Siberian Regionalism as a Phenomenon of Social Thought in Late Imperial Russia

ALEXEY V. MALINOV

Abstract: This article considers regionalism (*oblastnichestvo*) as an independent direction in the history of Russian thought and culture. Four varieties of regionalism are pointed out: Russian, Ukrainian, Siberian, and Western Russianism (*zapadnorussizm*), which held the principles of federalism in common. The philosophical and methodological basis of regionalism was *narodnichestvo* (populism)—the ideology and movement of the intelligentsia in Russia in the second half of the nineteenth century. *Narodnichestvo* was against serfdom and capitalist development in Russia, and for the overthrow of the autocracy by means of a peasant revolution, positivism, and Slavophilism. The program of the regionalists was addressed to the provincial intelligentsia and was largely aimed at the formation of an intelligentsia called to serve their region. The program of Siberian regionalism is considered in more detail.

Keywords: federalism, geographical determinism, ideology, *oblastnichestvo*, regionalism, *sibirefilstvo*, *ukrainofilstvo*

> The fact is that the population of any territory, especially if it is large, wants not only to eliminate the shortcomings of its social life, but in general to be the creator of its own destiny.
>
> —Potanin, "The Regionalist Tendency in Siberia" (1907)

The historian Konstantin Bestuzhev-Ryumin, drew attention to "historical law" in one of his popular articles, "What Russian History Teaches."

> Obeying the great law of history, unification came from the youngest and more mixed tribe: the unification of Greece, though incomplete, was accomplished by half-barbarian, half-Greek Macedonia; the unification of ancient Italy came from a city inhabited by natives of all

> Italian tribes; Italy was united not by purely Italian Piedmont; Germany by German outskirts once Slavic. The movement of unification that has begun in such places also finds support in other areas, takes in other elements and transforms itself into a common cause. The Suzdal movement was the same: it became an all-Russian movement. (Bestuzhev-Ryumin 1877: 11)

The historian's observation can hardly be called a "law;" it is rather a generalization, which characterizes the philosophical-historical attitude of the researcher himself. Bestuzhev-Ryumin belonged to the followers of the Slavophile doctrine, but in his philosophical and historical outlook he approached the ideology of the social movement commonly referred to as regionalism (*oblastnichestvo*). This is not coincidental; Bestuzhev-Ryumin's views were formed in the same years as the establishment of regionalism.

Oblastnichestvo was a prominent movement among the provincial intelligentsia in Russia in the second half of the nineteenth century. The ideology of the *oblastniki* (regionalists) focused on the defense of local interests, and their program was addressed to the provincial intelligentsia and aimed at changing their consciousness. According to this ideology, the intelligentsia was called upon to defend local interests and strive for the socio-economic and cultural development of the regions; this would ultimately lead to the spiritual awakening of the people, expressed in a variety of cultural activities, including independent philosophical thought, whose model for the regionalists was European philosophy. The *oblastniki* attached great importance to the development of journalism and literature in forming a local intelligentsia in order to awaken the cultural forces of the province.

Siberian regionalism as a direction in Russian social thought and a movement among the provincial intelligentsia, or, in the words of Potanin, a "tendency," found its designation in such terms as "Siberian *oblastnichestvo*," *sibirefil'stvo* (sibirophilism), or simply *sibirstvo* (Siberianism). There would be no need for such duplication if these terms were merely synonymous. Siberian *oblastnichestvo* is a historical phenomenon that existed for more than half a century (from the early 1860s to the end of the Russian Civil War, and in the Russian emigration to the Second World War). Originating as a literary and cultural movement of the emerging Siberian intelligentsia, it began to take political shape only in the years of the First Russian Revolution. The political activity of the Siberian regionalists increased in 1917, when the projects of the federal Siberian structure appeared. However, educational and cultural activities remained dominant for Siberian regionalism, which directly

brought it closer to Sibirophilism. Sibirophilism was not limited to the Siberian intelligentsia, but included a broad study of Siberia and striving for the development of the region. *Sibirstvo* (Siberianism) was a new regional identity that transformed into a political worldview with all its potential dangers in the form of political isolation, confrontational ideology, and so forth.

The origins of all these definitions can be seen in the teachings and activities of Potanin; his figure unites them all. His significance is also indicated by the fact that he was the founder and leader of the Siberian regionalists, an active sibirophile, the first spokesman of the "Siberian idea"—a new regional identity, namely *sibirstvo* (Siberianism). I will only note that, as a historical phenomenon, regionalism has certainly already taken place, but the theoretical side of the regionalist doctrine, its philosophical component, still requires comprehension, reflection, and, perhaps, continuation. An isolated study of Ukrainian, Siberian, or Russian regionalism would be hardly productive for understanding the philosophical views of regionalists. The socio-philosophical and philosophical-historical doctrine of regionalism can be reconstructed only on the basis of a comparative study of the heritage of all directions of regionalism. Without getting acquainted with the works of Siberian regionalists, a historical study of not only Russian nomadism and ethnography but also Eurasianism is impossible.

The leaders of the Siberian regionalists were Grigory N. Potanin (1835–1920) and Nikolai M. Yadrintsev (1842–1894). Yadrintsev was an influential journalist, writer, public figure, and explorer of Siberia and Central Asia. In 1865, he was accused of Siberian separatism and sent into exile, where he wrote *The Russian Community in Prison and Exile* (1872). In 1878 and 1880 he made expeditions to Altai, and in 1886, 1889, and 1891 to the Minusinsk region and Mongolia, where he encountered Karakorum, the capital of Genghis Khan's empire, and Khala-Balgas, the capital of the Uighur state. The monuments of ancient Turkic script he found there made it possible to decipher the Orkhon-Yenisei script (the runic script of the ancient Turks). In 1882–1894, he founded and edited the newspaper *Oriental Review*. According to Yadrintsev's project, the first university in Siberia was founded in Tomsk in 1878. Yadrintsev's books *Siberia as a Colony* (1882) and *Siberian Foreigners* (1891) became programmatic works of Siberian regionalism.

Potanin was a traveler, a great explorer of North and Central Asia. In 1865, he was sent into penal servitude for a "case of Siberian separatism." Potanin's first expeditions date back to 1863–1864. In 1876–1878 and 1879–1880 he made two expeditions to Mongolia, in 1884–1886

and 1892–1893 to China and Tibet, and in 1899 to Inner Mongolia. The published materials of these expeditions are of great scientific value, containing information on the geography, flora, and fauna of the regions, as well as ethnography, including the most complete collection of Turkic-Mongolian folklore. From 1902, Potanin lived in Tomsk and enjoyed unquestionable authority among the Siberian intelligentsia. Thanks to Potanin's research, journalism, and public activities, the program of the Siberian regionalists, including their political program, was finally formed. Potanin did not accept the October Revolution of 1917 and remained a supporter of federalism and autonomism.

Regionalism (*oblastnichestvo*) in the History of Russian Thought

Regionalism emerged in St. Petersburg at the turn of the 1850s and 1860s, when historians N. I. Kostomarov, A. P. Shchapov, Bestuzhev-Ryumin, and P. V. Pavlov, as well as students and non-matriculated students of St. Petersburg University and other educational institutions (Potanin, Yadrintsev, N. S. Schukin, S. S. Shashkov and others) were in the capital for various reasons. Historians Kostomarov, Shchapov, Bestuzhev-Ryumin, and Pavlov became part of the historiography under the rubric of the federalist historians (Boyarchenkov 2005), and students and non-matriculated students of St. Petersburg University and other educational institutions (Potanin, Shchukin, Yadrintsev, Shashkov, etc.) formed the Siberian *zemliachestvo* circle, from which Siberian regionalism grew (Malinov 2010).

The expression "idea of *oblastnost'*," in other words, the idea of regionalism, is first found in the works of Shchapov in the 1850s–1860s, but the term *oblastnichestvo* did not gain a foothold until the early 1890s, when many of the founders of the doctrine were no longer alive. The authorities reacted negatively to the new movement and its ideology, accusing its followers of separatism. The stigma of separatism (both Ukrainian and Siberian) was attached to the leaders of the regionalists for several decades. The earliest attempts at self-definition included the expression "local patriotism." This term, for example, was used by Potanin: "The regionalist tendency is the same as local patriotism," he admitted (Potanin 1907: 2).

The program of *oblastnichestvo* was addressed to the provincial intelligentsia and aimed at changing its consciousness, and often at actually creating such an intelligentsia. The task of the intelligentsia,

as understood by the provincialists, was to serve local interests and the socio-economic, political, and cultural development of their region. According to its ideologists, the expressions "people's self-activity" and "local self-development" were synonymous with regionalism. As an influential social movement, regionalism existed for more than half a century, until the early 1920s, and in emigrant circles until World War II. The first (1905) and the second (1917) Russian revolutions strengthened the public and political activity of the Siberian regionalists (Pereira 1993). There are historical studies of regionalism that examine the facts, but the theory of regionalism has been little researched. All this prompts us to take a new look at the regionalists and to evaluate the ideas they put forward. The emergence of neo-regionalism (neo-*oblastnichestvo*) in the last two decades also confirms the relevance of the regionalist program.

Regionalism cannot be called in the strict sense a philosophical doctrine. Its followers were not professional philosophers. However, the philosophical side of the regionalists' doctrine is important, though it has rarely attracted the attention of researchers. As an exception, it is possible to point out here the works of Alexander Golovinov (2011; 2012a; 2012b) and Tatiana Emelianova (2004). It is hardly necessary to look for ontology or a theory of cognition in the works of the regionalists. Meanwhile, the regionalist historians managed to create an original philosophical-historical concept, based on federalist conceptions of Russian history, which emphasizes the history of the people and their culture over the history of the state and political history. This is reflected in the works of Shchapov, Kostomarov, and Bestuzhev-Ryumin. The socio-philosophical doctrine of *oblastnichestvo* is presented in the works of Shashkov, M. P. Dragomanov, and V. I. Anuchin.

Shashkov has a series of publications on the history of Western European philosophy (Malinov 2012: 64–88) and the history of Russian social thought. Yadrintsev and Potanin expressed original philosophical and cultural ideas. Proposing a general model for the evolution of cultural forms, Yadrintsev introduced the notion of "transitional type" cultures, by which he meant, primarily, forest cultures. Together with Potanin, he was the first to show and substantiate the distinctness and value of nomadic life. The "Eastern hypothesis," proposed by Potanin, holds that most of the literary and epic plots of the European Middle Ages, as well as a number of religious concepts, were borrowed from the Turkic-Mongolian world. The cultural doctrine of the regionalists is also joined by the idea of the "pochinistic nature" (from the word

pochinok—a village, a small new settlement) of Russian culture, expressed in a number of historical works by Shchapov.

The most notable achievements of the regionalists in other fields of knowledge include history (Shchapov, Kostomarov, Bestuzhev-Ryumin, Pavlov), ethnography and folkloristics (Yadrintsev, Potanin, who compiled one of the most complete collections of Turkic-Mongolian folklore), archeology (Yadrintsev's excavations of Karakorum, the capital of Genghis Khan's empire), and to some degree sociology. The regionalists were among the first to use statistics for the analysis of the condition of modern provincial society, and they were the first organizers of the provincial statistical committees. Yadrintsev, in a series of journalistic articles and feuilletons, brought out vivid social types of Siberian society: kulaks; monopolists; *chaldony* (the old-timers of Siberia, i.e., descendants of the first Russian settlers); schismatics; and "Tashkentians" or "flying intelligentsia." The regionalists were most successful in the field of journalism. Their publications *Osnova*, *Kamsko-Volzhskaia Gazeta*, *Vostochnoe Obozrenie*, and others, were the brightest phenomena of Russian post-reform journalism (after Alexander II's reforms in the early 1860s). The studies and activities of the regionalists contributed to the establishment of regional studies as a field; in fact, local history owes its appearance to the provincial intelligentsia, whose consciousness was largely shaped by regionalist journalism.

Varieties of Regionalism (*Oblastnichestvo*)

Oblastnichestvo was not a homogeneous movement and manifested itself differently in various regions. The nest of Russian or Great Russian regionalism should probably be considered the Volga region. Historians Bestuzhev-Ryumin and Pavlov were natives of the Nizhnii Novgorod governorate. The *Kamsko-Volzhskaia Gazeta* was published in Kazan in 1872–1874 and was one of the best regionalist editions. The theoretical legacy of Russian regionalism is represented first of all by the philosophical-historical constructs of Bestuzhev-Ryumin and Pavlov, who criticized the principle of centralization, on which the historical concept of the "state school" (S. M. Solov'ev, B. N. Chicherin, and K. D. Kavelin) was based. Developing an alternative view of Russian history, Bestuzhev-Ryumin and Pavlov not only saw the development of the federative principle in the Russian historical process, but also laid the foundation for a new understanding of the tasks of historical research itself. According to their views, the meaning of Russian history is not

the gathering of Russian lands around Moscow, but may be understood only from the study of the history of the people and the history of its cultures. The federalist approach to history also led to a shift of emphasis in the study of history itself from the state to the region, the people, and their culture, resulting in a partial rejection of political history in favor of the history of civilization.

It is possible to connect Ukrainian regionalism with the activity of the Cyril and Methodius Society in Kyiv (T. G. Shevchenko, Kostomarov, P. A. Kulish, etc.); with subsequent historical works of Kostomarov, who shared the federalist view of Russian history and also formulated the program of historic-cultural research; and with the works of Dragomanov. Ukrainian nationalism and separatism, which intensified at the turn from the nineteenth to the twentieth century, proclaimed the theorists of Ukrainian regionalism their ideological predecessors.

Western Russianism (*zapadnorussizm*) was developed in the works of M. O. Koyalovich, a historian and professor at the St. Petersburg Theological Academy who was close to the Slavophiles. He is the author of the terms "Western Russia" and "Western Russian Slavs." Koyalovich's own works included *Historical Study of Western Russia* (1884) and *Lectures on History of Western Russia* (1864), in which he considered the Western Russian Slavs (Belarusians) as a regional type of Russian people, and the history of Western Russian lands as a part of Russian history. The ideas of Western Russianism were developed in the works of P. A. Beznosov, K. A. Govorsky, E. F. Karsky, P. N. Zhukovich, G. Y. Kiprianovich, L. M. Solonevich, and others. The program of Western Russianism was supported by several publications: *Vestnik of Western Russia*, *North-Western Life*, *The Outskirts of Russia*, and others. The *oblastnik* program coincided in many respects with the program of the *Russkoe okrainnoe obshchestvo* (Russian Outskirts Society), which published the newspaper *The Outskirts of Russia*. Its editor was A. S. Budilovich, who in historiography is considered to be a representative of the right wing of Slavophilism (Krasnova 2019). Western Russianism, as well as regionalism in general, was characterized by its criticism of nationalistic and chauvinistic ideology.

It is necessary to note that Siberian regionalism was the most productive, both in content and in theoretical respects (and in this sense the most interesting). While Russian regionalism turned out to be rather amorphous in theoretical and organizational terms, Siberian regionalists had not only a distinct program, but also organizational formations, from fellow countrymen's associations (*zemliachestvo*) to political organizations at the beginning of the twentieth century (such

as the Society for Study of Siberia and Improvement of Its Life, the Siberian Assembly, and an attempt to open the Siberian House in St. Petersburg), including the Siberian parliamentary group in the State Duma, which at one time even declared itself a Siberian fraction. The Siberian parliamentary groups in the First and Second State Dumas were particularly close to the ideology of *oblastnichestvo* (Barsukov 1996). At the same time, Siberian regionalists began to make political demands for "equal rights for Siberia" and decentralization of government. "In fact," wrote one of the advocates of regionalism at the beginning of the twentieth century,

> … systematic work on the details of cultural and economic life in such a vast region as Siberia cannot be carried out from the center; the only expedient solution to the problem must be based on the principle of broad decentralization, on the allocation of local legislative issues to the competence of regional institutions … There is no doubt that the idea of regional autonomy in Siberia has real grounds both in the external conditions of its life and in the acute need for the broad decentralization of legislation" (Nekrasov 1912: 111, 113).

For the overwhelming majority of Siberian public figures, the idea of regional autonomy was a natural and logical development of the understandable and generally popular slogan of equal rights for Siberia. The regionalists noted that the rise of Siberia, impossible without its political awakening, was necessary for Russia as a whole from the perspective of the inevitable civilizational clashes and transformations that would take place in the East. The historical experience of Siberian regionalism, out of the whole set of regionalist concepts and practices, seems the most important for modern Russia.

The leaders of Siberian regionalism belonged to a younger generation than their Ukrainian adherents. The awareness of the unity of views and beliefs promoted both interaction and the formation of common theoretical positions. Yadrintsev, Potanin, and Shashkov attended the lectures of Kostomarov at the St. Petersburg University, which in the early 1870s were published in the pages of the *Kamsko-Volzhskaia Gazeta*. Yadrintsev and Shashkov were exiled to Shenkur together with A. N. Stronin, who was convicted for educational activities in the manner of regionalism in Ukraine. Nevertheless, one can hardly speak of a united regionalist movement and doctrine. Russian, Ukrainian, and Siberian regionalisms acted quite independently.

The ideas of regionalism were not alien to the self-consciousness of the Cossacks. The Siberian regionalists, in particular, pointed to kin-

dred sentiments among the Ural Cossacks. Similar trends were noted in the Province of the Don Cossack Host (Bratoliubova 2010). Regionalism can be characterized as a trend common to several regions of the Russian Empire in the second half of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, associated with the growth of regional self-consciousness and dissatisfaction with the managerial methods of the unitary state. The Cossack regions insisted on preserving or expanding autonomy, while Ukrainian regionalists advocated decentralization of power and the cultural independence of the region. The Siberian regionalists openly criticized the managerial practices of the center in relation to the outskirts, especially Siberia, rightly seeing in it a manifestation of purely colonial policy. Common to all strands of regionalism is a consistent advocacy of the principles of federalism in its various forms (from autonomism and decentralization to the transition to a confederative state structure).

The most significant differences in regionalism should be noted in the solution of the national question. It is no coincidence that the confrontational ideology of nationalism goes back to Ukrainophilia, while on the contrary Siberian regionalism developed a program of support and development of Siberian foreigners (Kovalyashkina 2004), and also justified the inevitability of forming a special "Siberian ethnic type" of Russian people. There is a reason why the national question was so important for the regionalist program. Regionalists came from regions of interethnic, intercultural, and interreligious contact. Issues of the mixing of ethnic groups, the preservation of original culture, the prospects of assimilation (mutually beneficial) of foreign national elements, and the nurturing of local intelligentsia and foreign intelligentsia were important concerns of the regionalists.

Sources of Regionalist Ideology

The sources of the formation of regionalist ideology are manifold. The closest to regionalism are the philosophical tenets of the *narodnik* movement (*narodnichestvo*). For a long time in Soviet historiography, a substantive analysis of regionalism (rather than a critical and expository or even openly denunciatory examination of the history and activities of regionalists) was allowed only within the scope of the study of the *narodnik* movement. The regionalists knew and often collaborated with many representatives of the *narodnik* movement. To a greater extent, this is related to the Siberian regionalists, but regionalism is not a type

of *narodnichestvo* itself. The convergence with *narodnichestvo* occurred on the basis of an all-democratic worldview and a certain opposition of both movements. The philosophy of regionalism does not contradict the teachings of the followers of *narodnichestvo*, it simply addresses mainly other problems and topics. Like the followers of *narodnichestvo* (*narodniki*), the regionalists were guided by the philosophy of positivism and the natural-scientific concepts close to positivism.

The greatest influence on the philosophy of regionalism here was exerted by the teachings of Henry Thomas Buckle and the theories of Karl Ernst von Baer and Charles Darwin. The first Russian translation of Buckle's "History of Civilization in England" was made by Bestuzhev-Ryumin. The principles of geographical determinism and organicism served as the basis for many generalizations of regionalist ideology and philosophical conclusions. The idea of "regional history" itself, which was realized in the historical works of Shchapov, proceeded from the principle of the natural and climatic conditionality of sociohistorical development. According to Shchapov, colonization, rather than centralization, was the main factor in the formation of the Russian state. The Russian state was formed from the organic unity of "land and water" and "city and village," according to the logic of the relationship of the whole and parts. Separate lands and regions, merging into a state, naturally differed not only geographically, but also ethnographically. Colonization led to the mixing of the Russian population with Finno-Ugric and Turkic-Mongolian peoples. This resulted in the formation of regional ethnic types of the Russian people, which occurred most actively on the outskirts of the state. In this way, regional ethnic types were formed.

Local-regional was the initial form of the historical life of the Russian people. From the period of the Time of Troubles, the state-union form became predominant. As an alternative to the process of centralization in the seventeenth century, Shchapov considered the Russian schism of Old Belief. The regionalists singled out two stages in the cultural history of Russia: "direct-natural" or "instinctive" and "reasonable-conscious" or "rational" (since Peter I). From the time of Peter the Great, the state assumed the role of educating the people; in the nineteenth century this task was passed on to the intelligentsia. In other words, regionalism perceived itself primarily as an educational movement designed to awaken the spiritual forces of the people. Philosophy was understood by them as the highest form of people's self-consciousness, the spokesman of which is the intelligentsia.

The peculiarities and differences of the natural and climatic environment also supported the separatist potential of regionalism. The climate, Potanin insisted, is "the most stubborn separatist … In the climate of Siberia there is a strong guarantee of isolation of the Siberian population, both physically and spiritually," he wrote in his article "The Needs of Siberia" (1908) (Potanin 1915a: 57). Potanin emphasized that regionalism was an ideology of cultural self-determination for the Russian inhabitants of Siberia and non-Russian people (especially for members of any national minority in tsarist Russia, indigenous peoples, and "outlanders" or foreign persons); therefore, he recognized only "cultural separatism" for regionalism. The articles of Potanin, including the "The Regionalist Tendency in Siberia" and "Needs of Siberia," published in 1907 and 1908 respectively, did not so much formulate the program of Siberian regionalism, which by that time had already been formed long ago, as it summarized the known result. More interesting is Potanin's conclusion about the inevitability of the regional division of Russia:

> The vast territory cannot but be divided into separate regions, even if the connection between them continues to exist. This separation must be established not on ethnographic, but on economic features due to the fact that the physical conditions in different regions of the empire are different. Siberia among other regions, which manifested a desire for regionalism or autonomy, is distinguished by the fact that in it such an idea is not associated and was not associated with the national idea. The basis of the Siberian idea is purely territorial (Potanin 1915b: 110).

Even Yadrintsev in his fundamental study, "Siberia as a Colony" (1882), pointed out that the scale of Siberia allows us to speak about it as a separate, independent continent. The "Siberian idea," about which Potanin writes, is a result of the formation of Siberian self-consciousness and the formation of a special regional identity that recognizes the need for cultural and economic self-development and self-determination. It is no longer possible for Siberia to develop effectively, being governed from a distant center, to serve the egoistic interests of this center, experiencing all the injustice of the colonial policy. Potanin once again emphasizes that the basis of Siberianism cannot be a national feature:

> Siberia is too great an appendage to the territory of European Russia; the Russian people living in this appendage are bound to feel that they live in special conditions. The territory of Siberia, no matter how

> similar in many respects it is to European Russia, especially to its northern part, still has its own physical organism, and the people living in dependence on this special organism must feel solidarity among themselves and at the same time feel that this solidarity ties them together more firmly than with the residents of other areas of the Empire. The cement for such cohesion of regional inhabitants could be economic and cultural interests alone, without national underpinnings (Potanin 1915a: 52–53).

Overcoming Siberian peculiarity and isolation is possible by shifting the civilizational center to Siberia. "The center of gravity of the Russian state must move to Siberia," Potanin proclaimed at the dawn of the formation of regionalism. However, this means the formation of a new civilizational project. After Potanin's statement, the baselessness of accusing Siberian regionalists of political separatism and the far-fetchedness of the famous police investigation "On the separation of Siberia from Russia" (1865), as a result of which regionalists were sent into penal servitude and exile, becomes clear. The separatist slogans could only serve as a means of drawing attention to the problems of Siberia and awakening local self-consciousness. The political program of the regionalists, on the contrary, contained a demand for equalizing Siberia with the European provinces and rejecting special forms of government (which, under certain circumstances, could serve as a basis for political secession).

The love for their small motherland, even when it grew into a political outlook and took the form of a political program, did not lead Potanin and Yadrintsev to oppose Siberian issues to all-Russian ones. As E. Kolosov noted: "The great merit of Potanin and Yadrintsev lies in the fact that they never lost sight of all-human, especially all-Russian problems. Siberia's problems can be solved only in connection with all-Russian, i.e., national problems" (Kolosov 1916: 213). First of all, these are economic and social problems. Again, the solutions proposed by regionalists can serve as a model for other parts of the state. Thus, according to Potanin, it is necessary to legally give "the regions the opportunity to develop the energy of the centrifugal force inherent in them, and especially in the colonies, without losing solidarity with other regions of the empire, not to fall away from the state body, we must recognize that the regional trend, based on the economic competition of the state parts, has the right to exist as long as the state itself" (Potanin 1907: 2). The development of regions and competition between them within a single state is not only a natural process, but

also an impetus for further development. Potanin explained in his political project:

> The Siberian regionalists who consider themselves members of the Russian people and do not want to break with them, extend their ideal to the whole state; they dream that all of Russia will be divided into regions, that each region will have its own parliament and ministries, that state finances will be distributed among the regions, and that a single State Duma will preside over the entire federation. Nationwide issues would be separated from the jurisdiction of the regional Dumas. The Constituent Assembly will set the limits of the legislative activity of the central and regional Dumas. (Potanin 1917: 156).

At the same time, he was aware that it is not only the political arrangement and, to a lesser extent, the economic ties that unite Siberia with European Russia. "We understand," he admitted, "that our connection with Russia is based on the Russian language, Russian literature, Russian spiritual traditions." The cultural development of Siberia through the creation of "cultural centers," the political and economic alignment of Siberia with European Russia, up to the creation of a United States of Siberia—this was the path preferred by the leaders of the Siberian regionalists. This is the difference between them and the Ukrainophiles, for whom national-cultural self-determination was more important than national development. The principle of equality was the basis of the regionalists' democratic program.

If one tries to fit regionalism into the usual coordinates of Russian nineteenth-century philosophy, it is, of course, a kind of Westernism. In their exposure to European culture and their acquaintance with European science, literature, and philosophy, the regionalists saw the main path for the spiritual development of the people. Europe, and America at the early stage of formation of regionalist ideology, were for regionalists a reference point of civilizational development. Among the Siberian regionalists, Kavelin enjoyed unquestionable personal and scientific authority. However, although it may sound paradoxical, in theoretical terms a greater influence on regionalist philosophy was exerted by Slavophilism. This influence was hardly direct. In practical terms, regionalists were supporters of the spread of *zemstvo* (country council) as a form of local self-government, the same form that Slavophiles promoted. The closest convergence between Slavophilism and regionalism was on the basis of common liberal demands, in particular freedom of speech and religion. However, the idea of cultural diversity and the

multiplicity of ways of cultural and historical development was closer to the regionalist spirit. It should be mentioned that Bestuzhev-Ryumin considered his philosophical-historical constructions as a development of the Slavophile doctrine, and the activities of the Cyril and Methodius Society in Kyiv was perceived by his contemporaries as a kind of Slavophilia, only in Little Russia (*malorossia*). The historiography has repeatedly noted the influence of the works of the Slavophile historians V. N. Leshkov and I. D. Belyaev on the formation of the *zemstvo-oblast'* theory of Shchapov. Among the representatives of late Slavophilism, the Siberian regionalists directly crossed paths, perhaps, only with V. I. Lamansky in the Russian Geographical Society. Heading the ethnographic department of the Russian Geographical Society, Lamansky supported the initiatives of the Siberian regionalists, and his later work, the political-geographical treatise *Three Worlds of the Asian-European Continent* (1892), in a number of provisions corresponds to the views of regionalists. The similarity here is mainly determined not by the ideological platform, but by the general conceptual principles. Lamansky also proceeded from the principles of geographical determinism and came to the views on Siberia close to those of the regionalists. The program of the creation of national schools and the formation of national intelligentsia proposed by Lamansky and his criticism of the policy of russification of the outskirts, which fully coincided with the demands of the regionalists, are particularly noteworthy.

The Program of Siberian Regionalists

The program of Siberian regionalism or "Siberian issues" was divided into external or main and internal issues. The external issues included the demand to abolish exile in Siberia. Criminal exile had a corrupting effect on the Siberian population both morally and physically. External issues also included overcoming the "manufactory yoke" of Moscow, which turned Siberia into a market for not always high-quality goods produced in European Russia and prevented the export and sale of Siberian goods, so that Siberia remained only a supplier of raw materials. The third of the "Siberian issues" was the issue of the Siberian intelligentsia, the solution of which the regionalists linked primarily with the opening of the Siberian University (Tomsk). The opening of a university in Siberia should have stopped the outflow of young people from the region and contributed to the formation of their own Siberian intelligentsia.

The internal issues included the non-Russian and resettlement issues related to the issue of the land fund of Siberia. The support and development of the indigenous peoples of Siberia, according to the regionalists, was to become "a means of humanization of Siberian society." Historical, ethnographic, and statistical studies of Siberian non-Russians carried out by regionalists had great scientific value. In addition to the wide range of historical, cultural, ethnographic, and folkloric material collected by the regionalists, their works were pioneering in many respects. This is especially true of the study of nomadic life and forest cultures as transitional forms to a settled way life. The works of Shashkov on the history of primitive culture also connects to these studies. The transition of non-Russians to a settled way life and assimilation of higher Russian culture (first of all, agricultural culture), according to the estimates of regionalists, would promote integration of the indigenous population into the Siberian ethnographic type of the Russian people. The solution of the resettlement question was to serve as a means of mastering and economic development of Siberia.

In the history of the Russian conquest of Siberia, it is possible to point out several stages. Siberia was by turns a fur-farming colony, an agricultural colony, a gold-producing colony, and a trading colony. Initially Siberia was settled by means of free-people colonization, which was replaced by state colonization. The provincialists believed that restrictions on moving to Siberia should be abandoned. Free movement to Siberia should replace forced exile of "undesirable" or outright criminal elements. The removal of restrictions on resettlement to Siberia, given other favorable conditions for the development of the region, could partially alleviate the contradictions between the center and the periphery.

Among the topics raised by the Siberian regionalists, but not included in the program of "Siberian questions," we should mention the "women's cause." The Siberian regionalists were, perhaps, among the first in Russia to develop the question of the role of women in the spread of civilization. Shashkov's monographs *Historical Fates of Women, Infanticide and Prostitution* (1871a) and *An Essay of the History of Russian Woman* (1871b), and articles by Shchapov and Yadrintsev contained a rich factual material, interesting observations, and generalizations about the women's question. It should be noted that in the lives of these researchers, women played a very significant and sometimes tragic role.

Conclusion

Although the term "*oblastniki*" is attached only to Siberian regionalism, regionalism was not an accidental or local phenomenon in Russian social thought and culture of the late imperial period. The program of the Siberian regionalists was probably the most considered and elaborated, but it was not the only one. The Oblastniks offered a kind of alternative to both centralist and nationalist discourse in the late imperial period of Russian history, and their ideas were shared not only by the members of the "Siberian circle" (the Siberian community in St. Petersburg) or the Cossack autonomists, but also by such representatives of Slavophilism as Bestuzhev-Ryumin, Budilovich, and Lamansky.

Oblastnichestvo became a new expression of the original folk-regional way of life of the Russian people. In many ways, it was a reaction to the administrative methods of the unitary state and represented the growth of regional self-consciousness in a number of regions of the Russian Empire. The carriers of the *oblastnik* ideology were the emerging local intelligentsia. The demands of the regionalists differed depending on the established local characteristics. For example, the regionalist ideas that found support among the Cossacks were limited to the demand to preserve or expand their autonomy. Ukrainian regionalists, advocating for a decentralization of power, proposed a broad program of cultural development of the region. The Siberian regionalists, criticizing the administrative practices of the center, pointed directly to the colonial position of Siberia and its negative consequences for the region. The regionalists were united by their consistent advocacy of the principles of federalism in several variants: autonomy, decentralization, and confederation. The most significant differences emerged in attitudes toward the national question. Ukrainophilism was gradually dominated by the desire for ethnic distinction, which developed into a confrontational ideology of nationalism. The Siberian regionalists, on the other hand, saw the region's ethnic diversity as a guarantee of its further development, believing that processes of intermarriage would lead to the formation of the "Siberian ethnic type" of the Russian people. The Siberian regionalists envisioned the possibility of creating autonomies for the non-Russian population of Siberia, studied the life and culture of the Siberian peoples, and worked out a program for their support and development. The ideology of the *oblastniki* found sympathy in the periphery of the state and in the field of interethnic, intercultural, and interreligious contacts. The Oblastniks sought ways to preserve local and national cultures in the inevitable processes of the population's

ethnic mixing and cultural assimilation, studied the negative and positive consequences of such mixing, and initiated the emergence of a non-Russian intelligentsia.

In the history of Russian thought, the doctrine of the regionalists stands apart from the theories that defined the ideological face of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. More precisely, in regionalism one can find aspects and shades of different, often contradictory concepts: Westernism and Slavophilism, Narodnik radicalism and conservatism. However, all this does not make regionalism an eclectic theory that exploits the contradictions of the dominant doctrines. Of course, in relation to these doctrines, regionalism looks like a marginal movement. This marginality, however, is determined by the historical and cultural view that ranks and separates theories according to their importance, establishing major and occasional doctrines according to their influence and relevance. Regionalism, on the other hand, consciously opposed political, cultural, social, and thus historical centrism. The Oblastniks deliberately opposed the periphery to the center, the province to the capital, and saw themselves as spokespersons for the interests and needs of provincial culture.

Acknowledgments

This study was implemented in the framework of the Basic Research Program at the National Research University Higher School of Economics (HSE University) in 2024.

Alexey V. Malinov is a Doctor of Philosophy and Professor at St. Petersburg State University and the National Research University Higher School of Economics (HSE University).
Email: a.v.malinov@gmail.com; ORCID 0000-0002-1252-9193.

References

Barsukov, Victor L. 1996. "Sibirskii deputaty Gosudarstvennoi Dumy o meste Sibiri v Rossiiskom gosudarstve" [Siberian deputies of theState Duma on the place in Siberia in the Russian state]. *Iz proshlogo Sibiri*, issue 2, part 2: 11–20. Novosibirsk: no publisher.

Bestuzhev-Ryumin, Konstantin N. 1877. "Chemu uchit russkaia istoriia" [What can we learn Russian history]. *Drevnaia i novaia Rossia: Istoricheskii illustrirovannii ezemesaichnii sbornik* 1: 5–25.

Bratoliubova, Mariia V. 2010. "Idei detsentralisma i kazachei avtonomii Dona v trebovaniiakh liberalnikh politicheskikh organizatsii Oblasti Voiska Donskogo v nachale XX veka" [Ideas of decentralism and Don Cossack autonomy in the demands of the liberal political organizations of the Don Army Region in the early twentieth century] *Oblastnicheskaia tendentsiia v russkoi filosofskoi i obshestvennoi mysli: K 150-letiu sibirskogo oblastnichestva* ed. Alexey V. Malinov, 26–31. St. Petersburg: St. Petersburg State University.

Boyarchenkov, Vladislav V. 2005. *Istoriki-federalisty: Konceptsiia mestnoi istorii v russkoi mysli 20–70-kh godov XIX veka* [Historians Federalists: The concept of local history in Russian thought from the '20s to the '70s of the nineteenth century]. St. Petersburg: "Dmitri Bulanin."

Emelianova, Tatiana N. 2004. *Oblastnichestvo Yadrintseva kak filosofia rossiiskoi deistvitel'nosti* [Yadrintseva's Regionalism as a philosophy of Russian reality]. St. Petersburg: Info-da.

Golovinov, Alexander V. 2011. *Ideologiia sibirskogo oblastnichestva: Sotsiokulturnye tsennosti i politicheskie smysly: uchebnoe posobie* [Ideology Siberian regionalism: Socio-cultural values and political sense]. Barnaul: Altai University Press.

Golovinov, Alexander V. 2012a. "Otechestvennye istochniki sotsialnoi filosofii oblastnichestva" [Domestic sources of social philosophy of regionalism]. *Mysl': Zhurnal Peterburgskogo filosofskogo obshestva* 12: 75–80.

Golovinov, Alexander V. 2012b. *Ideologiia sibirskoi svobody: Etnokulturnye i politicheskie idei klassikov oblastnichestva* [Ideology of Siberian freedom: Ethnocultural and political ideas of classic regionalism]. Barnaul: Altai University Press.

Kolosov, Evgeny. 1916. "Sibirskie oblastniki o prishloi i krairovaya intelligentsia" [Siberian Oblastniks about the External and Regional Intelligentsia] *Sibirskie zapiski* 3: 206-220.

Potanin, Grigory N. 1917. "Prekrasny`j final" [Beautiful finale] *Sibirskie zapiski* 3: 153-160.

Kovalyashkina, Elena P. 2004. *"Inorodcheskii vopros" v Sibiri: koncepciia gosudarstvennoi politiki i oblastnicheskaia musl'* [The "foreigner issue" in Siberia: The concept of public policy and regionalistic thought]. Tomsk: Tomsk State University.

Koyalovich, Mikhail O. 1864. *Lekcii po istorii zapadnoj Rossii* [Lectures on the history of western Russia]. Moscow: in the printing house of Bakhmetev.

Koyalovich, Mikhail O. 1884. *Chteniya po istorii zapadnoj Rossii* [Readings on the history of western Russia]. St. Petersburg: A.S. Suvorin Publishing.

Krasnova, Anastasia A. 2019. "Slavianskaia identichnost' v kontekste mental'noi geografii u A. S. Budilovicha." *Filosofskii polilog: Zhurnal Mezhdunarodnogo tsentra izucheniia russkoi filosofii*, 1: 67–80. https://doi.org/10.31119/phlog.2019.5.5.

Lamansky, Vladimir I. 1892. *Tri mira Azijsko-evropejskogo materika* [Three Worlds of the Asiatic-European Continent]. St. Petersburg.

Malinov, Alexey V. 2010. "Sibirskii zemlaicheskii kruzhok: Pervaia organizatsiia sibirskikh oblastnikov" [Siberian zemliachestvo in St. Petersburg: The first organization of Siberian regionalists] *Oblastnicheskaia tendentsiia v russkoi filosofskoi i obshestvennoi mysli: K 150-letiu sibirskogo oblastnichestva*, ed. Alexey V. Malinov, 116–139. St. Petersburg: St. Petersburg State University.

Malinov, Alexey V. 2012. *Filosofiia i ideologiia oblastnichestva* [The philosophy and ideology of regionalism]. St. Petersburg: Intersotsis.

Nekrasov, Nikolai V. 1912. "Pis`ma o nacional`nostyax i oblastyax. Kul`turny`e i politicheskie problemy` Sibiri" [Letters on Nationalities and Regions. Cultural and Political Problems of Siberia] *Russian Thought* II: 100-113.

Pereira, Norman G. O. 1993. "The Idea of Siberian Regionalism in Late Imperial and Revolutionary Russia." *Russian History* 20 (1–4): 163-178.

Potanin Grigory N. 1907. "Budushchee sibirskoi oblastnicheskoi tendentsii" [The Future of the Siberian Regionalist Tendency] *Siberian Life* July 6. № 65: 2.

Potanin Grigory N. 1915a. "Nuzhdy Sibiri" [Needs of Siberia]. *Sbornik k 80-letiu so dnia rozhdeniia Grigoriia Nikolaevicha Potanina: Izbrannye stat'i i biograficheskii ocherk*. Tomsk: Lithography of the Siberian Printing Association.

Potanin Grigory N. 1915b. "Oblastnicheskaia tendentsiia v Sibiri" [The Regionalist Tendency in Siberia]. *Sbornik k 80-letiu so dnia rozhdeniia Grigoriia Nikolaevicha Potanina: Izbrannye stat'i i biograficheskii ocherk*. Tomsk: Lithography of the Siberian Printing Association.

Shashkov, Seraphim S. 1871a. *Istoricheskie sud`by` zhenshhiny`, detoubijstvo i prostituciya* [Historical Fates of Woman, Infanticide and Prostitution]. St. Petersburg: N.A. Shigin.

Shashkov, Seraphim S. 1871b. *Ocherk istorii russkoj zhenshhiny`* [An Essay of the History of Russian Woman]. St. Petersburg: N.A. Shigin.

Yadrintsev, Nikolai M. 1872. *Russkaya obshhina v tyur`me i ssy`lke* [Russian Community in Prison and Exile]. St. Petersburg: A. Morigerovsky Printing House.

Yadrintsev, Nikolai M. 1882. *Sibir` kak koloniya* [Siberia as a Colony]. St. Petersburg: printing house of M. M. Stasiulevich.

Yadrintsev, Nikolai M. 1891. *Sibirskie inorodtsy, ix by`t i sovremennoe polozhenie* [Siberian Aliens, their Life and Current Situation]. St. Petersburg: I.I. Sibiryakov.