

Nikolay Petrov

5. Shared Sovereignty Russian Style: Relations between Moscow and the Regions

‘Centre – region’ relations are the key to an understanding of exactly what is happening in Russian politics now, what its internal machinery is, how stable the current configuration of forces is, and how fundamental and irreversible are the changes that have occurred since Soviet times: in short, what is to be expected in the immediate future and in the long term. In general these relations are described by various commentators in various ways: from triumphant federalism to variations on purely feudal relations, from the rigid diktat of Moscow to the freebooter activities of the regional barons. Without a sufficiently detailed and comprehensive account of what is happening, the reader may form an unbalanced and therefore entirely erroneous opinion.

Current Russian political reality is so dynamic and varied that arguments can be found to support the most widely differing, sometimes diametrically opposed, concepts: disintegration of the country, or conversely rapid unification and centralisation; a cult of personality, where the prosperity or poverty of enormous regions depends upon their leaders, geographical determinism, where each social grouping has what nature has given it, and cultural determinism, where the people have the government that they deserve.

The aim of this paper is to give a general idea of the basic principles, as established in the past and as now taking shape, of internal organisation of the Russian political machine as regards relations between the two principal levels: the Centre and the regions. After a short historical outline we will give a brief description of the principal institutions through which the central and regional levels interact (the Presidential administration, the Federation Council, the Constitutional Court), the principal players (regional elites, mayors, Presidential representatives in the regions), and the established rules of the game (bilateral treaties).¹



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Political History of the Regions I: the Republics

The patterns of recent political development are extremely varied, especially in the initial stages, in the republics and in the rest of the regions (including the autonomous districts in most cases). In its most general form, political development in the republics was essentially as follows. With the onset of perestroika the party leadership was replaced in many of them, sometimes by a natural process, sometimes, as in Mordovia and Bashkiria, as “velvet revolutions”. In 1990, as in other regions, the leaders in the republics were changing places, from First Secretaries of Republic Committees (as the former Soviet Communist Party republic regional committees were called as from 1990) to Presidents of Supreme Councils in their republics.

1991 was a landmark for the republics. In its struggle with the Russian leadership, which was gaining ground, the Soviet leadership made active use of republican leaders. The most influential of these (the leaders of Tatarstan, Bashkiria and Yakutia) were involved in the debates on the reform of the Soviet federal structure and the preparation of a new Union Treaty, which they were to have signed on an equal footing with Russia. Most of the republics declared an increase in their status and followed Russia in adopting declarations of sovereignty. Then also former autonomous oblasts were transformed into republics, leaving their respective oblasts and krais; in the case of four of them, Adyghea, Karachai-Cherkessia, Khakassia and Gornyi Altai, this was sealed by a resolution of the Supreme Council of the RSFSR (the Russian parliament) in mid-1991. A fifth, the Jewish Autonomous Oblast, did not change its status, although it left the Khabarovsk krai. Autonomous districts also made similar attempts to quit their “maternal” regions, but only one, Chukotka, was successful.

Ethnicisation began, in the form of a marked increase in national cultural movements, an increase in ethnic imbalances in the ruling elites and greater ethnic tension (particularly apparent in Tuva, Khakassia, etc.). According to the Soviet federal tradition, each republic expressed the right of so-called “titular nations” to a particular political status in the federal framework. In 1991 titular peoples’ congresses were held in most republics, and attempts were made to form governing agencies. In most cases these attempts were nipped in the bud by the regional authorities, which had retained power or had even come to power on a wave of national movements but had soon distanced themselves from the national-radicals. In Chechnya, however, the National Congress of the Chechen people seized power and proclaimed a Chechen republic; its chairman, Dzhokhar Dudaev, became the President.

Sovereignisation by republics was followed by a wave of “presidentisation”.² This began in 1991, and proved to be more extensive than sovereignisation, spread over time and still not complete.³ As a rule the fight in the presidential



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elections was between the heads of the legislative and executive powers. In this conflict between the Supreme Council and the Council of Ministers, the former had an appreciable advantage (heads of government managed to gain the upper hand only in Tuva in 1992 and in Karachai-Cherkessia in 1994). In Kalmykia, where the heads of the divisions of power were wiped out, repeated elections ended in victory for a *varangian* – a businessman from Moscow. “Distinguished sons” of their peoples were also summoned to power in Chechnya (1991, a general), Ingushetia (1993, a general), and Chuvashia (1993, a former minister). In the remaining cases power was retained by the former Party-Soviet nomenklatura (old or revived).⁴

The year 1991, a turning-point for the remaining regions in the country, changed nothing in the republics. All the leaders kept their jobs, including those who had actively supported the State Committee for the Emergency (GKCHP) during the August 1991 coup against Gorbachev.⁵ A timid attempt to appoint representatives of the President of the Russian Federation in a number of republics (Kabardino-Balkaria, Chechnya and Kalmykia) encountered strong resistance from local elites and failed. The first representative of the President in a republic was the retired long-serving head of the government of Chuvashia; the second emerged only two years later, in the autumn of 1993, in Mordovia, and a third one again another two years later on in Kalmykia. The breakthrough came only in 1997, when presidential representatives were appointed all at once in some ten republics in a wave of consolidation of Centre positions in the regions. Only Bashkiria, Tatarstan and Yakutia then remained without a “Presidential babysitter” for the time being.

The end of 1993 marked a new and important divergence in the paths of development of the republics and the remaining regions. On the one hand, the new Constitution embodied equality in practice for republics and oblasts, but on the other hand, while power in the oblasts, krais and autonomous districts had been reformed (councils disbanded, many heads of administration retired), in the republics they kept “everything as it was”.

Constitutions were adopted in Chechnya and Yakutia as early as 1992, in Tatarstan and Tuva in 1993 (but before the Russian Constitution), and in Bashkiria two weeks later; constitutions were adopted in the remaining republics in 1994-1995. The exceptions were Kabardino-Balkaria, Karelia and Chuvashia, where new constitutions were not adopted and the old 1978 models continued in force, with amendments and additions.

Constitutions were normally adopted by the Supreme Council or, as in Dagestan (1994), Ingushetia (1994), Kalmykia (1994) and Mordovia, by a Constitutional Assembly; only in Tuva (1993) was the Constitution approved by a referendum. Referenda on treaty relations with Russia were held in Tatarstan and Bashkiria several months before adoption of the Constitution. The reaction of

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the federal authorities to the first referendum, held in March 1992 on the eve of the signing of the Federal Treaty, was extraordinarily lively, but the response to the second, a year later, was insignificant.

The election of the President of Kalmykia ahead of schedule at the end of 1995, in which K. Ilyumzhinov, the President in office, was re-elected unopposed, was the first in a second series of elections for republican leaders.⁶ They were followed by a presidential election in Tatarstan in the spring of 1996; this was also ahead of schedule, and again there was no alternative candidate. Here also, after the safe election of M. Shaimiev for a second term, the election Law was amended – formally on the subject of conformity with the Federal Law (a provision requiring a minimum of two candidates was inserted), but actually for the benefit of the leader in office (the provision limiting presidential terms to a maximum of two was deleted).

Right at the end of 1996 second elections were held in two other republics: Yakutia, and in Mari El, where for the first time the leader in office lost, and that to a Russian candidate. The Mari election was noteworthy for a conflict arising from the examination to test knowledge of the Mari language required by a local law (this kind of conflict was repeated later in Adyghea, Tuva and Bashkiria) and for an attempt by the outgoing President to cancel voting at the last minute (this was prevented by the Elections' Committee, and later criminal proceedings were even instituted against the loser).

In 1997 a second election for the President of Kabardino-Balkaria was held, with no alternative candidates but on time, and then an election ahead of time but with rival candidates for the head of the Komi Republic; power did not change hands in either case. While in Tatarstan a rival to the President in office could not register, due to strong political pressures, in Adyghea (1997) and Bashkiria (1998) actual rivals to the leaders were removed by the Republican Elections' Committees on the ground of infringements during the collection of signatures. In fairness it must be said that not all the second elections won by the incumbents were "put-up jobs"; the battles in Tuva (1997) and Chuvashia (1997), where the principal rivals to the Presidents in office were the speakers of the Republican parliaments, were quite fierce. The fiercest battles in a second election occurred in North Ossetia (1998) and Karelia (1998), where the leaders lost, in the former case to a deputy of the State Duma, a former leader of the region in the late Soviet era, and in the latter to a former mayor of the capital.

Examination of second elections shows that firstly, the odds in favour of the leader in office are sufficient in most cases for the result of the election to be a foregone conclusion, even when the leader has real rivals in the republic; secondly, such rivals are either representatives of the republican "top people" (speaker, mayor of the capital) or State Duma Deputies; and thirdly, leaders who are clear-

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ly surpassing all rivals in popularity may prefer to keep their rivals right out of the elections (Kalmykia, Tatarstan, Bashkiria).

Unlike the krais and oblasts, the republics have exercised integrative functions extremely rarely, not claiming to lead and not agreeing to be led. They are unobtrusive in inter-regional associations and do not act as their headquarters. Before the events of September-October 1993 the principal republican leaders, M. Shaimiev (Tatarstan), V. Stepanov (Karelia) and M. Nikolaev (Yakutia) had been extremely prominent in pan-Russian politics, and K. Ilyumzhinov (Kalmykia) joined their ranks in 1993. After those events the leaders of the republics concentrated on internal issues. There are some exceptions to this. The Tatar President M. Shaimiev had a vital role in connection with Chechnya (mediation and assistance in rebuilding the economy). He was also involved in 1997 in the public debates on the introduction of a new model of a Russian passport without the "nationality" heading. The Chuvash President N. Fedorov organised a meeting of the leaders of seven republics in Cheboksary in January 1995 which called for an end to the war in Chechnya. He allowed citizens of Chuvashia to refuse to participate in military action.

The Political History of the Republics II: the Oblasts

In August 1991, the Russian Centre, to its own surprise, replaced the Union in the role of rightful "master" of the country. The slogan "All power to the Soviets" had lost its force with the break-up of the Communist Party. The idea of reforming the agencies of power in the provinces included the replacement of the Soviets and the construction of a new executive axis – "President – head of administration". The variant whereby the heads would be elected was quickly discarded as inopportune, because the undeveloped state of election legislation in the provinces and control of elections by the old local elite made it more than probable that all those same First Secretaries would be returned through the elections. At the same time as the "witch-hunt" designed to cut out the most odious of the "has-beens", there was an extensive programme to choose candidates for two new posts in the regions: head of administration and the President's representative.

1992 was the year in which the new system of organising power in the regions was actually established and the subdivisions of power knocked off each other's rough edges. A leader appointed in spite of the oblast Council either joined the local elite or was rejected by it out of hand. In some regions the process of acceptance of an appointed leader by a council that had initially failed to support him took almost a year, as for example in the Yaroslavl and Tambov oblasts, where the leaders were approved by the councils and accordingly got rid of the prefix 'act-



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ing' almost a year after their appointment. In the process of rejection by the local elite events might also develop according to various scenarios:

- *the Ulyanovsk scenario*, in which the appointed leader was given such a hostile reception that in practice he did not take up his duties and the President, who was visiting the oblast, was forced to appoint as leader Yu. Goryachev, the chairman of the oblast council, the recent first secretary of the oblast committee;
- *the Sakhalin-Primorskii scenario*, when the unacclimatised leader was changed by Presidential edict a year or a year and a half after his appointment;
- *the Krasnoyarsk scenario*, when the leader was forced to leave and the next leader was chosen by the population;
- *the Amur-Bryansk-Lipetsk-Oryol-Penza-Smolensk-Chelyabinsk scenario*, when the oblast council expressed its distrust of the leader, arranged elections and the nominated leader was replaced by an elected leader.

It seems somewhat paradoxical in this situation that the first democratically elected leaders after the mayors of Moscow and St. Petersburg made their appearance in regions known to be extremely conservative. However, the directly elected leaders formally held office by virtue of a Presidential edict, written according to the "will of the citizens". Three of them – the leaders of the Amur, Bryansk and Chelyabinsk oblasts – were removed from office by Presidential edicts after the events of autumn 1993.

Break-Up of the Power Axes

The Soviet Union, though called a federation, was a unitary state with rigidly centralised government and a network of cells – regions – which changed repeatedly in number, size and configuration. After two relatively short periods of enlargement of the country's administrative and territorial structure (enlarged oblasts at the end of the 1920s and the beginning of the 1930s and national economic councils (sovnarkhoz) at the end of the 1950s and the beginning of the 1960s), the network of cells (regions) of the first rank reached its present state, with regions very similar to Catherine's provinces at the end of the eighteenth century.

The power axes, linking a very mixed and heterogeneous mosaic of regions to form a single whole, were extremely rigid and diverse. As a first approximation we can speak of three types: party, state and branch axes. In the 1970s and 1980s the party (Soviet Communist Party) axis, which had lost its ideological component to a very considerable extent, was the most powerful structure, binding together society and country from the very top to the very bottom. Accounting

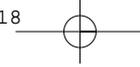


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for almost a tenth of the country's adult population, the many millions of members of the Soviet Communist Party were rigidly organised according to the principle of "democratic centralism". The democratic element in this linkage was extremely abstract and superficial, but the centralism was very effective. It was maintained by a powerful nomenklatura network, of Party committees, permeating society from top to bottom. Primary organisations acted as the lower cells, grouped at the very bottom according to the industrial principle and higher up according to the territorial principle, starting from region and city. Russia, unlike the rest of the republics in the USSR, did not have an independent republican Party leadership, and for most of the time its republican and oblast Party committees were controlled directly from the Central Committee of the Soviet Communist Party. The formation in 1989 of the Central Committee of the RSFSR Communist Party marked the beginning of the break-up, both structural (Russia splitting away from the Union) and qualitative (formation of a more conservative wing of the Soviet Communist Party in the RSFSR Communist Party). Soviet-state leadership of the system of Councils-executive committees was also organised according to the territorial principle in parallel with Party leadership.

Given the vast number of power axes in the provinces, there was a complex balance of forces. A sensitive system of checks and balances was in operation, the basic elements of which were the Soviet Communist Party oblast committee, the KGB administration, the oblast executive committee, the managers of large regional enterprises, the internal affairs administration, and high-ranking military and naval commanders. A refined system for the movement of key personnel was in operation, which included rigid rotation machinery. As far as the regional elite was concerned, this was done at a Union level. The key personnel themselves were selected and approved by Party bodies, and joined the 'nomenklatura': Central Committee nomenklatura, oblast committee nomenklatura and so on. A man who joined the nomenklatura was guaranteed against "dropping out of the ring" or a reduction in grade provided that he did not infringe certain standards of corporate behaviour. He could move only upwards or sideways, remaining a leader at a particular level—today culture, tomorrow agriculture, the day after tomorrow transport, and so on.

The nomenklatura system was almost ideally suited to the interests of the state, which was organised like a complex machine controlled from one centre. The rigid corporate ethic and discipline ensured obedience and controllability from the top downwards and provided opportunities for corporate tactics. The price for this — a lack of independence — did not seem to be excessive. The prospects of career growth and privileges that were a feature of each level of the nomenklatura hierarchy, the high level of social protection and the immunity acquired on entering the nomenklatura acted as sufficient incentives to encour-



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age joining it, and places in it were highly valued. The nomenklatura, not the Party as a whole, was organised like an order of chivalry, as Stalin, one of the chief architects of the system, once expressed it.

The branch axes began to disintegrate as a result of the economic crisis, the break-up of the USSR, the privatisation of enterprises, the disruption of manufacturing links and the destruction of a once unified economic area. A single power axis remained in the Russian regions at the end of 1993 after the elimination of the Soviets. The principal factor in the region was the Governor, appointed by the President and accordingly controlling and co-ordinating the activities of all federal structures in the region on his behalf. The elections for Governor, which were held on a massive scale in the autumn of 1996, altered the disposition of forces substantially. The Governor, having become an elected official, ceased to be subordinate to the President and the emissary of the Centre in the region. That one and only powerful power axis was broken. Threads linking federal agency departments in the region to the Centre remained, but there was no-one either in the Centre or in the region to pull them together. The real influence of the Governor on federal structures in the region not only failed to diminish but even increased.

The Presidential Administration

Boris Yeltsin's administration, which took the place of the Party Central Committee including its purely territorial elements, had a key role in relations between Moscow and the regions until recently. This role declined somewhat with the election of leaders for all the regions and a shift in the centre of gravity from purely administrative to financial controls. A. Chubais, as head of the Presidential administration, did much to transform it from a "collective Rasputin" responsible for nothing and interfering in everything into a bureaucratic system, a great office. The Presidential administration "managed" for instance the elections for governor from the executive. Regional problems are dealt with in the Presidential administration by the territorial board and by the board split off from it to work with Presidential representatives in the regions. The Main Legal Board, which reviews regional legislative enactments and devises standard versions of these, also plays a vital part in relations with the regions. The Presidential administration has been making active attempts to establish direct links with local authorities, primarily with metropolitan mayors, through the President's Local Government Council and through regular though by no means properly constituted meetings of mayors of regional centres.

The regular shake-ups in personnel since the end of 1997, internal conflicts and contradictions, and the development of the Presidential administration



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from an independent centre of power into a personal Presidential office have, however, helped to reduce its actual role and its influence on the regions.

The Federation Council

The Federation Council, which made its appearance in December 1993, was initially designed as a safety-valve or counterweight in relation to the State Duma. It was assumed that it would include regional heads, most of whom were Presidential appointees. This idea did not suit either the regional leaders themselves, who by that time were well enough established for their complete dependence upon the President to be a burden, or the democratic politicians, who rightly took the view that a House of Parliament appointed by the President was unacceptable. In addition, Boris Yeltsin needed to have his project for a Constitution adopted and to hold elections to the State Duma in order to reinforce his practically monopolistic power in the country. The Centre needed the personal involvement of the regional leaders to conduct the voting, while the regional leaders needed additional legitimacy through elections. A compromise was found: the President got his Constitution, and the regional leaders, according to the results of voting by the entire population of the region, acquired posts as Deputies in the Federation Council, without the agreement of which they could not lawfully be dismissed.

The members of the present Federation Council, which has been in operation since January 1996, are all heads of regional executive and representative authorities. All the members have therefore received a vote of confidence from the regional population. Personal continuity between the new and the old Federation Council is very great, and continuity of policy, which is governed not by personalities and not by the political sympathies of the "senators" but by their role as a connecting link between the regional and central elites, is even greater. In contrast to the Duma and its numerous public scandals, widely publicised in the Russian media, the Federation Council works quietly, votes in secret, is proud of its lack of factions and groupings and prefers individual negotiation with the government. Egor Stroev has headed the Federation Council since 1996. He is one of the most influential politicians in the country, a former member of the Soviet Communist Party Central Committee politburo and "red governor" of the Oryol oblast and was recommended for that post by President Yeltsin.

The Federation Council is an agency of federal authority and the apex of regional authorities at the same time. Once it seemed that with the election of "red" governors and speakers it would be transformed into a political arena, forming an alliance with the opposition in the State Duma, or would become a

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kind of boyars' council, the real centre of power. Neither has happened, primarily because individual interest among the regional leaders prevails over party-political, corporate and any other interests. In its present form, the Federation Council is acting increasingly as a club for regional leaders who travel to Moscow from time to time for a couple of days (understandably at far from full strength; therefore postal voting is often practised in the Federation Council, where the quorum problem is acute) in order to discuss some general problems and to solve the problems of their regions in the government and administration on an individual basis.

The Constitutional Court

In the early stages, when the Russian political system was only just being put together, the Constitutional Court was attempting to play an active part in relations between the Centre and the regions even before its reform. However, if its decisions were in conflict with the position of the executive in the Centre or in the provinces they were simply ignored, as was the case with the referendum in Tatarstan (here the republican authorities ignored the decision of the Constitutional Court) or with the elections for governor of the Chelyabinsk oblast (here the President ignored the Constitutional Court's decision).

In the period from 1996 to the beginning of 1998 the Constitutional Court considered several cases connected with local self-government:

- 1) the *Udmurtia* case: there the republic's State Council was trying to revert to appointing city and regional leaders instead of electing them;
- 2) the *Buryatia* case: the Constitutional Court took a decision whereby the representative agency of power in the region could suspend the powers of the elected head of local government and call for new elections if breaches of federal or local legislation by the latter were established by due process of law;
- 3) the *Tula* case: the right of the Centre to prescribe elections of local government heads and agencies in cities and regions in the absence of special decisions by local legislators on this subject was confirmed;
- 4) the *Tambov* case: in response to an application by the President regarding the unconstitutional nature of certain articles in the oblast Charter, the Constitutional Court corrected the Tambov legislators in spite of the fact that their former leader, currently the oblast governor, assured the Court in writing that he had no fault whatever to find with the local Duma;
- 5) the *Komi* case: the Constitutional Court, having considered the issue of the conformity of the republic's Constitution and its law on executive bodies, considered that the local administrations with appointed leaders were unconstitutional and compelled the republic's authorities to hold elections.

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On three occasions the Constitutional Court considered one of the most difficult problems in the federal system of the country—the issue of the relations of the South Tyumen oblast and the two north Tyumen districts. On each occasion the decisions were different and also inconclusive. The illegal registration permit for Moscow (the so-called “propiska”) and the registration charges introduced by certain administrations were considered on four occasions. The Court declared these charges to be infringements of citizens’ constitutional rights, whereupon the Moscow Mayor declared that the city needed restrictions on registration and that other charges would simply be introduced in place of those set aside.

Courts of general jurisdiction, and in particular the Russian Supreme Court, played an important part in regulating relations between the Centre and the regions. Since the new Constitution entered into force, these courts have declared more than 500 enactments by regional authorities to be wholly or partially invalid. However, on 16th June 1998 the Constitutional Court made an order whereby it alone was entitled to take decisions on whether enactments were not in conformity with the Constitution and to set them aside. Bearing in mind that the Constitutional Court order on interpretation of the Constitution acquires its force on the adoption of the Constitution, being retroactive, its June decision will have extremely serious legal consequences.

As an instrument regulating relations between the Centre and the regions, the Constitutional Court is fairly weak, for several reasons: it lacks weight⁷, independence and self-sufficiency, the procedure for examination of cases is lengthy (long queues) and it is not flexible enough. The decisions of the Constitutional Court do not have the force of precedent and it cannot initiate cases of its own motion. Shakhrai, as a Presidential representative⁸ in the Constitutional Court and known as the ideologist-architect of the entire system of Centre-region relations, proclaimed the policy of “constructive interaction” with the regional leaders and compromise before resorting to the Court. He clearly demonstrated the essential nature of the “new Presidential policy” in a case involving Kalmykia in the autumn of 1996. Boris Yeltsin had openly criticised gross breaches of federal legislation in the law on elections for the President of Kalmykia. Shakhrai, however, alluded to the fact that the necessary amendments had been made to that law. The fact that this took place after K. Ilyumzhinov had been elected President of Kalmykia under the same law which has so strongly been criticised by Yeltsin was glossed over. It is noteworthy that before the “gesture of goodwill” by the Russian President’s representative, Kalmykia showed an unprecedentedly high level of support for Boris Yeltsin in the elections. Thus, this case openly demonstrated the role of the Constitutional Court as an instrument for political bargaining according to the formula “non-inter-



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ference by the Centre in the internal affairs of the region in exchange for loyalty from its leadership”.

The President's Representatives

Until 1997, the regional leaders appointed by the President could have been regarded as his vice-regents. Since 1997, when they were all elected and thus “broke out” of the power axis, this function has been exercised to an ever-increasing extent by the President's representatives, whose previous role was that of “the eyes of the monarch”.

The introduction of the institution of President's representative and the August putsch occurred at practically the same time, in 1991. The first representatives were appointed at the same time as the heads of administrations, and also usually from among the Russian deputies. Both posts were then approximately equal in status, and in a number of cases the deputies were even given the choice. Personnel were selected under the emergency conditions by a small group of experts headed by V. Makharadze from Volgograd. In 1991, President's representatives had been appointed in all the oblasts and krais, but there were none in the republics with the exception of Chuvashia (attempts to introduce Presidential representatives in Chechnya, Kabardino-Balkaria and other republics encountered stiff resistance from the local authorities). In all, President's representatives had been appointed in 62 regions before the end of 1991.

In the struggle which soon began between the President and the Russian parliament, the President's representatives were savagely attacked by their own colleagues — the deputies. Initially the parliament attempted to introduce its own representatives in the regions, and when this was unsuccessful it attempted to get rid of the President's representatives also. The attacks on the President's representatives were particularly severe at the end of 1992-1993, when the parliament passed official resolutions to abolish that institution, while locally the oblast councils tried to cut off funding for the representatives and to drive them out of the regions. After October 1993, when the parliament was disbanded by Yeltsin, the President's representatives fell out of the frying pan into the fire, becoming mere tokens in individual negotiations between the President and the regional leaders.

Incidentally at the same time, immediately after the presidential edict on the dissolution of the Soviets, S. Filatov the head of the presidential administration announced the forthcoming appointment of President's representatives in republics which had retained Soviet power. This proved to be an empty threat, although it did compel certain republics (Bashkiria, Dagestan, Karelia) to speed up the introduction of the post of President and presidential elections. In obtaining the loyalty of the governors, initially in connection with adoption of the



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Constitution and then by solving certain problems in the Federation Council, and also in the preparations for the presidential elections, Boris Yeltsin “gave up” the most independent of the President’s representatives who did not suit the local authorities. As a result, the more or less independent “king’s men” were replaced by members of the governors’ teams who suited them.

There was an understandable competition between the President’s representatives and the heads of administrations. This was particularly apparent in December 1993 in elections to the Federation Council. Many of the President’s representatives took part, but only four managed to become deputies.⁹ There were echoes of this struggle in the elections for governors in 1996, when in the Arkhangelsk and Vladimir oblasts President’s representatives, in defiance of instructions from above, stood as candidates: they paid for this with their jobs (they both lost).

The reverse process also occurred, especially during and after the elections for governor. Thus P. Marchenko, the former Stavropol leader who had lost in the elections, was appointed President’s representative in his own krai and four North Caucasus republics; A. Kovalev, the former Voronezh governor, was sent to represent the president in North Ossetia and Ingushetia on the eve of the elections; in the Altai krai V. Raifikesht, the former leader, was appointed President’s representative. Even earlier in Bryansk V. Barabanov made the journey from President’s representative to Governor twice (and back once) and N. Yudin the former leader became the President’s representative in the Oryol oblast after failing in the 1993 elections. Yu. Lebedev was the last to make the transition from the leader’s chair to the President’s representative’s chair; before the July elections in 1997 he was acting governor of the Nizhnii Novgorod oblast.

As a result of all the to-ing and fro-ing, only 12 from the first intake of President’s representatives were left by October 1997. By way of comparison, there were 36 regional leaders from the first intake before the elections for Governor in 1996-1997 and 20 after those elections.¹⁰

With the election of leaders, the Centre began to speed up the process of strengthening the President’s representatives in both institutional and personal terms, in order to retain its influence in the regions. At the beginning of 1997 a special board to co-ordinate the activities of President’s representatives in the regions was formed in the bowels of the presidential administration; it was headed by one of the most authoritative leaders, A. Fedorov, a former President’s representative in the Samara oblast.¹¹ In July 1997 new regulations were ratified which created the basis for “regulating interaction between the Centre and the regions” in three vital areas: monitoring the implementation of the federal budget, the use of federal property in the regions, and strengthening the personnel of federal authorities locally.¹² Co-ordinating the activities of territorial executive agencies in the region was defined as the first of the functions assigned to the President’s represen-

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tatives. It should be noted that there are now from 30 to 100 different federal bodies operating in the regions; the total number of civil servants in these may exceed the number of regional civil servants by several times. Although Moscow pays the salaries of this army of civil servants, their working and living conditions (apartment, office, car and so on) are usually dependent upon the local leadership.

The personnel replacements among the President's representatives proceeded in parallel with their institutional strengthening—before endowing the President's representative with real powers as the political representative of the Centre in the regions it was essential to ensure that he was not dependent upon the governor. Here the Centre encountered a serious problem: in many regions there were simply no strong and relatively independent figures who were neither in the governor's team nor in the left-wing opposition. In finding solutions for specific problems in the regions, in particular cases the Centre favoured combining the post of President's representative with another post, as for example in the Tambov oblast, where the duties of President's representative were assigned to V. Koval, the mayor of the oblast capital.

The Primorskii krai is a special case. There general V. Kondratov, head of the Federalnaya Sluzhba Bezopasnosti (FSB; the successor to the KGB), who had received unprecedentedly extensive powers by special edict of the President, including control over all the financial flows in the krai budget, became the President's representative. However, it is doubtful whether an experiment of this kind can be widely applied. The appointment of President's representatives from among the staff of the enforcement agencies was also practised previously—take, for example, Yu. Chervinskii, the President's representative in the Krasnodar krai, a general who had previously been head of the FSB and then head of the fiscal police there. However, nowhere were extensive powers really brought together in one pair of hands.

Previously the sole examples of combining the functions of leader and representative for a short time had been G. Popov (1991) in Moscow, V. Barabanov in the Bryansk oblast (1991-1992) and B. Nemtsov for quite a long time in the Nizhnii Novgorod oblast (1991-1994). We note that in 1996 the Centre returned again to this old experiment in "territorial pluralism", in which one man represented the President in more than one region (G. Popov in Moscow and the Moscow oblast from August to December 1991, and Yu. Yarov and S. Tsyplyaev to May 1993 in St. Petersburg and the Leningrad oblast), when first Yu. Moskvich, the President's representative in the Krasnoyarsk krai, was appointed by special edict to represent the president in the Taimyr and Evenkii districts. Then A. Kovalev became the President's representative in North Ossetia and Ingushetia, while in 1997 P. Marchenko became the President's representative in five constituents of the Federation at once: the Stavropol krai, Adyghea, Dagestan, Kabardino-Balkaria and Karachai-Cherkessia.

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By giving substance to the co-ordination of federal agencies in the region, a position that had been formulated in somewhat abstract terms by the regulations of July 1997, Moscow made clear in particular that federal agency boards directed by the President's representatives in the regions would be formed, consisting of the leaders of the 16 "most important" departments: the FSB, the Air Traffic Control Board, the Central Bank Board, the Federal Government Communication Agency, the fiscal inspectorate and police, the public prosecutor's office, the Audit Board, the authority for combating organised crime, the general and arbitration courts, regional television channels and the press boards. The role of the President's representatives in personnel matters will also increase in the appointments to key posts in territorial federal bodies. However, it is possible that the real rights of the President's representatives in the regions will expand gradually, not all at once, and individually and not in general. It should not be forgotten that governors are morbidly sensitive to any strengthening of the President's representatives.

The Regional Political Elites

The importance of the regional elite has increased sharply in recent years. After a short period, when the importance of the regional leaders on the Russian scene was governed not by the potential of their respective regions but by the leaders' personal qualities, the political realities are gradually coming into line with the economic realities.

In contrast to the central elite, the upper levels of the regional elite have not changed so much by comparison with Soviet times. Its composition, which was quite fundamentally renewed in 1991-1993, has gradually reverted to the "old norm". Since the presidential elections campaign of 1996, there has been a return of former leaders who had been sidelined for some time in elections for governor in a number of regions. On the whole, the landscape after the elections can be described by the formula "many changes of personality – little or no change in substance". The return of former Soviet regional leaders indicates a redistribution of power within the elite.

The collapse of the executive axes which existed during Soviet times has led to changes in the composition of the local elites, which have become more "domestic". Inter-regional and regional-central migration of elites in the process of growth has been practically excluded. The collapse of the executive has also led to a new configuration of elites in the regions in the form of a pyramid, often with a single strong politician at the head. The role of intra-regional clans has increased, that of inter-regional clans has declined. The links with the Centre have grown weaker, and pendulum-type movements (from the region to the Centre and then back to the region to a higher post, or from region to region

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either directly or through the Centre) have been greatly curtailed. There has been pupation of the elites, and fragmentation of elite territory.¹³

The old nomenklatura system of forming and renewing the elites has changed its form somewhat through the electoral process. Even “elections without choice” (as occurred in a number of regions, especially in national republics) contribute to the development of a certain local consensus about the figure of the leader, which previously was by no means inevitable. The elections for governor were the first experiment in the build-up of large political coalitions at regional elite level. In most cases such coalitions proved to be extremely short-lived. Saint Petersburg, with a real multi-party and coalition system, looks like an exception against this background.

The monolithic nature of administrative and economic power persists to a large extent and reinforces the influence and accordingly the attractiveness of political power, contributing to its “internal” stability to the detriment of elections and other democratic institutions. Property is becoming the key issue in the question of power. However, privatisation, the arrival of powerful property owners in the regions and the establishment of new rules of the game are destroying the regional elites’ monopoly of power and property. The slow but sure increase in the strength of the lower level (cities and districts) is also contributing to this.

The absence of both institutional and personal counterweights to the figure of the leader is a feature of the new balance of forces on the regional Olympuses (these counterweights existed in a number of regions, where the personalities of the formal and informal leaders did not coincide, until the elections for governor). As a rule, the federal parties in the regions are weak and often have weak links to the Centre. Their leaders, normally reshuffled many times, are either in the administration now, losing part of their political personality, or were in it previously and hope to return.

A “political desert” effect can be seen increasingly often in the regions, with a strong one-man leadership of the governor and his administration, which has absorbed all politicians carrying even the slightest degree of weight. There is now a danger of increased authoritarianism at the regional level and a kind of “new stagnation”, with leaders unchanged as a result of elections but merely regularly re-elected. The position of the Centre, which is often guided by the feudal principle of non-interference in the “internal affairs of the region” in exchange for the loyalty of its leader, contributes to this.

The Regions in Terms of Political Elite Composition and Movements

At the end of 1992, a year after the reorganisation of the Party-Soviet system into an administrative-council system, we classified the elites in the regions by type. This was done on the basis of the results of a questionnaire from President’s rep-

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representatives (they were asked to name the five most influential politicians and leaders in the region).¹⁴

The **nomenklatura type**, to which 27 regions (out of 89) were assigned, proved to be the most widespread. As a rule, only official leaders there were named as being part of the political elite. Here the Astrakhan oblast and the Khanty-Mansi district may be regarded as the standards (in both cases a pair of executive and representative leaders were named as the influential figures), as well as the Irkutsk oblast (the leader, his deputy, and the chairman of the oblast council were named), the Stavropol krai (the leader, his deputy, the chairman of the Council, and the Cossack ataman).¹⁵

The **neo-nomenklatura type** is immediately next to it. The composition of the elite there is similar to that of the previous type, the only difference being that the formal leaders represented in it are not the “old hard core” and have arrived from other spheres relatively recently. Fourteen regions, including the Krasnoyarsk krai (the head of administration — a former State farm director, the president of the Council — a former academic institution laboratory director, the mayor of the krai centre — a former factory director, the deputy chairman of the Council — a former teacher in higher education, and only the deputy head of administration of the krai was a former chairman of the krai executive committee), the Kaliningrad, Vladimir, Ryazan, Yaroslavl, Tambov and Saratov oblasts; the republics of Bashkiria, North Ossetia, Khakassia, the Nizhnii Novgorod and Rostov oblasts, Moscow and St. Petersburg.

The **old nomenklatura type** can also be called the preservation-nostalgia type. Its principal feature is a relatively high proportion of “former figures” who have either retained their positions completely or have lost them to some extent. The standard representative of the type is the Ulyanovsk oblast (the head of administration was a former first secretary of the oblast committee; the president of the Council was a former deputy chairman of the oblast executive committee; and the departmental head was the former second secretary of the oblast committee and chairman of the oblast executive committee). The Tula oblast was the standard representative of the “nostalgia” sub-type (the former first secretary of the oblast committee, two former second secretaries, a former first secretary of the capital city committee, and a former chairman of the oblast executive committee). This type also included the Nenets district, and the Oryol, Lipetsk, and Volgograd oblasts, as well as Mordovia and the Amur oblast.¹⁶

The second type in terms of extent after the nomenklatura type was the **directorial type**, to which 19 regions were assigned. Here directors (industrial, agrarian and military) were widely represented in the elites alongside both the official leaders.¹⁷

It is remarkable that not one of the three waves of elections for governor in April 1993, December 1995 and September-December 1996 made any substan-

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tial change in the type-classification of the regional elites: assignment to type was very accurate.

In the most general terms, the transformations in the elites in the ten years or so since the beginning of perestroika can be subdivided into six periods or phases:

- 1) a gentle restructuring, rejuvenation and refreshing (including the last “Gorbachevian” recruitment into the Party-Soviet elite from industry, science and so on, and also the “velvet” revolutions in the regions with replacement of first secretaries by second and third secretaries);
- 2) the revolutionary movements in 1991 and to a lesser extent in 1993 with appointment and re-appointment of leaders according to the principle of loyalty to Boris Yeltsin and the “reform policy”, the reorganisation of the Party-Soviet system into a purely administrative system;
- 3) 1992-1993: confrontation between the executive and the legislative powers;
- 4) 1993-1995: the elites take root and stabilise;
- 5) December 1995-December 1996: legitimisation of elites by direct elections, with replacement of the leadership with support from above (political stalacmites) by leadership with support from below (political stalagmites);
- 6) 1997-1998: rotation of elites.

In the context of transformation of the elites in general, there were also important personnel changes among the first in line. While the composition of the upper levels in an elite is mainly decided on the regional level, the centre plays a role in determining the personality of the leader in the regions. The heads of administration appointed in 1991 can be subdivided into three groups which were then practically equal in numbers: 1) **democrats**, mainly from among the people’s deputies and leaders of local democratic forces; 2) **partocrats**, from among the pre-putsch Party-Soviet nomenklatura, including the heads of Soviets and executive committees and secretaries of Soviet Communist Party oblast committees; 3) **executives**, represented by the managers of usually middle-ranking enterprises both industrial and agricultural, who have also usually passed through the ranks of the deputies. The heads of administration have undergone constant change as a result of successive dismissals and appointments, on the one hand, and elections, on the other. It is apparent from an analysis of the period 1991-98 that the importance of executives and partocrats did not decrease. In two-thirds of the cases those who were in power belonged to one those two types. Insofar as personnel stability is concerned, this was appreciably higher in the case of the partocrats. As a type, democrats practically disappeared as heads of regions (we should remember that this is not so much a matter of political views as of regional roots). The structure of the corps of governors has altered substantially as a result of all the movements that have taken place. Whereas in 1991 democrats, executives and partocrats were equally represented, by the middle of 1998

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the democrats had been squeezed out and the partocrats and executives had been augmented by **ideological communists** and red directors; a group of **military governors** and **presidents of republics** was also formed.

Before the large-scale elections in 1996, changes in the leadership were mainly due to replacement of democrats by executives, partocrats and communists, both economic and ideological. In 1992-1994 (in 1995 they suffered no losses) the number of democrats in the regional leadership had decreased by 13 in all; although the democrats were replaced mainly by executives as a result of organisational "squeezes" followed by the appointment of a new leader (Moscow, the Krasnodar, Stavropol, Primorskii and Altai krajs — the krai leaders were decimated — and the Sakhalin oblast), they were replaced by more democratic means by communists-partocrats (the Orlov and Penza oblasts), ideological communists (Bryansk oblast) and economic communists (the Amur, Lipetsk and Smolensk oblasts), at elections.

The year 1996, with its elections for governor, brought the most substantial movements, both personal and typological. There were 10 more casualties from the ranks of the democrats. They were replaced mainly by executives as a result both of the elections themselves (St. Petersburg, the Kaliningrad oblast, the Koryak Autonomous Oblast) and regrouping of the party in power on the eve of the elections (the Vologda and Saratov oblasts and the Nenets Autonomous Oblast). In four cases democrats gave way at the elections to partocrats (the Vladimir and Kaluga oblasts), to a communist-executive (the Leningrad oblast), and to a nationalist (the Pskov oblast). Executives and red executives continued to replace democrats in 1997 also, again both at the elections and by way of appointments (the Nizhnii Novgorod, Kemerovo and Tula oblasts). It is a curious fact that democrats came to power only in three cases by the democratic route proper, by way of elections: in Chuvashia in 1993 (replacing another democrat), in the Tver oblast in 1995 and in the Altai Republic in 1997.

Mayors

The mayors of the regional centres are the strongest and most independent persons in the regions after the governors. The conflicts between the governors and the mayors of the capitals after the dispersal of the Soviets in 1993 became the principal political conflicts in the regions. This is hardly a matter for surprise in a country, where from a quarter to a half or more of the entire human, economic and other potential and up to 100% of the tax base of the regions are concentrated in their centres. In 1994, in the conflict between the mayors and the governors, who were then for the most part appointed, Boris Yeltsin entirely supported the governors, removing by edict D. Bednyakov, the mayor of Nizhnii

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Novgorod, V. Cherepkov, the elected mayor of Vladivostok, V. Samoilenko, the mayor of Krasnodar and A. Shoikhet, the mayor of Omsk. Cherepkov, who had previously won his case against the President in court, was restored to office by the first presidential edict in 1996.

Now, when practically all the mayors are elected, not appointed and as such are as independent of the leaders as of the Centre, the latter is trying to rely on the mayors in opposing the regional leaders. At the end of 1996 there was a conflict between A. Saltykov, the mayor of Izhevsk, and the authorities in Udmurtia, when, in accordance with the republic's law on agencies of state power, the mayor – like the other heads of cities and regions – was removed from the system of local government and then removed from office, as he had been an appointed, not an elected, official. Saltykov was restored to office after intervention by the Constitutional Court. In Buryatia, relations between the mayor and the republic's leadership were no less difficult than in Udmurtia. In October 1996 V. Shapovalov, a former KGB officer elected mayor of Ulan-Ude at the end of 1995, was in turn removed from office by L. Potapov, the president of Buryatia, and the city council and then restored to office by decision first of the regional court in Ulan-Ude and then the by the Supreme Court of the republic. As soon as he was arrested by the republic's public prosecutor, he appealed to the Russian Supreme Court.

The Constitutional Court, to which the People's Council of Buryatia had referred as early as December last year, confirmed as constitutionally correct the provision in the law "On the general principles of organisation of local government in the Russian Federation" whereby, if it is established in law that the activities of an elected local government official are not in accordance with the Constitution or the constitution or charter of a constituent of the Russian Federation, federal laws, the laws of the constituent entity or municipal regulations, the legislative (representative) agency of state power in the constituent of the Russian Federation is entitled to suspend the powers of the elected official and to arrange fresh elections.

In conclusion we should note that the role of the office of mayor in forging key personnel not for the regions, but for the country, is not very great as yet. Until recently the ex-mayor with the highest profile on the federal scene was P. Borodin, the President's business manager, whom the President had noticed in former times in Yakutsk. He has now been joined by Deputy Prime Minister O. Sysuev, recruited in Samara, and among recent appointments may be mentioned V. Vlasov, the representative in Chechnya, a former mayor of Arkhangelsk.

Bilateral Treaties between the Centre and the Regions

A Federal Treaty, or more precisely three versions of it that differed somewhat, was signed in March 1992: one version for the republics, the second for the

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oblasts and krajs, and the third for the autonomous oblast and the districts. Three regions did not sign the Treaty: Tatarstan, Chechnya and Ingushetia (the latter soon joined the signatories). Certain regions signed the Treaty with reservations and individual annexes. These were of the greatest significance in the case of Bashkiria, establishing the republic's responsibility for the land and natural resources and independence in international activities, in taxation and in the judicial system.

In the case of Tatarstan and Chechnya, the idea of signing a direct bilateral treaty with the Centre was put forward in order to include them in a common legal area. Almost two years were spent in devising and co-ordinating the first treaty, the most difficult one, for Tatarstan¹⁸. There was no success with Chechnya. However, the Tatarstan example proved to be contagious and a queue formed to sign personal treaties with the Centre. In the same year, 1994, treaties were signed with another two republics: Kabardino-Balkaria and Bashkiria. The question then arose whether to terminate the practice of establishing "special" relations with selected components of the Federation, or on the other hand putting the treaties on a production line, eliminating the exclusiveness of particular regions. The latter alternative was chosen. Subsequently, in 1995, four more regional leaders were favoured with treaties: North Ossetia, Yakutia, Buryatia and Udmurtia.

The Russian oblasts and krajs have long looked with envy on the special position of the republics. The Vologda and Sverdlovsk oblasts even held referenda on 25th April 1993 on putting their constitutional rights on an equal footing with those of the republics (over four-fifths of those who voted were in favour). The oblast councils in Arkhangelsk and Chelyabinsk expressed themselves in favour of an increase in status. Half a year later a similar referendum was held in the Tomsk oblast; here, however, only one in five voted "for".

The breakthrough came in January 1996, when treaties were signed with four non-national regions at once: the Sverdlovsk, Kaliningrad and Orenburg oblasts and the Krasnodar krai. Why with these in particular? They all had very powerful "lobbyists" in the person of president Boris Yeltsin, a native of the Sverdlovsk oblast, Deputy Prime Minister S. Shakhrai, the chairman of the treaty commission and guardian of the Kaliningrad oblast and V. Shumeiko, the speaker of the upper house and Kaliningrad's deputy to the Federation Council, prime minister V. Chernomyrdin from Orenburg, and N. Egorov, the head of the presidential administration, who comes from the Kuban. After the four "highly lobbied" regions, a treaty was signed with the latecomer republics: Komi and Chuvashia. The next 11 regions came into the presidential campaign, and treaties with six of them were signed by Boris Yeltsin on the spot in the course of his pre-election trips. In all, 16 treaties were signed in 1996 with 18 constituents of the Federation. In 1997 treaties were signed with 14 constituents. They were all signed in

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Moscow, but with the exception of the Samara oblast, where Boris Yeltsin was resting, and the Krasnoyarsk krai where he met the prime minister of Japan; treaties were concluded in two sessions in Moscow — five regions each on 4th July and 31st October. Treaties with six regions, including Moscow, were signed in the first half of 1998.

The Treaty proper on the Delimitation of Areas of Authority and Powers between the Federal Agencies of State Power and Agencies of State Power in a Constituent of the Russian Federation (this is the full title of this document) is a fairly general and formal outline which is fleshed out each time with specific content in the form of agreements between the government of Russia and the government of the appropriate region on specific issues. Eleven agreements were signed for the first Tatarstan treaty: on economic collaboration, on budgetary relationships, on property issues, on banking, finance, credit and currency policy, on customs matters, on the sale and transportation of oil and petrochemical products, on the defence industries, on co-ordinating the campaign against crime, on higher education, and on environmental protection. There were ten agreements as annexes to the treaty with Bashkiria. In the case of Yakutia, with which around 15 agreements were signed, “local” agreements were added to the gentleman’s kit on the mining industry, on the road-building complex, on the management system for the Northern Sea Route, on providing employment for the population, on controlling migration processes, and on implementation of federal programmes.

In general, however, there are 5-8 agreements per region, usually devoted to economics, property, resources, “defence”, the agricultural-industrial complex (APK) and foreign economic links. While the fact that an agreement has been concluded with the Centre rests on the powers of penetration and political weight of the regional leader, the actual content of the treaty depends upon the region’s possibilities, on its economic and resource potential. The treaties on the delimitation of powers between the federal and regional authorities (and on 1st July 1988 these had been concluded with 46 constituents of the Federation) are a kind of new asymmetrical Federal Treaty extended over time.

The problem of reconcluding treaties with the Centre, particularly those that were signed initially as a result of long and difficult negotiations and then became the basis of some kind of common standard, is now an extremely acute one. The idea of ratifying the concluded treaties has arisen on more than one occasion in the Duma, from the bowels of which there came long ago a framework Law, stopped dead in its tracks by the Federation Council, on treaties on the delimitation of powers (one of the main stumbling-blocks was the retroactive effect stipulated by the Law, with the requirement that all previously concluded treaties must be brought into line with it within half a year of its introduction). The federal executive and a number of deputies are against this, since ratification

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would give the treaties absolute legal status, which at present they generally lack: the fact is that neither the President nor the government has the right on its own authority to redistribute powers and treaties defined by the Constitution. Thus, these documents are semi-legal/semi-personal in nature, and strictly speaking operate while the persons who signed them are in power and can be disputed at any time by the Centre.

The Redistribution of Power between Regions and Centre

The present political situation in Russia and its new and apparently extremely stable political regime can be described as a nomenklatura democracy. Two important features distinguish it from the previous nomenklatura system: 1) the present nomenklatura is highly regionalised (at the personal level its continuity relative to the old Soviet nomenklatura is extremely high); and 2) it is fully adapted to elections and other democratic institutions, using them skilfully both as a shield and as a powerful weapon in resisting the Centre.

In more general terms, we may speak of the establishment in Russia of a delegative democracy. Its two levels, with inevitable conflicts between the “father of the nation” and the “masters of the regions”, are the principal factor in instability, which at the same time may be an obstacle on the slide into authoritarianism, particularly in small regions where the old system of checks and balances has been destroyed.

In terms of the redistribution of powers, what has taken place in recent years in Russia has been not so much a breakdown of the State as a regionalisation, a repartition of powers between the central and the regional elites. The Federal Treaty of March 1992, the December 1993 Constitution and the bilateral treaties on the delimitation of powers between the executive agencies of the Centre and the regions have not so much changed relationships as fixed the changes taking place in them.

Up to now, the disintegration trends have come from below and the integrationist tendencies have come from above. The exception is the expansionist tendencies of the authorities in the capital cities, who were attempting to “merge” with “their” oblasts (a sort of agreement was even concluded between St. Petersburg and the Leningrad oblast providing for union after 2000, but its initiators disappeared after the elections and nothing more has been heard of it), and the recent economic integration of Tatarstan and Bashkortostan. Some experts also see a revival “from below” of inter-regional associations, first of all the “Siberian agreement” and the Black Earth Zone.

At present, as has happened more than once in Russian history, the decentralisation phase is being replaced by a centralisation phase. The visible elements of the latter are: the 1993 constitution, changes in taxes and in the budget as a

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whole (1997), depriving the regions of “special” privileges on an individual basis (Yakutia) and by way of the law on the delimitation of areas of authority and powers (1997), and strengthening the post of Russian Federation President’s representative in the regions. This year has become a watershed: in 1989-1993 there was predominantly decentralisation (peaking in 1991), in 1993-1996 there was a combination of decentralisation and centralisation, and in 1997 centralisation predominated. It is to be expected that some of the extreme aspects of “initial spontaneous federalism” will gradually disappear while the remainder, which are now often no more than declaratory, will acquire real content. Apparently the period of discontinuous transformation of the state system is for the most part complete, and subsequently the changes will be smoother, in a pattern of self-generated oscillation.

In parallel with centralisation and redistribution of powers between the upper and middle levels of the power hierarchy to the advantage of the former, there is also a second-order “localisation” or decentralisation-redistribution of power between the middle and lower levels. In these circumstances the strengthening of local self-government, which had taken shape by the middle of 1996, has been replaced by the reverse process after the elections for governor, the decision of the Constitutional Court in the Udmurtia case, and the passing of the law on financial guarantees for local government, making local authorities dependent upon the regional authorities.

In strategic terms, relations between the centre and the regions are much more institutionalised now than they were quite recently; they are much more unified, and governed less and less by personal relations between the head of the region and the President. Nevertheless both the Centre and, which is more surprising, the regional leaders prefer to do business individually. A. Kuzmin recently suggested¹⁹ the following explanation for this: the regions of the Russian Federation can be subdivided into 1) regions that are objectively powerful and strong in relations with the Centre (Moscow, Tatarstan, the Sverdlovsk oblast), 2) regions that are objectively powerful but relatively weak in relations with the Centre (the Perm and Chelyabinsk oblasts), 3) regions that are objectively weak and subjectively strong (Ingushetia, Kalmykia), and 4) those that are objectively and subjectively weak (certain oblasts and autonomous districts with the exception of the north Tyumen regions). Of the categories listed, only the regions in group 2, whose political weight does not come up to their available potential, and a minority of these, are interested in reviewing the present individualised rules of the game with the Centre. However, most regional leaders, both strong and weak, are interested in building individual relations with the Centre.

As regards everyday relations between the regions and the Centre, these were in the process of re-institutionalisation after the elections for governor in 1996, which have substantially altered the functions and role of regional leaders. The

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Centre, being incapable of organising the co-ordination of its own subdivisions operating in the region from Moscow, is attempting to maintain this kind of co-ordination in the region itself by using the President's representatives for this purpose. This is opposed both by the regional leaders, who have no wish to have a strong independent figure "on their doorstep", and by political forces in the Centre, which oppose the concentration of all powers in relations with the regions in the hands of the presidential administration.

The significantly greater stability and homogeneity of regional elites compared with central elites gives them a certain advantage in relations with the Centre, making it possible to exploit differences between the various power structures. Thus, both sides are employing the principle "divide and a rule": the Centre in relations with the regions ("divide" in these circumstances refers increasingly to relations between the Centre and the regions as a whole and not with politicians within a region, as before), and regional leaders in relations with power structures in the Centre.

The separation of powers in the regional capitals has been undermined, initially by the elimination of the Soviets in 1993 and finally by the strengthening of the governors as a result of the elections in 1996. The main confrontation in regional politics now is between governors and mayors of capitals, where the Centre is supporting the mayors. This is not an horizontal confrontation, but rather a vertical phenomenon within one branch of power. The Centre has a stake in strengthening this sub-regional level of government.

Almost the most important and dangerous development from the point of view of the prospects of constructing a civil society is the far-reaching regionalisation of public life, against the background of weakening overall State control and greater dependence of society on the regional leadership: society is losing the State at national level and acquiring the State at regional level. As a result of the decentralisation that began at the end of the 1980s, the balance of forces on the "centre-regions" axis has altered significantly in favour of the regions; at the same time, for a variety of reasons, the old system of checks and balances in the regions has been destroyed and a very strong one-man leadership has arisen instead.

The relationship between the central and regional levels is a key issue for Russian society, for its very survival as a unified whole and avoiding the break-up into individual Moscow, Ryazan, Kalmyk, Primorskii, etc. societies. Changes in the balance of forces between the federal Centre and the regional leaders reflect both the alternating phases of consolidation and internal conflicts in the Centre itself and the cyclic nature of processes of political development in Russia linked to elections. The most important milestones along this road are: the "parade of sovereignties" at the time of confrontation between Russian and Union authorities (decentralisation); the reform of agencies of state power with introduction of the institutions of appointed heads and President's representatives in the regions

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after the August 1991 putsch, and the signing of the Federal Treaty (centralisation); the strengthening of independence of the republics, the rejection of leaders and President's representatives appointed by Boris Yeltsin, and open insubordination to the federal authorities during the acute conflict between the President and the Russian Parliament in October 1993 (decentralisation); the dissolution of the Soviets, replacement by the President of regional leaders who were not loyal to him, elections to the State Duma according to lists with strengthening of federal parties, and the adoption of a relatively centralist Constitution after the dissolution of the Parliament (centralisation); reform of the agencies of power in the regions with formation of a significantly weakened representative power under the control of the administrations, subsequent adoption of constitutions and charters (decentralisation); the start of the war in Chechnya (an unsuccessful attempt at centralisation); enhanced control by the regional authorities over the elections to the lower house of parliament, the transition to formation of the upper house of parliament from heads of executive and representative authorities elected in the regions, and other concessions by the Centre to regional leaders with a view to obtaining their support in the elections for the president of Russia (decentralisation); an increase in the cohesion of the regional elites and in their independence from the Centre as a result of elections of governors, and then, under their control, of mostly loyal legislative assemblies (decentralisation).

After the elections for governor, the Centre began to make active attempts to restore the balance of forces that had been disrupted to the advantage of the regional authorities. With the arrival in the President's administration and the government of A. Chubais and his team, an attempt was made to reconstruct the system of relations between the Centre and the regions to the advantage of the Centre. We should note that the establishment of regionalised and departmental structures are most important given the underdeveloped state of civil society and the weakness of political parties in Russia.

At the same time attempts were made to strengthen the institution of President's representative. The post of President's representative in the region introduced in 1991 was regarded then as almost equivalent to a head of administration, but the heads of administration themselves did everything possible both to weaken the institution and to replace presidential representatives who were independent from them by people loyal to themselves. Now the positions of the President's representatives, as analogues of prefects supervising federal agencies and structures locally, are being strengthened in Moscow by the creation in the presidential administration of a special board to co-ordinate their actions. Their position is also strengthened locally by the adoption of new regulations on the President's representative which extend his rights substantially, large-scale replacements of President's representatives by stronger individuals loyal to the Centre and appointment of President's representatives in most republics, where there were none previously.

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A further line of action in the Centre's regional policy is to restrain regional leaders who are becoming too independent. An obvious example is the Primorskii krai, in connection with the crisis in energy supply and workers' disturbances. A presidential edict ordered the removal of the deputy governor and gave a warning to Governor E. Nazdratenko. The president appointed a President's representative and gave him enormous additional powers. In Primorskii krai, the Centre suffered a fiasco; the very fact of its interference caused the diminished popularity of the Governor in the krai to increase. The rest of the leaders, irrespective of their personal sympathies, unambiguously supported the Primorskii governor in his conflict with Moscow. The campaign against breaches of federal laws and enforceable enactments widely proclaimed at the end of October 1996 did not come off either. It was limited to an "exemplary thrashing" for meek and mild Udmurtia.

The regional leaders tried to pit their own actions against the Centre; these were particularly dangerous in the financial area, where the principal (and now almost the only) possibilities for the Centre to exert effective influence on the regions exist. Regional leaders, — the so-called federal budget donors²⁰, though few in number (eight to ten) — made a number of demarches. They "demanded" a review of the 1997 budget from the President, the government and the Russian Federal Assembly. The stake in this conflict was not so much the disintegration of Russia as a radical change in the configuration of the political space, with a shift in the centre of gravity from the government and the President's administration to the Federation Council, the "big ten" or similar club of the most influential governors. This did not happen, primarily because of the lack of connections between the regional leaders, each of whom prefers to construct his relations with the Centre individually and is jealous of any increase in the strength of his neighbour, particularly such a powerful neighbour as Yu. Luzhkov, the mayor of Moscow, who is attempting to form a political and economic alliance of governors apart from the federal Centre.

The status quo was mostly retained as a result of the active efforts of both sides in the budgetary-financial area. The government drafts for the 1998 budget and the Tax Code were initially centralist. They intended to curtail the tax base in the regions, to reduce direct transfers and to enhance the role of federal programmes and to increase sharply the funding for the judicial system, now the strongest of the federal institutions in the regions. These measures were, however, softened.

The first wave of centralisation was even replaced by a certain amount of recoil at the end of 1997, as the clan confrontations in the Centre became more acute, and in particular with the departure of the "Chubais team" from the government and the presidential administration. At the very end of the year Boris Yeltsin placed practically the entire responsibility for the payment of arrears of

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wages on the government, contrary to his July decision regarding equal responsibility for the regional administrations and the government and contrary to the respective agreements signed by the Finance Ministry with each constituent of the Federation. This created an extremely negative precedent, because the regional leaders who had honourably paid their part of the debt to the budgetary staff proved to be fools, while others, including those who had diverted budgetary funds to doubtful projects, loans, postponement of taxes and so on came out the winners.

The second, “Kirienko” wave of centralisation began with the formation of a new government in April-May 1998. It included: 1) stricter inter-budget relations, with a campaign, lightning-fast by Russian standards, to conclude agreements between the government and constituent executive agencies on the reorganisation of state finances and the conditions for financial assistance to the budgets of Russian Federation constituents from federal budget resources and stricter control of external borrowings by the regions; 2) a package of tax laws, including laws as part of the government’s anti-crisis programme, increasing the role and potential of the Centre, other measures including changes in the formula for calculating transfers, increased departmental responsibility for resources allocated under federal programmes, legislative refinement of the machinery for “bankruptcy of regions”; 3) rigid vertical arrangement of a media holding company with inclusion of regional television and radio companies as subsidiaries, and a government anti-crisis programme proposing to go as far as “the introduction of external financial management for regions in financial crisis”; 4) exemplary “thrashings” for the regional elite (the corruption case in the Kursk oblast²¹) and for large regional companies (Tatneft, Bashneft); 5) fresh attempts to derive support from sub-regional authorities against regional authorities, in particular the establishment of a Congress of Municipal Bodies which someone has called the “third house of parliament”.

There has also been a substantial regrouping of forces, with the final transfer to the Kremlin — to the presidential administration and the Security Council — of the entire staff controlling relations with the regions and its organisational upgrading.

Centralist principles are gradually gaining strength in relations between the Centre and the regions. The most recent evidence of this is: the extension (to almost all regions) of President’s representatives and their personal and institutional reinforcement in the regions; the centralisation and regionalisation of the tax system; the strengthening of powerful national banks and of huge corporations such as Gazprom; strengthening of the juridical system, the strongest local institution independent of the regional leaders; the redistribution of resources sent to the regions in support of federal programmes by direct subsidy; depriving the regions of “special” individual privileges.

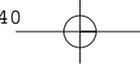
Conclusions: Russia as a Single Political Space

What can and what actually does unite the Russian regions to form a single whole?

1) **National property (State property or the property of national corporations)**. Until recently state property was absolutely predominant, being managed on behalf of its nominal owner by Ministries and departments, on the one hand, and by regional administrations, on the other. With the disintegration of the Ministry system and with privatisation, the local elites managed to “hive everything off to the regions”, having established their direct or indirect control over the vast majority of the enterprises in the regions. In most cases, however, this was not ownership but control via, for instance, parcels of State shares transferred to the regions. In 1997 the situation changed. On the one hand, national giants such as ONEKSIM, “Russkii Kredit” etc. arrived in many regions to replace the relatively small local banks and companies, binding the country together with financial bands in place of disintegrating administrative ties. On the other hand, the regional administrations themselves were transformed into big owners, having obtained from the government the right to State parcels of shares on account of federal budget debts.

2) **A common infrastructure** exists, primarily as three super monopolies: The Ministry of Communications (railways), the “Common Energy System” (electric power), and Gazprom (gas). The last two, which have their own subsidiaries in most regions, are introducing the practice of signing co-operation agreements with regional administrations; the first has attempted to reinforce its regional structures, but has retreated, having encountered fierce resistance from the regional administrations, who fear the loss of taxes and loss of control. The sharp increase in transport tariffs in recent years has contributed to a significant reduction in the proportion of long-distance links in the general structure. Unfortunately, some local administrations prescribe unlawful tolls for the use of the federal motorway network, as is the case, for example, in the Bryansk or Smolensk oblasts.

3) **The economic complex, a common economic space**. Under the prevailing conditions of profound economic crisis and continuing restructuring of the economy, there is large-scale disintegration of the industrial links that even recently formed a common fabric over the whole country. Protectionism by local authorities led to prohibitions on exports or special taxation of imports. The most viable sectors of the economy are the export-oriented sectors such as oil and gas production or metallurgy or, like the food industry, oriented towards serving the local region. Due to its remoteness from the main centres, the Far East has greatly reduced the extent of its links with the Russian regions and is increasingly oriented outwards—to the countries of the Asia-Pacific region.



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4) **Strong national parties, a common political space.** At present all-Russian parties are at the formation stage. These are mainly parties which have to secure the electoral victory of some particular leaders, with no precise membership or strict discipline, but with extremely independent regional sections and a high degree of mobility among the active members. The continuing transformation of society impedes the constitution of a stable social base. In the regions there are also strong local governors' parties. As regards the elites, in this respect the country's political space is broken down into regional cells.

5) **National mass media, a common information space.** This is also fragmented, because the role of the national "paper" mass media has declined sharply; electronic sources are not generally accessible and are not protected from regional make-weights or from control by local administrations. However, efforts have recently been made to create a really strong unified all-Russian State television and radio company.

6) **The national idea.** It does not exist, in spite of all attempts to find, formulate or develop it and in spite of the competitions and special government working groups that have been held. And it will not exist, at least in the immediate future, because of the deep political divisions in society. However, there are ethno-nationalist ideas in a number of republics, connected with the building of their own ethnic states. A common enemy might contribute to unity, but no such enemy is in view. There is no national idea, but there is a common heritage of history and culture and a common mentality, and the sense of belonging to a single country (however, practically the same could have been said in 1991 about the USSR).

7) **Universal legislation, a common legal space.** This does not exist. Federal laws and even the Constitution are flouted quite often, the decisions of the higher courts, including the Constitutional Court, do not have the force of precedent and are frequently ignored or subjected to delaying tactics; it is sufficient to refer to experience in the local elections and to the numerous breaches that accompanied them. However, the Court and the public prosecutor's office are almost the only institutions that regional leaders as a whole have been unable to bring under their control in spite of all their efforts. It cannot be said that local courts are absolutely independent, but regional courts have nipped in the bud a number of attempts to establish local rules of the game in the elections that are in breach of federal laws but suit the authorities, to introduce unlawful taxes, to prevent the free movement of people and goods across regional frontiers and so on. In this situation the Order of the Constitutional Court in June 1998 whereby all courts except the Constitutional Court itself were forbidden to consider complaints about any enactments by the authorities of constituents of the Federation that run counter to federal laws and the Constitution looks strange.



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8) **A common space for the activities of the population:** this does not exist, because of the enormously increased “conflicts of distance” resulting from the high cost of transport and communications²², enormous contrasts on the housing markets making it practically impossible for people to move from depressed regions, and many local “snags and obstacles” in the way of newcomers, as in Moscow, Krasnodar or Stavropol.

9) **A strong unified police system, army and enforcement agencies.** Here there is no trace of such a force or any unity, because in a budgetary-financial crisis the enforcement agencies become increasingly dependent on the regional authorities. More and more soldiers on short-term active duty serve within their own regions, the voice of the regional authorities in appointing and/or removing the heads of the MVD, the public prosecutor’s office and other federal bodies, etc. carries more and more weight, and many regions have their own special forces (OMON) and similar paramilitary bodies, to say nothing of municipal militia. However, under the current military reform sole responsibility in large districts, with all the armed units subordinated to a single command, is to be established.

10) **A common space at the sub-regional level.** An attempt may be made to solve the problems of integration that arise at the regional level by using the next one, the sub-regional level of cities and districts. The latter, like the regions are headed in most cases by directly elected civilian leaders. The sub-regional level, to which the Centre has been actively appealing recently (the Local Self-government Council under the Russian Federation President created in 1997, the Congress of Municipal Bodies set up in 1998, and the Law on the financial principles of local self-government) may be used in two ways: these are consolidation at the local level, from Russia of the regions to Russia of cities and the districts, and a movement from the opposite direction: a wedge is knocked out by a wedge. Both the forces of attraction and the forces of repulsion may be on the side of integration.

It is apparent on the basis of the above account that unity of political space exists and, if we leave out Chechnya which has stood apart for long time, hardly anything threatens it in the immediate future. However, this is a unity of extremely diverse parts which are sometimes also developing in various directions, attached more to the Centre than to each other by administrative-bureaucratic links which in addition have a tendency to grow weaker. Society, like the political elites, is highly fragmented and, though formally united, lacks internal integrity. Elements of social self-organisation that were weak and showed little independence previously in the Soviet era have not grown stronger in the time of crisis, which does not help to bind the country together from the bottom up and horizontally, plus the existing administrative and in part financial-economic ties from the top down. In these circumstances the boundaries between the regions are

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total. They are crossed by practically no-one, completely enclosing the life of society in all its aspects. A political space organised in this way is unstable. The principal dangers of its weakening still further to the point of disintegration are due to a) increased internal heterogeneity and growing contrasts between regions, and to forces of repulsion between them; and b) weakening of the Centre, without which unity in the political space in its present form is quite impossible. Strengthening unity in the political space is unlikely to be possible until the country's economy is working normally.

Experience of Russian Federalism Applicable to the Georgian-Abkhaz Conflict

It is unlikely that any part of the Russian experience of 1991-1998 in building relations between the Centre and the regions is directly usable with regard to Abkhazia and its relations with Tbilisi, now or in the near term. This is rather a matter for a more distant future. We have, however, to be attentive to the many links between the post-Soviet elites, whether Russian, Georgian or Abkhaz. This relationship goes further than the simple fact that the paths of Shevardnadze, Ardzinba and, say, that native of Tbilisi Primakov crossed in Moscow in the 1980s and at the beginning of the 1990s (especially at the Congress of USSR People's Deputies). There are definite similarities between the socio-political, economic, religious and ethnic background to the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict and a whole range of other similar Russian examples. Moreover, Russia as a whole and individual forces in Russia at both the federal and regional levels have played, continue to play and will play a vital part in the Georgian - Abkhaz conflict and in its resolution.

This might be a matter of seeking parallels in at least two major areas, one linked with general principles, approaches and aims and the other with methods of implementing these, with forms and with institutions. The confrontation between Moscow and Kazan, which was particularly acute in 1992, and the confrontation between Moscow and Grozny before the Chechen war (in 1991-1994), during that war (1994-1996) and after it (1996-1998), the Ossetian-Ingush conflict with open armed confrontation and the expulsion of Ingush from the Prigorodnyi region in 1992, experience in concluding bilateral treaties between the Centre and the regional authorities in 1994-1998, a number of episodes in the struggle between the regional leaders and the Centre for powers (particularly for control of the courts and the law-enforcement agencies), etc.: the list of recent episodes from turbulent Russian political life that may provide useful material in the context of the Georgian-Abkhaz confrontation can be extended ad infinitum.

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A brief formulation of the lessons learned by Moscow from recent political conflicts with the regions that are applicable to Sukhumi and Tbilisi is more difficult; the same applies to formulating principles for relationships between the Centre and the regions, especially those that can be recommended to neighbours. There are two main reasons for this: the negative nature of the experience in most cases and the absence of cases of “full-cycle” conflict resolution because observation time is too short and because the Centre is extremely inconsistent, as a result of overall political instability; the second is the uniqueness of each specific case and the impossibility of making any generalisations, or if generalisations are possible these are trivial.

The following lessons (principles) can be stated in their most general form (they are of little interest in “cut-down” form, and must in any event be taken in a broad and individual socio-political and geographic-historical context).

1. Most of the socio-political processes connected with Centre-region confrontation are irreversible (it is impossible simply to go back to the situation preceding the routine escalation of confrontation a year or even a week before, and a long roundabout route has to be used every time to restore the status quo, if that can be achieved in principle).
2. It is impossible to devise and implement a long-term strategy because of political and economic instability (it is beneficial to “bottle up” the conflict, to take off its edge, and to begin a long-term negotiating process with no hopes of a radical solution). Hence the benefits of the “softly softly approach”, of setting rules and following them.
3. An individual approach by the Centre, with a reasonable combination of open/public and lobby negotiations and arrangements; untying the hands of the executive is a requirement for this.
4. Directing attention primarily towards economic interest as an essential condition for achieving any relatively long-term political compromise (in a time of crisis the preferred option may be to the “bottle up” the situation, with preparation in the future for opportunities for a breakthrough) as a means of blocking out resistance by the political elites from within and creating strong and stable motivation. Head-on attempts to achieve a rapid and radical solution to the conflict by force are hopeless. Steps that lead to an advantage for one side to the detriment of the other are strategically counter-productive, with the consequent necessity of worrying about an advantage for the other side as a principal guarantee for itself.
5. There must be parallel work with the various elites (clans and strata) and with the masses; without the support of the latter no arrangements with the elites will be strong and long-lasting enough. Both sides have a strategic interest in the development of democracy and democratic institutions, in spite of the difficulties that this involves in the short term.



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Notes

- ¹ A whole range of economic topics of vital political importance are outside the scope of the paper: inter-budget relations, the taxation system, regional financial securities, central bank expansion in the regions, etc., as well as a number of aspects of the topic itself which are interesting though perhaps not the most important: inter-regional associations, regional missions in Moscow, associations of fellow-countrymen, regional lobbies, national parties and their regional sections, etc. The author pleads the vastness of the topic as a partial excuse. Each individual topic listed could be a subject for special study, but they simply could not be accommodated in this paper, which is very general in nature.
- ² Kalmykia, Chuvashia and Mordovia were the first after Tatarstan in 1991 to hasten to elect presidents. In the first two cases the elections produced no victor (the next elections were held 1 - 2 years later). In the third the victory of a "democrat" led to his confronting the Supreme Council; this led to the abolition of the office of President 1 year later (it was only reintroduced in 1997).
- ³ In Karachai-Cherkessia the head up to the summer of 1999 was V. Khubiev, appointed by Yeltsin but not elected by the population, while in Dagestan, where attempts were made to apply the idea of a "collective president", the chairman of the State Council, elected by the members of an electoral college, is acting as head.
- ⁴ With the exception of Mordovia already referred to, where in 1991-1993 the President was a "democrat" from the plant laboratories, and Khakassia, where in 1996 Colonel A. Lebed (junior) was victorious in the elections.
- ⁵ M. Shaimiev in particular was accused of this.
- ⁶ Strictly speaking, the first of the "second" series of effective elections of a republic leader was held in February 1994 in Ingushetia. They were held on the initiative of President R. Aushev a year after the first elections without an alternative candidate and represented a kind of vote of confidence.
- ⁷ In the last year or two Yu. Luzhkov, the mayor of Moscow, and the Udmurtia State Council have pointedly ignored the decisions of the Constitutional Court. In the latter case it was actually necessary to duplicate them by a special Presidential Edict.
- ⁸ M. Mityukov replaced S. Shakrai in July 1998.
- ⁹ V. Adrov from Astrakhan, N. Egorov from Vladimir, G. Oinvid from the Koryak district and V. Kulakovskii from Stavropol. In several cases President's representatives replaced leaders (O. Savchenko in the Kaluga oblast in 1996 and V. Barabanov in the Bryansk oblast in 1995), but as a rule they were forced out of the region.
- ¹⁰ The most frequent changes in President's representatives took place at the end of 1993 and the beginning of 1994, when 13 were replaced, at the beginning of 1996 in the presidential campaign (10 representatives) and most significantly in the first half of 1997 when 20 new President's representatives were appointed, including representatives in six republics where there had been none before.
- ¹¹ Previously the Control Board had acted as tutor to the President's representatives; this subsequently passed to the territorial board devolved from it.
- ¹² Ros. Gaz. 16th July 1997.
- ¹³ The new phenomenon of mass elite migrations from the regions to the Centre of governors and their teams who have lost elections is particularly noticeable against the background of the general weakening of links between the central and regional elites, due to the fact that the latter have become isolated and have taken root. Here reference can be made to the transition to federal power of a substantial part of the St. Petersburg team of A. Sobchak and others, for example V. Khristenko, a Deputy Premier in the government of S. Kirienko and recently a former



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deputy leader, then for a very short time a President's representative in the Chelyabinsk oblast. If we leave out the very specific case of A. Tuleev, no one has yet gone back from "federal power", although they have tried (N. Egorov in the Kuban, N. Medvedev in Mordovia, I. Kostoev in Ingushetia, etc.); the only successful moves have been from the opposition, mainly deputies—V. Sergeenkov (Kirov oblast), Aleksei Lebed (Khakasia), E. Mikhailov (Pskov oblast), A. Chernogorov (Stavropol krai), A. Rutskoï (Kursk oblast), V. Lyubimov (Ryazan oblast), S. Zubakin (Altai), Aleksandr Rutskoï (Krasnoyarsk krai) and others.

¹⁴ The 47 regions on which information was obtained (these were oblasts and kraï, because as a rule there were no President's representatives in the republics) were grouped into five main and two intermediate types. Later, on the basis of a situation analysis and our own expert assessments, we extended the type classification obtained to the remaining regions also (regions from "our" list have no indication of the number of "most influential politicians").

¹⁵ The following were also assigned to this type: the Altai kraï, the Arkhangelsk, Pskov, Tver, Kaluga, Belgorod, Kursk and Orenburg oblasts and the Jewish Autonomous Oblast; the republics of Adygea, Altai, Buryatia, Kalmykia, Mari and Yakutia and the Voronezh, Kirov, Kostroma and Leningrad oblasts and the Aga-Buryat, Komi-Permyak, Koryak and Taimyr districts.

¹⁶ The **non-nomenklatura type**, to which seven regions (Chita, Vologda, Ivanovsk, Penza, Novosibirsk, Omsk and Bryansk oblasts) were initially assigned, proved to be the most unstable, and was essentially transitional. Its characteristic incomplete upper echelon in the form of the heads of the two branches of power and extensive representation of Party leaders and people's deputies proved to be short-lived, and as a result of appointments and elections the regions finished up in the old nomenklatura or simply nomenklatura types.

¹⁷ The Novgorod oblast (all directors) and the Chelyabinsk oblast (the head of administration, the chairman of the Council and three directors) may be taken as standards. This type also included the Samara, Perm, Kurgansk and Kemerovo oblasts, the Ust-Ordynsk Buryat and Chukotka districts and also, to some extent provisionally, the Murmansk and Kamchatka oblasts, where senior naval officers took the part of directors. The republics of Karelia, Komi and Udmurtia, the Primorskii kraï, the Magadan, Sakhalin, Smolensk and Tyumen oblasts and the Yamal-Nenets district also fell within this group. Chuvashia (the chairman of the Supreme Council, the president of the Academy of Sciences, the president of the National Congress and the leaders of the peasants' union and the agricultural industry trade union) and Kabardino-Balkaria, Tatarstan and Tuva which border it formed a particular **national-liberal type**. However, this type, like the non-nomenklatura type, soon merged with the nomenklatura and neo-nomenklatura types.

The seven regions that "fell between" the types can be classified either as transitional (the Tomsk oblast — between the non-nomenklatura and old nomenklatura types, the Krasnodar and Khabarovsk kraï — between the nomenklatura and old nomenklatura types) or as representatives, though in isolation, of a particular type: the Sverdlovsk oblast as the criminal-market type (7: the head of administration, the chairman of the Council, the President's representative, an entrepreneur and three mafiosi) and Dagestan and in part Karachai-Cherkessia as an ethnic-clan type. An extremely dispersed nomenklatura-directorial elite was characteristic of the Moscow oblast.

¹⁸ In a radio address on 31st October 1997 on the problems of the Russian territories, Boris Yeltsin spoke about this in the following terms: "... in 1994 we used an essentially new constitutional instrument for the first time in order to solve very complex and disputed issues involving Tatarstan. I am referring to a bilateral treaty on the delimitation of powers between federal and regional agencies. Then it acted as a kind of "political first aid". It warded off the danger of the Federation breaking up."



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- ¹⁹ Oral communication.
- ²⁰ In fact, the donors are not the regions, but a small number of large modern export-orientated manufacturers present in the regions and connected mainly with the oil and gas and metallurgical complexes.
- ²¹ The latest one, in which the deputies of governor A. Rutskoi and his own brother appear as extras, accused of using intermediary firms for personal enrichment; this is encountered in some form or another in most regions. This case may serve as a signal to all regional leaders of the Kremlin's resolve in applying political pressure when it has the goods on someone.
- ²² An announcement from Chukotka appeared in the press in the summer of 1998: "Exchange two-room apartment for two tickets to Moscow".

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