



THE ISSUE OF SENATORIAL INSPECTIONS IN THE RUSSIAN EMPIRE AND F. GIRS' REVIEW IN TURKESTAN

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Article history:	Abstract:
Received: 26 th January 2025 Accepted: 24 th February 2025	This article provides information on the initiation, goals, and objectives of senatorial investigations conducted throughout the governorates of the Russian Empire, the guidelines developed for these investigations, the Russian emperors' attitudes towards investigative work, the commencement of F. Girs' revision in Turkestan, its intended purpose, and its results.

Keywords: Russian Empire, Turkestan Governor-Generalship, 1711, Peter I, Senatorial Investigation, April 4, 1722, Count A.A. Matveev, Peter II, Anna Ioannovna, Elizabeth Petrovna, Peter III, Decree of December 1, 1799, A.E. Nolden, Von Kaufman, F. Girs, M. Chernyaev, Alexander I, Alexander III, Count Ignatiev.

The issue of state governance has long fascinated many researchers in historical studies. In this context, particular attention has been given to the work of senatorial investigations aimed at identifying abuses in the sphere of governance and establishing the legitimacy of state power by officials operating in the territories of the Russian Empire. Consequently, in studying the history of state administration during the period of the Turkestan Governor-Generalship, the significance of senatorial inquiries appointed by Russian emperors has been considered high.

Senatorial inspections, one of the means of monitoring the activities of government bodies in territories incorporated into the empire, began to be conducted from the time of Peter I in 1711. This system of oversight persisted until the final days of the Senate's existence, with the following functions:

- a) monitoring the adherence to established rules by administrative bodies within the empire;
- b) verifying the compliance of decisions made in local areas with the requirements of the regulations. [P. 1-30]

The concept of senatorial inspection was established by the Senate's decree of April 4, 1722, which stated that it was created "to ensure justice in all affairs of provinces and regions." According to the decree, a commission consisting of one Senate member and representatives from ministries would be formed annually and sent to study the territories. Additionally, complaints about the actions of senators could only be filed with the Senate itself. [p. 3-155-157]

Although such a form of control was not widely developed during the reign of Peter I, during the reign of his successors, inspections were carried out

consecutively and systematically. For example, shortly after the death of Russia's first emperor, an inspection of the Moscow Governorate, conducted by Count A.A. Matveev in 1726-1727, was ordered. During the investigation, A.A. Matveev uncovered numerous instances of abuse, violations, and theft in various locations, and the perpetrators were severely punished.

Historians note that during the reigns of Emperors Peter II, Anna Ioannovna, Elizabeth Petrovna, and Peter III, senatorial inspections were not conducted. [1-2-B]

A new phase in the government's activity regarding Senate inspections was implemented during the reign of Emperor Paul I, who aimed to address unresolved issues from previous years, as well as to regulate the process of state governance in accordance with his ideas. Senatorial inspections were widely appointed by decree on December 1, 1799. Inspections were carried out simultaneously in 41 provinces. To achieve the set goals, the emperor established specific objectives for conducting the inspections. These included: a fair assessment of state administration; the condition of internal governance in the provinces; fraud (bribery, theft), the state of agriculture and forests; as well as an assessment of the authorities' care for orphans and the state of their upbringing.

The effectiveness of such mass inspections was not always positive, as neither the number of specialists involved in the inspections, nor the scope of issues to be examined, nor the time allocated for conducting and documenting the inspection, contributed to an objective assessment of the state of affairs in the governorates. In this regard, A.E. Nolden cited an example of a



superficial approach in the inspection of the St. Petersburg Governorate.

However, it can also be seen that the empire achieved positive results in its inspection activities. For example, in the Tambov and Vyatka provinces, senators uncovered clear evidence of violations.

The emperor specifically defined the status of an inspector, who was considered an inspector rather than a judge. Attention was paid to separating the inspector's supervisory powers from the court and not violating the established procedure for reviewing cases.

In his research, D.V. Sokolov emphasized that the death of Emperor Paul I did not negatively impact the Senate's inspection activities, and noted that 79 senatorial investigations were conducted throughout the empire between 1800 and 1850. [1-4-B]

By decrees of Emperor Alexander I issued on September 8, 1802, August 1, 1805, and March 17, 1819, both the Senate body and its auditing powers underwent certain modifications. For example, the Emperor's decree of 1805 provided a list of issues that needed to be examined during an audit. According to it, the following aspects were to be verified:

- a) the correct observance of imperial decrees;
- b) adherence to administrative regulations by local authorities;
- c) the status of tax and mandatory payment collection;
- d) assessment of public order and security conditions in the region.[1-4-B]

During the reign of subsequent emperors, the practice of senatorial inspections was further intensified, and their powers were expanded. According to the calculations of S.V. Lyubichankovsky, between 1800 and 1917, 129 senatorial inspections were conducted in Russia, with the aim of studying the administrative management systems of territories within the empire.[2-14-p]

By the first half of the 19th century, during inspections, various punishments were typically established for errors and shortcomings of local officials, including dismissal from office. At the same time, in addition to gathering information on the status of audits, record keeping, and the completeness and correctness of decisions made by civil servants, these inspections led to the collection of important statistical and research materials about the region under investigation. This included data on population size, employment, public sentiment, causes of ongoing social processes, and the economic situation. Such information, of course, proved valuable in assessing the policies implemented by the state.

The first senatorial inspection of the administrative system of the Turkestan Governor-Generalship, along with other regions that were part of the Russian Empire, and the development of a draft for new regulations on regional governance was carried out in 1882-1883.

The impetus for the inspection of the Turkestan region came from Emperor Alexander III's meeting with M.G. Chernyayev, the future Governor-General of the Turkestan region, in December 1881. During this official meeting, Chernyayev informed the Emperor about the extremely unsatisfactory state of the regional administration. [pp. 2-15]

In historiography, Chernyayev's military and political activities, as well as his special role in the incorporation of Central Asia into the Russian Empire, are widely documented. While researchers highly value Chernyayev's military talent and his service to the empire, they also emphasize that he lacked administrative abilities and failed to prove himself as a governor-general. [P. 4-438]

After von Kaufman's death, General Chernyayev was appointed Governor-General by order of Emperor Alexander III. One of his initial actions was to actively begin preparing and conducting a senatorial investigation to review the governance reforms of his predecessor. In April 1882, he sent a request to the Russian Emperor to inspect the region, informing him of the necessity to conduct a senatorial inquiry in the territory entrusted to him.

Regarding M. Chernyayev's active involvement in organizing the senatorial investigation of Turkestan, the imperial official R.Yu. Pochekaev stated: "Chernyayev, who governed the Turkestan region in 1865-1866, was strongly opposed to Kaufman's appointment as governor-general after the establishment of the Turkestan Governor-Generalship in 1867. He viewed Kaufman as his rival and therefore consistently criticized all his actions. Chernyayev took the initiative in conducting the senatorial investigation to achieve condemnation of his enemy's policies." [Page 104-5]

While not denying M.G. Chernyayev's personal interest in investigating the Turkestan Governor-Generalship entrusted to him, it can be said that the existing problems in Turkestan's administrative system, socio-political sphere, and judicial-legal domain also played a significant role in organizing the senatorial investigation.

After heated discussions on the issue of conducting an inspection in the Turkestan Governor-Generalship, on October 20, 1882, the Emperor's trusted confidant, Fedor Karlovich Girs (1824-1891),



was appointed head of the inspection commission. Specialists from various ministries were included in the commission. For example, N. Galdinsky from the Ministry of Internal Affairs, N. Petrovsky from the Ministry of Finance (who was also the Empire's consul in Kashgar), S. Ezuchevsky from the Customs Department, and A. Ditlov from the Ministry of Justice, who was the Prosecutor of the Novgorod District Court.

Instructions for conducting an inspection in the Turkestan region were prepared and approved on October 20, 1882, with the signature of the Minister of War, General-Adjutant Vannovsky. Apart from the Orthodox Church and the military sphere, it listed sectors that were subject to inspection. The inspection commission was tasked with studying the management system based on these instructions and submitting their reports. The manual consisted of 20 points and included areas that needed to be examined. [6-11-B] We can say that firstly, the purpose of the inspection commission was to identify the areas that needed to be inspected. It was also determined that the commission should submit its conclusions for the development of a draft regulation on the administration of Turkestan. This was to be based on assessing the extent to which the powers granted to Governor-General Kaufman by the Supreme Decree of July 11, 1867, had been exercised, evaluating the legal status of the temporary regulations on territorial administration developed by the Governor-General, and identifying shortcomings observed in the field of administration.

The results of the inspection conducted in Turkestan under the leadership of F. Girs were reviewed by a government commission formed in 1884 under the leadership of Count Ignatiev. The majority of the proposed projects were subsequently incorporated into the final draft of the Regulation on the Administration of Turkestan in 1886.

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