	35%	51%	14%
	198	38%	50%	12%

chapter--national and social origins and educational experiences--to their service careers, additional influences on the choice of a service career may be seen.

In the previous chapter, the Committee of Minister's membership was divided into several groups based on various social characteristics. Singled out for detailed comparative study were the ministers of non-noble birth, the ministers of foreign birth, and the Russian and German ministers. Considerable differences are apparent among these groups in their degree of inclination toward military careers.

Service of a combined military and civil nature was common among ministers of noble, of Russian, and of foreign birth, but for ministers of non-noble or German birth solely civil service was the norm. While only thirty-five per cent of the noble-born ministers had no military service, seven of the ten non-noble ministers served only in the civil bureaucracy. While a minority of the Russian ministers, thirty-three per cent, had no military service, a fifty-six per cent majority of the German ministers had only civil service. Among the group of ten ministers of foreign birth who immigrated to Russia at the turn of the century, eight entered Russian military service and made their lifelong careers in that area.

One may explore as well the connections between the occupation of a minister's father and the career choice of his son. Approximately thirty per cent of the ministers who were either sons of landowners or of military officers had no military service, while fully fifty-six per cent of the sons

of civil servants served only in the civil bureaucracy. The small groups of priests' sons and educators' sons were divided equally between military careers and solely civil ones, while the two physicians' sons and the only merchant's son had no military service at all. Among sons of landowners and military officers, the practice of joint military and civil service was common; however, the majority of bureaucrats' sons did not have military service, but worked in the bureaucracy like their fathers before them.

Before drawing together all of the interrelations between social characteristics and the incidence of military and civil careers among members of the Committee of Ministers, one final topic should be explored: the effect of the ministers' educational training on their choice of service area. To examine this relationship between educational experience and career choices, tables 12 and 13 utilize the methods of classifying educational training employed in the previous chapter. Table 12 compares the ministers' type of education to their patterns of civil service or combined military and civil service. There is a strong correlation between the type of educational training attained by the ministers and their choice of service area.

Not unexpectedly, attendance at a military school influenced a minister's choice of service career tremendously. As shown in table 12, only for the ministers trained in military educational institutions was it most common to have a military career. Conversely, of those ministers receiving a general

TABLE 12

DURATION OF THE MINISTERS' MILITARY SERVICE,  
COMPARED WITH TYPE OF EDUCATION ATTAINED

Type of education	Number of ministers with known data	No military	Military career	0-10 years military
General education	113	46%	40%	14%
Military education	50	2%	84%	14%
Technical and professional education	22	82%	14%	5%
	185	38%	49%	13%

education, nearly half had no military service whatsoever.

Among the few ministers identified as trained in professional and technical schools, military service was least common.

While the predominantly legalistic training of this latter group dictated a solely bureaucratic career, military training did otherwise.

Like the type of education received by a minister, the level of formal education he attained also influenced his service career. Table 13 categorizes the ministers according to their levels of education and their civil or military careers. Here again there is a very strong correlation between educational experience and service career.

As indicated in table 13, the more highly schooled a future minister, the more likely he was to have a solely civil service career. Both those groups of ministers who were home tutored and who attended secondary schools most frequently had military careers. But this pattern was reversed for those ministers who had attended higher educational institutions. Of those for whom there is complete data, fully sixty-seven per cent of the ministers educated in higher institutions served only in the civil bureaucracy, while only fifteen per cent of the home educated and ten per cent of secondary educated officials had no military experience.<sup>111</sup>

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<sup>111</sup> Within this category of higher education, fifteen of the seventeen ministers who graduated from Tsarskoe Selo Lyceum became solely civil servants. Similarly, of the forty-two ministers who had attended universities, thirty-two had state service careers entirely in the civil bureaucracy.

TABLE 13

DURATION OF THE MINISTERS' MILITARY SERVICE,  
 COMPARED WITH LEVEL OF EDUCATION ACHIEVED

Level of education	Number of ministers with known data	No military service	Military career	0-10 years military
Home education	46	15%	70%	15%
Secondary education	51	10%	70%	20%
Higher education	88	67%	25%	8%
	185	38%	49%	13%

The close relationship between a totally civil career in the state service and higher education would seem, therefore, to be evident in these careers of the ministers. Indeed, this connection between higher education and civil service serves to link all of the intricate relationships among the variously differentiated social groups and their choice of civil or military career. Both the German group of ministers and the non-noble group had a demonstrably high level of formal schooling; both of these groups went in greatest numbers into the civil bureaucracy rather than into the military. This career pattern of these two highly educated groups plus the tendency of sons of bureaucrats to enter the civil service, not the military, indicate that the civil service drew educated talent from a widening social base and was becoming a self-perpetuating group. In contrast to these highly schooled, socially diverse groups of future ministers who went more frequently into the civil bureaucracy, the military drew from a less highly educated group and from the landed Russian nobility. That both land-owners' sons and military officers' sons most commonly had military educations and subsequent military careers attests to the convergence of these traditionally dominant social groups upon the military area of state service.

Information on the careers of the members of the Committee of Ministers thus suggests that the civil bureaucracy was becoming the only career for large numbers of better trained, upwardly mobile servicemen by the mid-nineteenth century. Yet, table 11 also indicates that the combination of

military with civil service was still common among future members of the administrative elite. In order to assess the relative frequency of the two career patterns, exclusive service in the civil bureaucracy and simultaneous service in the military and civil areas, on the Committee of Ministers, one must turn to a description of career characteristics of the Committee during each of the five reigns of its existence. Accordingly, table 14 illustrates the duration of military experience of the ministers according to the reigns in which they held positions.<sup>112</sup>

Table 14 documents that the positions on the Committee of Ministers were filled increasingly during the course of the nineteenth century by men who had served solely in the civil bureaucracy. While under Alexander I a majority, fifty-three per cent, of the Committee's positions were held by military careerists, by the reign of Alexander II the percentages of positions on the Committee held by men with some military experience and by those with none at all were equal. The reign of Nicholas I, much touted by historians for his militaristic outlook, indeed was the high point in the Committee's existence for the share of offices held by military careerists.<sup>113</sup> After this peak of military influence on the Committee, the

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<sup>112</sup>As with such previous tables, the unit employed is an individual's holding of a ministerial post under one tsar.

<sup>113</sup>Under Nicholas I half of the Committee's positions were filled by officials holding the top four military chiny; in all other reigns of the Committee's existence, their share only approximated half of the posts.



TABLE 14

DURATION OF MILITARY EXPERIENCE ON THE COMMITTEE  
OF MINISTERS, ARRANGED BY POST AND REIGN

Reign in which post was held	Number of positions with known data	No military service	Military career	0-10 years military
Alexander I	77	22%	53%	25%
Nicholas I	72	26%	57%	17%
Alexander II	88	50%	43%	7%
Alexander III	46	65%	28%	7%
Nicholas II	49	59%	39%	2%
	332	42%	46%	12%

largest increase in the percentage of posts held by civilian ministers occurred under Alexander II. The only reign in which the military's share of positions grew from the preceding reign was that of Nicholas II.

Increasingly through the course of the nineteenth century, then, the places on the Committee of Ministers were filled by officials whose only area of service had been the civil bureaucracy. This trend may be seen as reflecting two different processes. On the one hand, as the civil bureaucracy grew in size and increased in the complexity of the tasks it undertook, its need for competent personnel to run the state apparatus grew. Concurrently, the decline in the economic status of landed nobility, hastened by the emancipation, caused them to sell their estates and to seek financial and status rewards in the expanding bureaucracy. Thus, mutual needs facilitated this identification of part of the nobility with the bureaucracy.<sup>114</sup>

The trend towards professionalization of the Imperial bureaucracy has been noted by Pintner. What is most interesting in comparing his findings for top civil bureaucrats with data for the members of the Committee of Ministers, is that, while he suggests that by the beginning of the nineteenth century even the topmost levels of the bureaucracy had become a professional, self-perpetuating group, this pattern does not become

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<sup>114</sup>Baron S. A. Korf, Dvorianstvo i ego soslovnnoe upravlenie za stoletie 1762-1855 godov (St. Petersburg, 1906), p. 474.

the dominant one on the Committee of Ministers until after the age of Alexander II.<sup>115</sup> What seems most notable, then, about the figures documenting the greater numbers of Committee positions held by civil bureaucrats under Alexander III is that the trend towards professionalization among bureaucrats was so long in reaching the administrative elite. Concurrently, one sees that the habit of simultaneous service, which Raeff identifies as an eighteenth and early nineteenth century phenomenon, was still fairly common on the Committee in the late nineteenth century, and actually underwent a resurgence under Nicholas II (table 14).

Pintner generalizes, too, that by mid-nineteenth century the bureaucracy was comprised of approximately half nobles and half non-nobles, while one quarter of his sample of top level bureaucrats were non-nobles.<sup>116</sup> In contrast, the number of the Committee's positions held by non-nobles was greatest under Alexander III, but even then was only ten per cent (table 3). Relative to Pintner's sample of top bureaucrats, the findings on the continued significant numbers of military men are consistent, then, with the earlier conclusions about the widening of the social composition of the Committee which took place during Alexander III's reign. What is demonstrated here

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<sup>115</sup>Pintner, "Early Nineteenth-Century Russian Bureaucracy," p. 431. It is to be remembered that while Pintner's group of top civil officials includes holders of the top five civil chiny, the Committee members held the top three.

<sup>116</sup>Ibid., p. 437, table 9.

seems to be the interrelation of several phenomena, all operating together, making up one consistent, intricate pattern.

As identified in Pintner's study, the picture of a self-perpetuating, professionalized civil service was made up of many components. Among these were movement of the nobility from dependence on their landholdings to dependence upon the civil service for both subsistence and status and concurrently movement of limited numbers of non-nobles through the ranks of the civil service facilitated by the achievement of higher education. According to Pintner, all these processes were characteristic of the top level of the bureaucracy at the middle of the nineteenth century. All of the components of this picture have been identified also in the foregoing descriptions of social and career characteristics of the members of the Committee of Ministers. But if Pintner's picture is an accurate one for the bureaucracy as a whole at the turn of the nineteenth century and for the top level at mid-century, it is an inaccurate depiction of the Committee of Ministers--until the advent of Alexander III. The only part of Pintner's picture which has been a prominent image in these descriptions of the Committee of Ministers has been the role that higher education played in determining administrative advancement.

In short, the social and economic forces which played their part in professionalizing the civil service took longer to affect changes in the elite reaches of Imperial service. This has been indicated in the previous chapter by the titled,

landowning nobility's continued, persistent hold of the greatest portion of the Committee's positions and in this chapter by the continued presence of the military on the Committee in significant numbers. Yet, the components of professionalization finally reached even to the Committee of Ministers. As shown with complete consistency in the tables which have arranged the ministers' social and career characteristics by the reigns in which they held positions on the Committee, the reign of Alexander III was the turning point for all the components of professionalization studied. Again with complete consistency, the following reign of Nicholas II saw a reversal of this pattern. That this revival of more traditionally dominant groups occurred on the Committee of Ministers under Nicholas II has been connected to the resurgence of the representatives and interests of the landed nobility during his reign. In turning now to a final exploration of the ministers' careers during their actual periods of service on the Committee of Ministers, one must be on the watch for other patterns evident within the Committee's history which might serve to connect it further to the forces of change at work outside the Committee's door.

#### Service on the Committee

The path to the Committee of Ministers for an advancing official was a long one. Since the ministers' average age at entry onto the Committee was fifty-two years, bureaucrats spent over three decades in state service before attaining elite status on the Committee. Moreover, the road to ministerial

power was almost equally long during all the reigns of its existence. When the two average ages of entry into state service and onto the Committee are determined for each tsar's ministers as a group, and the pre-ministerial career period determined from these averages, the variations are slight indeed (see table 15). Even though age at entry into state service rose throughout the nineteenth century, approximately the same period of time was spent in state service before reaching the Committee for ministers of Alexander I as for those of Nicholas II, thirty-four years and thirty-three years, respectively. Most of the ministers had no career experience other than their lengthy state service, and few innovations requiring social change could be expected to emanate from a group of men who had spent three decades exclusively in governmental work which emphasized order and hierarchy. Conventional bureaucratic solutions to problems of vast complexity might rather be anticipated of the Committee of Ministers, on which gerontocracy was the rule.<sup>117</sup>

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<sup>117</sup>It is notable that two men who sought far-reaching solutions to governmental problems, Speranskii and Witte, were quite youthful by the Committee's standards when they first entered the Committee. Speranskii was thirty-eight when he first sat on the Committee in 1808; Witte was forty-three when he entered the Committee in 1892. Speranskii's service on the Committee fell into two distinct periods, 1808 to 1812, when he was abruptly dismissed from power by Alexander I, and 1838 to 1839, the year of his death. When Speranskii rejoined the Committee he had completed compilation of all the Empire's laws, an important task, but not requiring change on a wide scale, as had his plans for governmental reform in the 1800's. Marc Raeff, Michael Speransky: Statesman of Imperial Russia 1772-1839 (The Hague, 1957), passim.

TABLE 15

AVERAGE AGE AT ENTRY INTO STATE SERVICE AND AT  
ENTRY ONTO THE COMMITTEE OF MINISTERS

Reign during which minister first entered the Committee	Average age at entry into state service	Average age at entry onto the Committee	Average pre-ministerial career period
Alexander I	16 years	50 years	34 years
Nicholas I	17 years	53 years	36 years
Alexander II	18 years	52 years	34 years
Alexander III	21 years	54 years	33 years
Nicholas II	21 years	54 years	33 years

Once officials reached the Committee of Ministers, it was not uncommon for them to hold more than one ministerial position. As mentioned earlier, a total of two hundred eleven men served on the Committee of Ministers, and among them they held two hundred ninety-three positions. One hundred fifty-three ministers held only one position on the Committee, forty-four held two, nine held three, two held four, one held five, and two held six. All of the ministers who held more than three positions joined the Committee under Alexander I or Nicholas I. No one serving after the 1860's held more than three ministerial positions. The greater holding of simultaneous or consecutive positions during the early reigns of the nineteenth century was perhaps a response to the smaller number of educated personnel available to staff high administrative positions. This holding of multiple posts during Nicholas I's reign also confirms the judgement of historians who have noted that once Nicholas chose to trust an official he was hesitant to lose him, preferring a very small circle of officials to perform countless duties.<sup>118</sup> While versatility may have been feasible for Nicholas' officials, the greater magnitude and complexity of governmental affairs after the 1860's<sup>119</sup> seems to have curtailed the ministerial practice of holding many high positions either simultaneously or consecutively.

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<sup>118</sup> Polievktov, Nikolai I: Biografiia i obzor tsarstvovaniia, p. 84.

<sup>119</sup> Eroshkin, Ocherki istorii gosudarstvennykh uchrezhdenii dorevoliutsionnoi Rossii, p. 202.



The actual positions held on the Committee of Ministers can be related to the social characteristics of the officials who held them. Among the groups of ministers whose identifying characteristics were non-noble birth, foreign birth, and German nationality, there are similar patterns in the positions commonly held. To explore these differences, two classifications of the Committee's positions are utilized. The first is a division into security and non-security offices, as employed in the previous section. The second is a division into technical and non-technical categories.

Positions involving matters of law, state finance, or applied science are classified as technical. Offices dealing with legal affairs included the minister and assistant minister of Justice, and heads of Imperial Chancery Section II on Codification, State Council Committee of Law, and the Codification Department.<sup>120</sup> Handling the finances of the Empire were state treasurer, state controller, minister and assistant minister of Finance, and chairman of the State Council Department of State Economy. Finally, offices of an applied scientific nature included ministers of War and Navy, chiefs of the Naval and Army Staffs, head and minister of Means of Communication, head of the Naval Ministry, and chairmen of the State Council Departments of Military Affairs and of Industry, Science, and

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<sup>120</sup> Upon the abolition of Section II in 1882, the Codification Department was created within the State Council to handle legal matters formerly under Section II's jurisdiction. Amburger, Geschichte der Behördenorganisation Russlands von Peter dem Grossen bis 1917, p. 82.

Trade. Of the two hundred ninety-three positions held on the Committee of Ministers, one hundred thirty-three are therefore included in the technical category. It can be assumed that these offices all required a higher degree of specific knowledge than the remaining positions represented on the Committee of Ministers. It should be noted that the two classification systems employed--technical and non-technical, security and non-security--are not mutually exclusive, but indeed overlap in some cases. (Offices involving the army and navy are classed both as security and as technical positions. Of the two hundred ninety-three positions held by ministers on the Committee, eighty are placed under the security designation.)

The ten ministers of non-noble birth held a total of thirteen positions, none involving security matters. Undoubtedly, this reflects the lack of military service among the non-nobles, only three of whom had military careers. Nine of the thirteen posts were technical, and within this group two non-noble ministers with military careers headed the Department of Means of Communication.<sup>121</sup> All of the four non-nobles with legal schooling used their legal expertise in legal positions. Thus, the earlier demonstrated high level of education of the non-nobles was utilized in offices requiring special knowledge. On the average the non-nobles entered state service at twenty-seven years; this atypically late beginning--four of the non-

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<sup>121</sup>Created in 1802 as an independent department concerned with transportation and construction of governmental buildings, Means of Communication became a ministry in 1865. Ibid., p. 260.

noble ministers taught before entering state service-- pushed their average age of first entry onto the Committee to fifty-seven years; however, their in-service career period was three years less than average.

Similarly, the foreign-born ministers also entered state service later than the overall average, at twenty-five years, but this did not retard their progress toward elite status. In fact, their in-service career period was the shortest of any group, only twenty-seven years. Of the ten positions held by the foreigners, eight were technical. In light of the strong military backgrounds of the foreigners--four had military education, eight had served in the military in Europe--it seems curious that only two of their positions on the Committee involved security matters. A fear of foreigners as poor security risks seems not to have kept them from security appointments; indeed, a Frenchman held a security post throughout the Russian conflict with Napoleon.<sup>122</sup> Rather, engineering skills acquired by foreign-born ministers in European military service seems to have led to their holding technical, non-security positions. This pattern is most evident in the fact that four of the first six heads of the Department of Means of Communication were from either France or the German states. The foreign ministers then represented a continuation of the Petrine tradition of importing technical expertise from Western Europe.

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<sup>122</sup>Marquis I. I. Traversay was Minister of Navy from 1811 to 1828. A former French fleet captain, he immigrated to Russia in 1791 during the French Revolution.

Like the non-nobles and the foreigners on the Committee, the Germans occupied mostly technical posts. Fifty-five per cent of the positions held by German ministers required technical knowledge, and only ten per cent involved security matters. The types of offices held by the Germans therefore reflected both their high level of educational attainment and their overall lack of military training. In comparison with the Germans, one third of the positions held by the Russian ministers were security positions, and only forty per cent are classified as technical. Put another way, the biographical information on the ministers reveals that of the eighty security positions held on the Committee of Ministers, eighty per cent were filled by Russians. As with the other groups, education and extent of military background determined the placement of Russian and German officials. With predominantly military backgrounds, the Russians held the security positions, while the Germans held technical offices. Both the higher level of education of the Germans and their exclusively civil careers led to technical positions, indicating a greater degree of professionalization in their careers. The specialized nature of the Germans' duties is illustrated by the fact that seven of the fifteen ministers of Finance were German.

On the average, the German ministers entered Imperial service at age twenty-one and began service on the Committee at age forty-nine. Their in-service career period, twenty-eight years, was five years shorter than the overall average. It can be postulated that both the higher level of education and in

turn the greater degree of professionalization among the German group hastened their advance to elite status and membership on the Committee of Ministers. (Averages found for the Russian group were no different than those for all ministers on age of entry into state service and entry onto the Committee of Ministers.) Higher education was seen by the government as a desirable qualification for top bureaucratic positions, and in the case of the non-noble, foreign, and German ministers, higher education not only aided their climb to ministerial status but seems to have accelerated the process as well.

The overall average for duration of service on the Committee of Ministers was six years. The type of position and the period during which it was held, however, both affected the length of time ministers remained in their positions. While ministers with non-security duties held office for six years, matching the overall average, those holding security posts were in office for five years. Similarly, the non-technical average was identical to the overall average, but holders of technical positions retained their Committee places for seven years. These variations are slight, but the tendency of faster rotation among security office-holders points toward greater political pressures brought to bear on security offices. Conversely, with their more complex skills, and their emphasis on administrative rather than political matters, heads of technical agencies were left to their specialities slightly longer than average.

The average tenure of ministers during each of the five

reigns indicates the relative stability or instability of the Committee's membership during the nineteenth century. Accordingly, the average number of years spent in a ministerial position was established for the Committee's membership during the following reigns: Alexander I, five years; Nicholas I, nine years; Alexander II, six years; Alexander III, six years; Nicholas II, four years.<sup>123</sup> The salient feature of these tenure statistics is their confirmation of a pattern already manifested, Nicholas I's preference for a small coterie of trusted officials. The brevity of Committee membership under Nicholas II compared to membership under Alexander III is also notable. Comparison between these two averages can be made with few reservations because the reigns of these sovereigns were roughly equal, and both came at the close of the nineteenth century. The end of the Committee of Ministers in the middle of Nicholas II's reign does not even prejudice the statistics because, to cite to a later finding, the turnover in ministerial offices was so great in 1905 that only two ministers retained their offices after 1906.<sup>124</sup> This first indication of instability of the Committee's membership under Nicholas II must be supported from other evidence before causes for this apparent instability

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<sup>123</sup> Ministerial terms of office which extended through more than one reign were split, so that the years served under one tsar were included in the average of one reign, and years served under the following tsar were included in that reign. An exception to this rule is that ministers who carried over from a previous reign were not included in the second reign if they left office within one year of the new emperor's ascension.

<sup>124</sup> Uexkull-Guldenbandt kept the office of state secretary until 1909, and Baron V. B. Frederiks served as Minister of Imperial Court until the end of Romanov rule in 1917.

can be ventured.

While tenure averages are concrete data, ministers' reasons for leaving their Committee positions are more difficult to measure consistently. With the obvious exception of a minister's demise, reasons for the vacation of a high level post were irregularly reported in available sources. Consequently, rather than seeking causes for termination of positions, this study considers the kind of activity undertaken by a minister upon leaving a Committee position. Table 16 presents this information for the ministers serving on the Committee under each of the five tsars.

Undoubtedly due to the ministers' advanced ages, death was the most frequent conclusion to their careers. Twenty-four per cent of all members of the Committee died in office. The fact that almost half of Nicholas I's ministers died in office is another indication of stability of the Committee's membership during his reign. Table 16 further illustrates that the holding of multiple Committee positions was more characteristic of the first half of the nineteenth century than the last, as indicated by the greater portions of both consecutive and simultaneous positions held under Alexander I and Nicholas I. A few ministerial careers were interrupted during periods of war with the French under Alexander I, with the Turks under Alexander II, and with the Japanese under Nicholas II.<sup>125</sup>

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<sup>125</sup>It is difficult to speculate on reasons for the other major Russian conflict's failure to interrupt any ministerial careers. No ministers left the Committee for active military duty during the Crimean War.

TABLE 16

## MINISTERIAL ACTIVITY AFTER POSITION, ARRANGED BY REIGN IN WHICH POSITION ENDED

Activity after position ended	Reigns in which positions ended					Total
	Alexan- der I	Nicholas I	Alexan- der II	Alexan- der III	Nicholas II	
Death in office	14	22	17	5	14	72
Consecutive Committee position	11	5	12	8	4	40
Retention of a Committee position	5	2	2	. .	. .	9
Active military command	3	. .	1	. .	2	6
State Council membership <sup>a</sup>	2	3	15	2	7	29
Administrative changes <sup>b</sup>	. .	. .	2	. .	9	11
Assumption of emperorship	. .	. .	1	1	1	3
Non-Committee governmental position	12	2	18	8	7	47
Temporary retirement	4	. .	. .	. .	. .	4
Final retirement	11	13	16	7	10	57
Unknown	1	3	5	4	2	15
	63	50	89	35	56	293

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<sup>a</sup>All ministers held ex-officio membership on the State Council, in contrast to active membership which is indicated here as a post-ministerial activity.

<sup>b</sup>Administrative changes include alteration in the classification of the post held and termination of the Committee.



The practice of sending ex-ministers to serve in the State Council, inaugurated by Alexander I, was most common under Alexander II who habitually appointed former ministers as lifetime members of the State Council, upon dismissing them from office.<sup>126</sup> Temporary retirements from state service occurred only during the first decade of the Committee's existence, when four ministers left office because of Alexander's alliance with Napoleon. All four returned to active service, however, during the war in 1812, remained in service after the war's conclusion, and later served on the Committee of Ministers again.

From some of the activities listed in table 16, one can safely draw some conclusions about the causes of the ministers' termination of office. On one hand, death, administrative changes, and service in another ministerial post or as tsar or in active military command connote no demotion in political status. On the other hand, the categories of service in the State Council, service in a non-ministerial position, and temporary retirement indicate a loss in status. The category of final retirement does not indicate dismissal, since it was purposely designed to include those ministers about whom sources differed. Thus, the category cloaks those who were actually dismissed from office as well as those who chose to

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<sup>126</sup>Zaionchkovskii, Rossiiskoe samoderzhavie v kontze XIX stoletie, p. 99.

depart.<sup>127</sup>

Two categories--State Council membership and holding of a non-ministerial post--may be used as indicators of possible dismissal from the Committee of Ministers. The number of positions falling in these two categories during each reign reveals parallels to some of the findings in the examination of tenure in office. If these possible dismissals are used as an index of instability of the Committee's membership, Nicholas I's Committee is shown again to be the most stable in membership, and Alexander II's to have been the least stable. While the Committee as constituted under the other three tsars did not differ greatly from the overall rate of twenty-six per cent possible dismissal, only eleven per cent of Nicholas I's ministers as compared to fully forty per cent of Alexander II's ministers appear to have suffered dismissal from Committee positions.<sup>128</sup> While the picture of Nicholas I's Committee is identically drawn by tenure and dismissal indices, the instability of either Alexander II's or Nicholas II's Committees must be

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<sup>127</sup>"Relieved of office at his own request" was the phraseology common in Russkoe biograficheskii slovar'. It is impossible in most cases to get behind this obvious facade of official protocol.

<sup>128</sup>Of course, some ministers were dismissed from a high-level position and appointed to a lesser office, only to regain admission to the Committee at a later date. Such was the case of Minister of Internal Affairs P. A. Valuev, who, upon dismissal from that position in 1868, worked in the State Council. Regaining membership on the Committee of Ministers in 1872, Valuev was appointed to head the Ministry of State Lands. He became chairman of the Committee of Ministers in 1881 and retained that post for two years. P. A. Valuev, Dnevnik P. A. Valueva, ministra vnutrennikh del, ed. by P. A. Zaionchkovskii (2 vols.; Moscow, 1961), I, pp. 30-49.

investigated further, since the two indices are at variance over these reigns.

While the dismissal index is tenuous, turnover statistics documenting rates of appointments to the Committee, like the tenure figures, are based on concrete data. Turnover statistics are more useful than tenure figures, however, because they can be grouped according to single years, clusters of years, or decades, and thus they afford a more detailed view of historical events. A high rate of turnover among governmental elites is generally associated with assumption of a new leader, a drastic change in administrative policy, or governmental problems of crisis proportions. Turnover statistics for the Committee's elite membership, when calculated by decades, reflect the increased rate of governmental crisis following the Great Reforms. While the only decade of high turnover of Committee personnel before the Emancipation Edict was in the 1810's, in the post-reform period the decades of high turnover came more frequently. The 1860's, 1880's, and the half decade from 1900 to 1905 each had more than double the average rate of turnover of the Committee's membership. Conversely, the decades of least turnover occurred from 1820 to 1849. The turnover index underlines again the quiescence of Nicholas I's Committee.

When the turnover index is based on particular years, the periods of highest turnover among the Committee's members

fall in approximately three-year clusters.<sup>129</sup> These three-year clusters, like the decades, occurred once during Alexander I's reign and then again with increasing frequency after the emancipation of the serfs. More specifically, the following years had at least double the average rate of turnover among the Committee's membership: 1810 to 1812, 1861 to 1863, 1879 to 1881, 1882 to 1884, 1893 to 1895, and 1902 to 1905. The connections of the first two clusters to historical events seem definite, the first to the conflict with France and the second to the Emancipation Edict. The connecting clusters, 1879 to 1881 and 1882 to 1884, saw the struggle of autocracy with a revolutionary movement, the assassination of Alexander II and ascension of Alexander III in 1881, and the institution of counter-reforms.<sup>130</sup> The period of 1893 to 1895 witnessed the premature death of Alexander III and assumption of his son, Nicholas II. Finally, the high turnover among the Committee's membership from 1902 to 1905 is obviously connected to the war with Japan and the subsequent revolution.

The relative stability or instability of the Committee of Ministers' elite membership therefore reflect periods of

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<sup>129</sup>Armstrong found six three-year clusters of high turnover among Imperial provincial governors, but in only one cluster of years was there a corresponding high rate of turnover among the Committee's personnel, the period immediately following the Emancipation Edict, 1861 to 1863. Armstrong, "Tsarist and Soviet Elite Administrators," p. 20.

<sup>130</sup>The overlapping of these two stressful periods on the Committee of Ministers lends support to Zaionchkovskii's view that the period from 1881 to 1882 was a continuation of the crisis of autocracy. Zaionchkovskii, Rossiiskoe samoderzhavie, p. 429.

crisis within the Russian Empire; and periods of rapid ministerial turnover indicate a major difference between Russia before and after the Emancipation Edict. As indicated by the rate of turnover of the Committee's membership, there was only one extremely stressful period before the Reform Age. During the first reign of the Committee's existence, the danger to the Empire came from without, from a foreign enemy, Napoleon and the French. In contrast, the greater number of periods of stress in post-Emancipation Russia may be seen as indications of internal pressures rather than external dangers. Reshuffling of officials at the top, among the Committee of Ministers' members, seems to have been an administrative attempt to deal with the complex social forces unleashed by the Emancipation. Especially under Nicholas II, with its resurgence of Committee members from the traditionally dominant military and higher landed nobility, bureaucratic, basically conservative responses to the rising level of crisis in the Empire were expectable. The inappropriateness of bureaucratic solutions to Russia's problems seems indicated by the final period of stress during the Committee of Ministers' existence, which culminated in the reorganization of the Committee itself and finally the abolition of the institution altogether.

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSION

Throughout its century-long existence the Committee of Ministers was dominated by representatives of the leading social group within the Russian Empire. Always comprising a majority on the Committee were Russian ministers of noble birth. While this configuration of identifying traits remained common in the Committee's membership throughout the nineteenth century, two processes were at work during the same period which moderated its traditional dominance.

First, the economic decline of the landed Russian nobility was associated with its loss of the right to own serfs. From the Emancipation onward, the nobility sold their estates with increased frequency. As the nobles gave up their traditional reliance on the hereditary agrarian patrimony, the prop to their ascendant social and economic status, they moved into the welcoming arms of the Russian state bureaucracy, which provided a new basis for their support and status. Striving for successful service careers and attainment of high chiny, the nobility identified with the bureaucracy and its needs; increasing numbers of nobles assumed civil rather than military positions; and likewise increasing numbers of noble ministers were of non-landowning families. This identification of the

nobility with the bureaucracy altered the early nineteenth century position of the nobility as an agrarian elite.

Second, within the bureaucracy itself, the greater organizational complexity and scope of tasks undertaken necessitated a reorientation of certain administrative practices. The government began selecting personnel to promote its own interests in efficiency rather than to maintain the traditionally dominant gentry. To meet its own organizational needs, the state service sought personnel on the basis of capabilities acquired rather than identities inherited. Thus the overall level of education increased among the state's topmost personnel. At the same time the bureaucracy's equation of higher education with superior administrative capability allowed members of the Imperial population not commonly found within elite circles to use education as a route to high state rank. The easiest access to ministerial office for a non-noble was in governmental areas requiring technical knowledge, areas in which the bureaucracy most needed expertise and efficiency.

Together these two interrelated processes constituted a trend towards professionalization. This trend has been found in the bureaucracy as a whole by the mid-nineteenth century, but the whole set of characteristics typifying it did not appear within the governmental elite, as represented by members of the Committee of Ministers, until the reign of Alexander III. While some features of professionalization are discernible earlier, many of its components were still germinating.

The second aspect of this general trend towards pro-

professionalization was particularly vulnerable. The importance of educational attainment had begun to minimize the role of traditionally decisive social origins. Of course education could never entirely supplant those traditional social origins, for they determined in practice who attained higher education. Ministers of noble origin therefore remained in the vast majority, although that majority declined under Alexander III and although the noble ministers' career patterns showed fewer agrarian and military features. Alexander III's reign--insofar as it diversified the social origins of ministers and vitiated their links to the traditionally dominant class--indeed proved to be the peak of the trend of professionalization; because Nicholas II ~~was~~ sympathetic to demands for former protection and privileges by the traditionally dominant military and landed nobility.

These constantly interacting trends, the traditional and the professional, can also be viewed in a pair of composite portraits of ministers drawn in terms of their social and career characteristics. The prototypical member of the Committee of Ministers in the first half of the nineteenth century was a Russian from the landed nobility who served in both the civil and military areas of government and who held more than one elite position within the relatively unprofessionalized bureaucratic apparatus. These types of social and career traits were overwhelmingly ascendant on the Committee during the age of Nicholas I. As the century progressed, however, another prototype, with an essentially different career pattern,



became visible. This minister was indeed a bureaucrat, with his characteristics defined by the needs of the civil service. He acquired a high level of education and professional skills, and those qualifications enabled him to rise through the civil ranks regardless of inherited nationality or social origins. This prototype had more numerous manifestations as the nineteenth century wore on, as the government increased in size and complexity.

On the whole, the social origins and educational experiences of the ministers served to channel their careers close to one prototype or the other. Bureaucrats of German and non-noble birth attained a high level of education, standing them in good stead in the civil service, which they entered far more frequently than military service. As a consequence both of their higher education and their lack of military service, the Germans and non-nobles on the Committee were drawn to offices requiring technical proficiency. In somewhat the same way, the foreign born ministers' high education and technical training directed their careers toward technical positions, toward the area of government most ready to seek professional capabilities as a substitute for inherited elite characteristics. In contrast to these three groups, the Russian ministers tended to have less higher education and more military service; they consequently predominated in security positions on the Committee of Ministers.

The two prototypes, one prominent in the early nineteenth century and the other nascent in the later part of the century,

can be brought into graphic relief by presenting concrete embodiments of them. The lives and careers of two influential ministers are described below, with emphasis on their prototypical characteristics.

Aleksandr Nikolaevich Golitsyn served on the Committee of Ministers continuously from 1810 to 1842. From a Russian family whose noble ancestry pre-dated the age of Peter the Great, Golitsyn inherited the title of prince. The son of a landowner and a guards' captain, Golitsyn was born in 1773 during the reign of Catherine II. He was sent to be educated at the Imperial Corps of Pages after having first received private tutoring at home; and at Catherine's court he became a friend of the young grand duke, Alexander Pavlovich. At age nineteen he entered state service in an elite guards' corps, a typical practice of the nobility at the time, and thereby avoided service in the ranks. Also like many other serving nobles of his age, Golitsyn retired from the military in 1799, during the brief, aberrant reign of Paul I, but he re-entered service in 1801 immediately after the ascension of his friend who had become Alexander I. Golitsyn did not, however, return to the military, but rather switched to the civil service.

Many of the first appointments made by Alexander I were men younger than the average holder of elite office, and Golitsyn was no exception. He entered the Committee of Ministers in 1810 upon appointment to head the newly created Department of Spiritual Affairs of Foreign Confessions. In 1816 he also became Minister of Education, holding the two offices simul-

taneously until their administration was merged in the following year. Thereafter he supervised both religious and educational affairs as Minister of Education and Spiritual Affairs. Additionally, in 1819 he became head of the Postal Department. Thus from 1819 to 1824 Golitsyn was again a member of the Committee in two capacities. Although he seems to have resigned from the Ministry of Education in 1824 under pressure, he still retained the postal position, even into the following reign. Golitsyn finally retired from state service in 1842 at the age of sixty-nine. He died two years later.<sup>131</sup>

Golitsyn's early years and official career display most of the traits which define the prototypical early nineteenth century minister. His distinguished social origins were those of the dominant social group at the turn of the nineteenth century, and the pattern of his career was not professional--he switched service areas, held several elite positions both simultaneously and consecutively, and administered unrelated governmental areas. His especially long tenure in the postal department emphasizes the stability that was a consistent feature of Nicholas I's Committee.

The patterns illustrated in Golitsyn's prototypical career remained strong on the Committee of Ministers throughout the nineteenth century, but a rival prototype, more suitable to

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<sup>131</sup>Alexander Kornilov, Modern Russian History from the Age of Catherine the Great to the End of the Nineteenth Century (New York, 1970), p. 188; Andreevskii, Entsiklopedicheskii slovar', XVII, pp. 50-51.

the needs of the growing bureaucracy, was emerging. And no one more strikingly exhibited this new pattern than Sergei Iulievich Witte. In contrast to Golitsyn's ancient noble lineage, Witte came from a family ennobled in the nineteenth century; its membership in noble ranks was therefore due to state service rather than ancestral prominence. A German native of the Russian Empire, Witte's father was raised in the Baltic provinces, educated at Dorpat University, and served in the Imperial administration in the Caucasus. Born there in 1849, Witte attended university in Odessa and specialized in mathematics. Upon graduation at the age of twenty-two, he entered state service in the civil bureaucracy. Focusing in his early career years on railroad management, Witte acquired technical training in bureaucratic areas where professionalism was crucial.

Witte became a member of the Committee of Ministers under Alexander III at the age of forty-three after twenty-one years in Imperial service. The first position which entitled him to membership on the Committee was Minister of Means of Communication, a post he only held for six months because of his subsequent appointment as Minister of Finance. After Nicholas II came to the throne in 1894, he retained Witte as finance minister until 1903, at which time he "promoted" Witte to Chairman of the Committee of Ministers, a position nominally higher but inferior in terms of actual executive power. In that capacity, Witte presided over the demise of the Committee of Ministers in 1905, having conceived the plan for its successor, the Council of Ministers. He briefly chaired that new admi-

nistrative body until he was made a count and dismissed by Nicholas. His professionalism and zeal for modernization out of step with the times, he left state service in 1907, living on in bitter retirement until 1916.<sup>132</sup>

The features of Witte's biography salient for this study include his German nationality--always well represented on the Committee of Ministers--his social origins in the service nobility, and his university education. Especially in comparison to Golitsyn, whose career involved a hodgepodge of educational, religious and postal affairs, Witte had a professionalized service record, with his education and early career experiences leading directly into related fields of technical expertise. Not only did Witte's career exemplify the trend of professionalism in the Russian bureaucracy, Witte himself actively sought to increase professionalism and modernism in the government and the Russian state, even at the expense of superannuated groups and interests. Yet, precisely those forces which Witte fought, the landed nobility and their agrarian interests, regained political vigor under Nicholas II and triumphed over Witte and the pattern represented by him on the Committee of Ministers. The nobility's victory proved to be, however, short and dearly bought.

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<sup>132</sup>Witte, The Memoirs of Count Witte, passim; Von Laue, Sergei Witte and the Industrialization of Russia, passim.

## POSTSCRIPT

It should be noted that this study has used prosopography mainly for one of its two chief uses, to describe a governmental elite and to trace social mobility within it. There is another use of prosopography which has not been elaborated herein, although its existence has been assumed throughout the work. Prosopography may be used as a tool to uncover the roots of political action, to relate ideas and actions of particular individuals to their differing backgrounds. In this work, the ministers' various social and career characteristics have been related to each other; but ideas espoused or actions taken on the Committee of Ministers have been but barely touched upon.

In order to investigate the existence of a relationship between social origins and ideas, one could use the present study as groundwork for a new one, which could explore the political opinions of the ministers and their actions on the Committee of Ministers. Preserved in the Committee's official history, many of the ministers' ideas and actions are readily available. The belief may be ventured, however, that few correlations between ministerial backgrounds and ideas can be found which are as neat as those traceable through Witte's life.

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## APPENDIX

### Positions included on the Committee of Ministers

<u>Position with dates of inclusion on the Committee of Ministers</u>	<u>Number of men to hold the position</u>
Chairman of the Committee of Ministers, 1812-1905	16
Minister of War, 1802-1905	14
Minister of Navy, 1802-1836	4
Minister of Internal Affairs, 1802-1905	23
Minister of Foreign Affairs, 1802-1905	10
Minister of Finance, 1802-1905	15
Minister of Justice, 1802-1905	16
Minister of Education, 1802-1905	20
Minister of Commerce, 1802-1810	1
Minister of Police, 1810-1819	2
Minister of Imperial Court, 1826-1905	5
Minister of State Lands, 1837-1905	10
Minister of Appanage, 1852-1856	1
Minister of Post and Telegraph, 1865-1868, 1880-1881	3
Minister of Means of Communication, 1865-1905	9
Assistant minister of Internal Affairs, 1802-1810	2
Assistant minister of Foreign Affairs, 1802-1810	2
Assistant minister of Finance, 1802-1810	1
Assistant minister of Justice, 1802-1810	2

<u>Position with dates of inclusion on the Committee of Ministers</u>	<u>Number of men to hold the position</u>
Assistant minister of Education, 1802-1807	1
State treasurer, 1802-1811	2
Head ( <u>glavnoupravliaiushchii</u> ) of the Postal Department, 1802-1868	4
Head of Means of Communication, 1809-1865	8
State secretary ( <u>gosudarstvennyi sekretar'</u> ), head of State Council Chancery, 1810-1814, 1893-1905	6
State controller, 1811-1905	10
Head of Spiritual Affairs of Foreign Confessions, 1810-1817, 1828-1831	2
Head of the Codification Department, 1882-1893	2
Head of Section II, Codification, 1839-1882	5
Head of Section III, Police and Corps of Gendarmes, 1826-1880	7
Head of Section IV, Institutions of Empress Maria, 1861-1905	5
Head of Section V, Polish Affairs, 1866-1878	2
Chairman, State Council Department of Law, 1812-1905	17
Chairman, State Council Department of Military Affairs, 1812-1858	4
Chairman, State Council Department of Civil and Spiritual Affairs, 1812-1905	11
Chairman, State Council Department of State Economy, 1812-1905	16
Chairman, State Council Department of Affairs of Tsarist Poland, 1832-1861	2
Chairman, State Council Department of Industry, Science, and Trade, 1905	1
Minister-State secretary for Tsarist Poland, 1841-1866	4

<u>Position with dates of inclusion on the Committee of Ministers</u>	<u>Number of men to hold the position</u>
St. Petersburg Military Governor, 1812-1830, 1846-1847	4
Chief of Naval Staff or Naval General Staff, 1822-1855	2
Chief of Army Staff, 1824-1830	1
Head of the Naval Ministry, 1855-1905	9
Special members, 1840-1905	12
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