

Russian Civil Society

A Critical Assessment

Edited by

**Alfred B. Evans, Laura A. Henry
and Lisa Sundstrom**



Russian Civil Society

Page Intentionally Left Blank

Russian Civil Society

A Critical Assessment

EDITORS

Alfred B. Evans, Jr., Laura A. Henry,
and Lisa McIntosh Sundstrom

 **Routledge**
Taylor & Francis Group
LONDON AND NEW YORK

Published 2016 by Routledge
2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 4RN
711 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10017, USA

Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business

Copyright © 2006 by M.E. Sharpe, Inc.

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reprinted or reproduced or utilised in any form or by any electronic, mechanical, or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publishers.

Notice:

Product or corporate names may be trademarks or registered trademarks, and are used only for identification and explanation without intent to infringe.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Russian civil society : a critical assessment / edited by Alfred B. Evans, Jr., Laura A. Henry, Lisa McIntosh Sundstrom.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 0-7656-1521-5 (cloth : alk. paper) — ISBN 0-7656-1522-3 (pbk. : alk. paper)

I. Civil society—Russia (Federation) 2 Russia (Federation)—Social conditions—1991– I. Evans, Alfred B. II. Henry, Laura A., 1971– III. Sundstrom, Lisa McIntosh, 1971–

JN6699.A15R873 2005

947.086—dc22

2005007918

ISBN: 978-0-7656-1522-0 (pbk)

Table of Contents

List of Tables and Figure	vii
1. Introduction <i>Laura A. Henry and Lisa McIntosh Sundstrom</i>	3
Part I. The History of Civil Society in Russia	
2. Civil Society in Late Imperial Russia <i>Mary Schaeffer Conroy</i>	11
3. Civil Society in the Soviet Union? <i>Alfred B. Evans, Jr.</i>	28
Part II. The Context of Civil Society Development	
4. Media, Civil Society, and the Failure of the Fourth Estate in Russia <i>Sarah Oates</i>	57
5. Business and Civil Society in Russia <i>Peter Rutland</i>	73
6. Organized Crime Groups: "Uncivil Society" <i>Louise Shelley</i>	95
7. The Church and Civil Society in Russia <i>Edwin Bacon</i>	110
8. Civil Society in Rural Russia <i>Stephen K. Wegren</i>	126
9. Vladimir Putin's Design for Civil Society <i>Alfred B. Evans, Jr.</i>	147

Part III. Civil Society in Contemporary Russia: Case Studies

10. Women's Organizations: Institutionalized Interest Groups or Vulnerable Dissidents? <i>Valerie Sperling</i>	161
11. Soldiers' Rights Groups in Russia: Civil Society Through Russian and Western Eyes <i>Lisa McIntosh Sundstrom</i>	178
12. Russian Trade Unions: Where Are They in the Former Workers' State? <i>Sue Davis</i>	197
13. Russian Environmentalists and Civil Society <i>Laura A. Henry</i>	211
14. Disability Organizations in the Regions <i>Kate Thomson</i>	229
15. Formal and Informal Strategies of Migrant Populations: Migrant Activity in Post-Soviet Russia <i>Moya Flynn</i>	246
16. Public-Private Permutations: Domestic Violence Crisis Centers in Barnaul <i>Janet Elise Johnson</i>	266
17. Is Civil Society Stronger in Small Towns? <i>Anne White</i>	284

Part IV. Concluding Thoughts

18. Russian Civil Society: Tensions and Trajectories <i>Lisa McIntosh Sundstrom and Laura A. Henry</i>	305
Appendix: Defining Civil Society <i>Laura A. Henry and Lisa McIntosh Sundstrom</i>	323
About the Editors and Contributors	327
Index	331

List of Tables and Figure

Tables

4.1 National Television Channels in Russia	65
7.1 Do You Consider Yourself a Believer, and If So, to Which Confession Do You Belong?	115
8.1 Rural Feelings of Political Trust	130
8.2 Distribution of Responses Regarding Type of Participation	138
8.3 Mean Participation by Husband's Age	140
8.4 Mean Participation by Level of Education	141
8.5 Mean Levels of Participation by Income Category	142

Figure

17.1 "Do People Participate Less in Community Life?"	295
------------------------------------------------------	-----

Page Intentionally Left Blank

Russian Civil Society

Page Intentionally Left Blank

Introduction

Laura A. Henry and Lisa McIntosh Sundstrom

In the shabby room of an abandoned kindergarten in the town of Novozybkov, near the Russian border with Belarus, a group of twelve schoolchildren gather for the weekly meeting of their Ecology Club. The children squirm and laugh as do children everywhere, but one aspect of their lives differs from their peers elsewhere—they live within Russia's Chernobyl zone of radioactive contamination. Their club of nature lovers is led by Ksenia Klimova, a young teacher and librarian. By teaching the children an appreciation of the natural environment and basic scientific knowledge, Klimova hopes to raise environmental awareness and prevent future disasters and to give the next generation a sense of optimism about the future in a town that has had both its public health and community spirit badly damaged by the 1986 nuclear accident. She represents one of thousands of Russians who are engaged in voluntary community activities to improve the well-being of their fellow citizens or to take advantage of new formally democratic rules and institutions to persuade the government to change its policies.

The dramatic collapse of the Soviet regime in 1991 symbolized not only the transformation of Russia's political and economic institutions but also the transformation of Russian citizens' day-to-day reality. Along with new freedoms of speech and association came new challenges, including the erosion of the state welfare system that encompassed free or inexpensive education, medical care, housing, and pensions. Russian citizens have responded to these changes over the past fifteen years with a range of behaviors from apathy to activism.

This volume is dedicated to exploring those responses and the emergence of civil society in postcommunist Russia. It is particularly apropos to consider how Russian citizens are engaging in voluntary activism at the present moment. The benign neglect of civil society during the Yeltsin years has given way to a more vigorous policy of the Putin administration to engage actors in civil society in a directed way. How does the Russian state facilitate civil society development and how does it discourage citizen activism? What role is played by international actors? And what of the Soviet legacy? How does it impinge on citizens' activities in the public sphere more than a decade after the end of the Communist regime? The contributors to this volume address these questions in relation to a broad range of issue areas.

Our Approach to Civil Society

Russian civil society encompasses elements of both change and continuity, of Soviet-era practices and institutions that persist into and shape the postcommunist period, and of innovative types of societal cooperation that have arisen to address contemporary problems. Tensions within civil society include civil society actors' search for a stable resource base, efforts to mobilize public support, attempts to gain influence over state policies, and the need to reconcile the continuation of the politics of personalism with new formally democratic laws and institutions. Efforts to resolve these tensions offer a likely locus for future political and social change in Russia.

What draws scholars' attention to civil society, however, frequently is not a neutral or objective interest in political change. Our motivation is most often found in predictions of civil society's positive influence on democracy and democratization. Normative concerns for democratic politics color the study of civil society. For example, in his investigation of Italian politics, Robert Putnam demonstrates how norms of reciprocity and social trust enable social organizing and are themselves increased by active cooperation among citizens, resulting in a virtuous circle of civic engagement (Putnam 1993). Larry Diamond, looking at recent political transitions, argues that civil society plays a profound role in consolidating new democratic regimes by persistently demanding adherence to formal democratic rules and organizing petitions for continued political reform. Thus civil society enhances "the accountability, responsiveness, inclusiveness, effectiveness, and hence legitimacy of the political system" (Diamond 1999, 249). In the case of Russia and other postcommunist states, scholars seized upon the reemergence of civil society not only as a means of explaining the suddenness and peaceful nature of regime transition but also as a path to the possible consolidation of new democratic regimes.

The intention of this volume is not to assume or to argue that civil society is inherently democratic, however, but to look at the variety of ways in which citizens cooperate in the public sphere and address the state. Moreover, our authors move beyond basic assessments of *whether* civil society as it is currently developing is fostering democratic norms and behavior in order to ask *why* civil society does or does not play this role. We wish to assess the extent to which actors in civil society are strong enough to achieve their goals and to identify the constraints that limit their ability to do so. The past fifteen years have shown that extreme assumptions—optimistic and pessimistic—about the fate of Russia's civil society need to be supplanted by a more complex understanding of the patterns of interaction within civil society, of the conditions that facilitate it and constrain it, and the various ways Russians are collectively coping with the challenges of postcommunism. Considering the factors behind the development and effectiveness of civil society improves our ability both to predict and to explain political and social change and moves beyond the relatively extreme depictions of civil society in much of the scholarly literature and sloganeering use of civil society in the realm of practical politics.

As a result, this volume offers a parsimonious definition of civil society intended to capture a variety of different types of interaction, concluding that it is best to avoid

an outcome-based definition of civil society (i.e., are instances of societal cooperation democracy-supporting or not?) and instead offer a relational definition in which we envision civil society as an intermediary between the public and private spheres.¹ We contend that civil society is a space of citizen-directed collective action, located between the family and the state, and not directed solely toward private profit. As a consequence, we exclude from our definition political parties (which aim to capture seats of government), business firms and organized crime groups (which are profit-oriented), groups employing violence to achieve their goals, and individual activities that are not publicly oriented. Nonetheless, we argue that it is essential to consider the role played by business elites, organized crime networks, and for-profit and state-owned media outlets in the development of Russian civil society due to their influence on governance and the broader environment in which civil society operates in postcommunist Russia, as well as outstanding debates over whether they indeed do belong within the definition of civil society.

Russian Civil Society: A Broad View

The contributions to this volume range across time, geography, and issue areas in an effort both to capture the enduring features of Russian civil society and to recognize innovative types of social cooperation. The chapters look back to pre-Soviet and Soviet history at patterns of state-society interaction. The authors also travel beyond Moscow to investigate the state of civil society in regional capitals, small towns, and rural areas. Rather than focus only on relatively well-known environmental, women's rights, and human rights organizations, these contributions also consider neglected areas of study such as disability rights, migrant resettlement, and the adaptation of Soviet-era organizations. Finally, while most scholarly attention to Russian civil society development has been directed at formal nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), many of which receive some form of foreign assistance, contributors to this volume also consider previously overlooked instances of societal cooperation through informal social networks. What follows is a brief summary of the chapters.

The first section of the volume considers the history of civil society in Russia. Mary Schaeffer Conroy's chapter on civil society in late Imperial Russia begins our exploration. Drawing on new evidence from the archives, Conroy demonstrates that, contrary to depictions of Imperial Russian society as inactive and fragmented, Russian citizens had begun to organize independent charities and hobby organizations, assert their legal rights, and participate in local representative and law-enforcement structures. Conroy points to a combination of state policies and citizen initiative to account for the rise of social cooperation in the late tsarist period.

Turning to the Soviet period, Alfred Evans questions whether civil society existed in the Soviet Union. Evans concludes that it did not; however, he reminds us that while social organizations were largely under state control during the Soviet era, many of them still provided valuable services to the general public. Evans also identifies a wide variety of efforts to influence state policy and strategies of interest

representation that persist to the present day, including the use of one's official position and contacts with key individuals as a means of affecting state behavior.

The next six chapters address the contextual factors shaping civil society development. Sarah Oates chronicles the continued politicization of the media in Russia after a brief period of pluralism in the early 1990s, pointing out that the Russian state has little tolerance for media criticism. Oates argues that, due to the efforts of state and economic actors and public tolerance for a restricted media environment, the Russian media is becoming less diverse and less free, limiting its ability to play a role in civil society development.

In her chapter on organized criminal networks, Louise Shelley describes the close relations between criminal groups and state officials, arguing that this interaction leads to a new form of authoritarianism in Russia. Shelley points out several ways in which organized criminal groups undermine and usurp civil society organizations, by virtually replacing the state in some sectors and by threatening independent actors who speak out on criminal activities.

Peter Rutland's investigation of relations between civil society and private business—in particular, the economic elite—chronicles the rise of oligarchic capitalism in Russia. Rutland's analysis offers several insights into civil society development, including the continued dominance of a narrow elite uninterested in engaging other social groups yet still vulnerable to the state's intolerance of political opposition. Rutland considers the Putin administration's recent efforts to prevent opposition from oligarchs, most prominently symbolized by the legal case against Mikhail Khodorkovsky, and sees them as reflecting more general patterns of repression of civil society.

In his chapter on the Russian Orthodox Church, Edwin Bacon offers a mixed assessment of the role of Russia's dominant religion in civil society development. Bacon cites the public's trust in the Orthodox Church, the communal aspects of religious faith, and the pluralism of the Church at the local level as factors that could serve as a basis for the development of a vibrant associational life. Yet he also notes that the Orthodox Church has aligned itself closely with the state and attempted to constrain the freedom of other religious groups in Russia. Laws promulgated to reinforce the leading role of the Orthodox Church, however, occasionally have been used by other religious organizations to defend themselves against attempts to limit pluralism in the religious sphere.

Stephen Wegren considers the potential for civil society development in rural areas of Russia by looking at three spheres of rural life: attitudes, organizations, and behavior. Using survey and interview data, Wegren assesses Russian rural residents' trust in their political institutions, the number and scale of NGOs serving the rural population, and rural citizens' participation in family and public events. While he offers a guardedly optimistic prognosis, Wegren convincingly points to the significance of civil society development in understudied rural areas—which contain almost 30 percent of the country's population—for Russia's political future.

Concluding the section on contextual factors, Alfred Evans examines Vladimir Putin's policies toward civil society. Evans describes the Putin administration's incremental and often indirect use of state resources to reward loyal social organizations

and to punish critical groups, in spite of Putin's rhetorical commitment to the rule of law and the development of a vigorous civil society in Russia. Evans convincingly argues that these policies illustrate Putin's vision of a civil society that is subordinate to and managed by the state, and that this model of state-society interaction—by stifling free public debate—may jeopardize the long-term stability of the regime.

The next section of the volume presents case studies of civil society organizing around various issue areas. While chronicling the proliferation of women's organizations in recent years, Valerie Sperling questions how effective these groups are at representing women's interests to the state and changing public consciousness. She points out that organizations' reliance on foreign assistance has facilitated the institutionalization of the women's movement but has also raised questions about whether the issues addressed by these groups serve to mobilize Russian women.

Lisa McIntosh Sundstrom compares Russian soldiers' rights organizations and finds that those led by soldiers' mothers are more effective—in terms of policy change and public support—than other groups critical of military policies. Sundstrom attributes this relative success of the soldiers' mothers' organizations to several factors, including the role of motherhood in Russian culture, widespread public disapproval for physical harm to new recruits, and the mothers' willingness to work cooperatively with state officials. Sundstrom contrasts these methods with more legalistic approaches to rights-based demands commonly found in the West.

In her chapter on labor organizations in Russia, Sue Davis contrasts the continued dominance of Soviet-era trade unions under the umbrella organization Federation of Independent Trade Unions of Russia (FNPR) with the new, independent trade unions that originated in the late Soviet period. While trade unions remain the largest membership organizations in Russia, they do a generally poor job of representing their members. Davis demonstrates that unions persisting from the Soviet era are more intent on defending their inherited commercial interests, while new unions struggle to counter the entrenched influence of the FNPR.

Laura Henry evaluates the ability of Russia's environmental organizations to play an intermediary role between the state and society and finds these groups to be weak on a number of measures. She argues, however, that this image of overall weakness conceals growing diversity among the types of organizations and activities that populate the green movement. Henry argues that the leaders of NGOs advocate models of state-society interaction that vary according to their different professional backgrounds and orientations toward the Soviet past.

Kate Thomson's chapter comparing organizations working on issues of disabled children highlights the role of the state in facilitating groups within civil society. Thomson's analysis shows that state agencies and officials, particularly at the local level, were instrumental in both the origination and effectiveness of disability organizations and locates this type of relationship within an interdependence model of state-society relations. Thomson speculates, however, that the closeness between organizations within civil society and the state ultimately may limit disability organizations' ability to advocate for the rights of the disabled beyond basic service provision.

In her contribution, Moya Flynn examines the situation of Russian migrants returning to Russia from the former Soviet republics. Flynn demonstrates how NGOs working on migrant issues are subject to the vagaries of shifting federal and regional policies toward migrants and therefore struggle to influence policy. Given the lack of state services, Flynn argues that many migrants make the rational decision to rely on personal networks, which then may provide migrants with a path toward integration into civic life by resolving basic barriers to civic inclusion, such as questions of housing and employment.

Janet Johnson examines the multiple roles of women's crisis centers in Russia, including their efforts to provide services, change policies, and raise public awareness. Her research reveals a complicated array of public-private cooperation on the issue of domestic violence, with organizations dealing with the issue ranging from Western-style advocacy organizations to state-affiliated semi-NGOs. Johnson suggests that a working group in the city of Barnaul, which links NGOs with responsible state agencies, offers a model for a potential "third way" between liberal and statist conceptions of civil society that promotes communication and builds new channels of interest representation.

Anne White advocates adopting a broad conception of civil society in order to examine an understudied aspect of contemporary Russian life: social cooperation in small towns. By surveying an array of topics—from NGOs to participation in town events—she finds sources of optimism in factors such as the high level of social trust in small towns. Counter to some arguments about the nature of the Soviet legacy, White also argues that in Russian small towns civic culture has "strong Soviet roots, and it could in some respects be quite promising for democratization" (Chapter 17).

Taken together, these chapters move beyond a simplistic characterization of Russian civil society as strong or weak, instead providing the reader with a more complex understanding of the varieties of civic activism that are occurring in Russia today. By analyzing these activities and organizations and the contextual factors that shape their development, we will be able to fruitfully compare contemporary Russian civil society with other regions around the world and to develop an understanding of how civil society emerges and when citizen activism is more or less likely to be effective at generating political and social change.

Note

1. For a more complete discussion of debates related to defining civil society, see Appendix.

References

- Diamond, Larry. 1999. *Developing Democracy: Toward Consolidation*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Putnam, Robert D. 1993. *Making Democracy Work*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Part I

The History of Civil Society in Russia

Page Intentionally Left Blank

Civil Society in Late Imperial Russia

Mary Schaeffer Conroy

In the popular mind, the government of Imperial Russia oppressed the citizenry, and the majority of citizens were illiterate and poverty-stricken, with no chance of bettering their lot.¹ As the Soviet Union disintegrated in the 1990s, some claimed that Russians had never known democracy, implying that they never would. Some historians, meanwhile, insisted that society in late Imperial Russia had been so fragmented as to render it inert. Others contended that society in the late imperial period was hopelessly polarized, thus precipitating revolutions in 1905 and 1917.

New evidence from the archives has allowed us to build a mosaic which reveals (Whittaker 1984, 118–19, 140–88; Lincoln 1990; Conroy 1976, 43–90) that in fact, a combination of government policies and private initiatives increased education, created a lively cultural milieu, expanded public participation in policy making, and generated a fairly robust economy that provided increased social mobility and rising living standards (Gregory 1994, 14–84), improved public health, and provided safety nets for the indigent and helpless. This chapter concentrates on the role of citizens in these endeavors, that is, on the creation of civil society. Civil society is taken here to refer to organizations and networks of cooperation that are created primarily by the initiative of citizens and draw at least in part on resources that are not granted by the state. A tentative civil society was visible in imperial Russia at least from the late eighteenth century, but civil society really burgeoned in the second half of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. This chapter presents evidence of a wide range of activities by Russian citizens that contributed to the expansion of cooperative endeavors in the social space between families and the state in the last decades of the imperial regime (Kassow, West, and Clowes 1991, 6). We will see that people of humble backgrounds as well as the wealthy and those of high rank, women as well as men, were engaged in a variety of pursuits that forged civil society.

It must be noted that research on civil society in Imperial Russia is not complete and historians differ in their interpretation of many facts. Disparities and vested-interest entities existed in late Imperial Russia, the more so since it was not a country but an empire comprising variegated ethnic, linguistic, and religious groups. The place of revolutionaries in civil society presents a particular conundrum, since three revolutions shook

the empire in the first two decades of the twentieth century. Civil society is a “big tent,” and individuals and groups of widely varying political persuasions can be a part of it. In this chapter, however, it is assumed that civil society in late tsarist Russia was composed of individuals who worked within the existing political and economic system to modify it rather than seeking to topple it by violent means. According to this rubric, we will see that on their own initiative, many individuals and groups cooperated with one another to improve the lives of their fellow citizens, eschewing the overthrow of existing political and economic institutions. Available evidence and analyses by a growing number of scholars suggest that a small but lively civil society existed in Imperial Russia before 1917.

It is true that civil society in Imperial Russia had more obstacles to overcome than civil society in contemporary America. The Imperial Russian government was domineering and intrusive and sometimes moved at a glacial pace. Records, laws, and regulations abounded throughout the imperial period. Until 1762, nobles were required to perform lengthy military and civil service, thus limiting the time they could spend on their own or societal pursuits. Before 1861, serfs, who constituted half the peasantry (peasants made up about 84 percent of the empire’s population), were not judicial persons and even after emancipation in 1861 suffered from some disabilities and restrictions on their physical mobility. Jews, who constituted only about 6 percent of the population but were densely concentrated in the western borderlands, also experienced restrictions on their physical mobility and job options after 1881. In the first half of the nineteenth century, central officials curtailed businesses to some extent by making it difficult to form corporations, reportedly because of a fear of abuses in the selling of stock (Owen 1991a, 25–26); and in the second half of the nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries, the government often hampered business growth through onerous rules and tariffs. Throughout the imperial period, associations of all kinds were required to register with the government; regulations were particularly strict before 1905. Although censorship rules eased in 1905, until the end of the empire government officials supervised publications and closed down those that they deemed pernicious.

Yet, notwithstanding the visible hand of the government, the inhabitants of the Russian Empire enjoyed a surprising amount of political, cultural, and economic autonomy. It has been noted that the central Russian government, though fairly efficient and larger than the American government of that time, did not possess enough officials to govern a vast empire or adequately care for a heterogeneous populace, with transport limited by climate, and communications by the technology of the time. These factors, plus the need to share administrative and welfare costs, induced the government not only to allow but to foster local self-government of various types and to permit publicly funded schools and philanthropic and cultural organizations. The economy underwent a growth spurt in the 1890s and again from about 1908, providing wherewithal for social and cultural projects and disposable income for a broader swath of the population to participate in these projects (Gregory 1994, 27, 34, 48–49). For example, the modest cost of the bicycle “for the middle classes, including

skilled and clerical workers" in the 1880s and 1890s led to the formation of bicycle clubs in the major cities of the empire (McReynolds 2003, 96–101).

Local self-government in the towns and on the county and provincial levels also was a bridge to civil society, for local elected bodies furthered popular education and furnished examples of heterogeneous economic and social groups working in concert for common goals. The nobility's self-government was restricted in the sense that it included only nobles, and nobles with a certain income at that. Nevertheless, the nobles' assemblies did have an impact on the rest of the population, even though nobles constituted only about 1.5 percent of the whole. About half the nobles were not wealthy, did not own land, and had to work for a living (Blum 1961). Catherine the Great instituted self-government by the nobility in 1785. The nobles' assemblies were to care for indigent, orphaned, and helpless nobles. Marshals of the nobility, elected by the assemblies, were to represent nobles' concerns to the crown (de Madariaga 1990, 121–23). In the second half of the nineteenth century, marshals of the nobility convened *zemstvo* assemblies after those all-estate institutions were established in 1864 (Wallace 1961, 29–30; Conroy 1976, 4–7) and dealt with a wide variety of peasant problems. Nobles also founded and supported charities and schools, as noted below.

Townspople, who made up about 13 percent of the population in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, also were given self-government by Catherine the Great in 1785. At first, all registered citizens, including small traders as well as wealthy merchants, were allowed to participate in city assemblies, although only those who had property that returned fifty rubles a year could be elected to the assembly steering committee, the city *duma* (de Madariaga 1990, 124–27). Following field research by "enlightened bureaucrats," the municipal government of St. Petersburg enlarged its electorate in the 1840s. Moscow did so in the 1860s; and by the 1870s, in some four hundred cities and towns, all who paid a small city tax were able to participate in city government. Representation was not equal, however. Three voting *curiae* gave preponderant representation to the richest and middle categories of urban dwellers. However, lesser citizens could participate and some people of modest backgrounds were elected as mayors. In the 1890s, in around seven hundred cities, the *curiae* were eliminated and the size of the assembly was made commensurate with the urban population. Simultaneously, suffrage requirements were raised and Jews were barred from participating in elections (Lincoln 1982, 109–16; Lincoln 1990, 134–43; Nardova 1984; Hanchett 1976, 97–114). Despite such restrictions, Daniel Brower emphasizes that civil society was visible in the towns. He documents the ways that municipal government blended classes and improved the environment for all urbanites (Brower 1990, 104–39).

Even while serfdom existed, peasants also had grassroots government, although politicking often divided the community, and officials elected from the nobility (*zemskie ispravniki*) had some police powers over peasants and nomads. Male heads of households in each peasant commune (*obshchina*, *mir*) elected an elder (*starosta*) (Matsuzato 2002, 27, 119). The communal assembly—or powerful groups within it—distributed

strips of land to constituent families, collected poll taxes (in effect from 1724 to 1885), and chose recruits for the military (before service was made more equitable in 1874). After the serfs were emancipated, communes collected land payments to reimburse the state treasury, which had compensated nobles for the land and labor they lost. Throughout the imperial period, communes settled small-scale crimes and disruptions of public peace (Wirtschafter 1997, 104–5). That system obtained among state peasants in Siberia, Cossacks, Finnish and Turkic nomads, and foreign colonists.

Law courts, although separate for each free *soslovie* (estate, pl. *sosloviia*) and technically closed to serfs before the mid-1860s, nevertheless helped foster civil society by making citizens aware of their separateness from the state and giving them a tool to protect private and public space. Serfs were not legal persons before 1861, but they circumvented that restriction and, utilizing a law that allowed serfs possessed by non-nobles to sue for freedom, generated over thirty-five thousand lawsuits in provincial courts and the Senate (supreme appellate court) between 1835 and 1858 (Wirtschafter 1997, 120–23). The judicial reforms of 1864 increased recognition of citizens' rights by establishing regular courts open to all classes on the county and provincial levels, with the possibility of jury trials for nonpolitical cases, and justice of the peace courts at the township level in thirty-four provinces. The judges in the latter courts were not trained, so justice was sometimes rough and ready, but the courts were more accessible. Juries, used in civil and nonpolitical criminal cases in thirty-four out of fifty regular courts after 1864, stimulated the growth of civil society by forging cooperation (albeit temporary) on common problems among disparate social and economic groups (Kucherov 1953, 72–73, 80–86).

Zemstvos or local councils, established in thirty-four out of fifty provinces and their counties in 1864, greatly strengthened civil society. They supplanted the Boards of Welfare, where from the time of Catherine the Great, representatives from the nobility, townspeople, and free peasants had assisted governors in caring for the indigent and helpless. The new local governing bodies did not employ the procedure of "one man, one vote." Owners of independent property, business properties, and property in communes voted in separate curiae. Governmental authorities supervised the zemstvos. They were supposed to eschew political discussion and were prevented from combining with other zemstvos. The zemstvos were able to levy taxes, and their frequent tax hikes particularly irritated peasant constituents. Nevertheless, zemstvos welded together former serfs, nobles, free peasants, and business people (Wallace 1961, 27–48). Women property owners could vote through male relatives. Zemstvos markedly increased elementary schools and improved health care. Because they handled the same matters as local bodies in the United States, Charles Timberlake views them as authentic, participatory local governments (Timberlake 1991, 164–79; Timberlake 1998, 53–54).

The zemstvos also encouraged change on the national level. Zemstvo work honed citizens' negotiating skills in dealings with one another and with government officials. Zemstvo achievements supported demands for a national parliament. Flaunting official rules, zemstvos cooperated with each other in times of crisis, as when they

assisted the central government during the Russo-Japanese War. Their record of achievements, coupled with popular upheavals and the advice of former Minister of Finance Sergei Witte, prompted Nicholas II to institute a national parliament in 1906 and permit political parties (Porter and Gleason 1998a).

Businessmen and businesswomen contributed to the development of civil society, since they operated in a space distinct from government power; personified entrepreneurship, determination, and self-confidence, traits that are requisite for civil society; and subsidized the organizations that enlightened and benefited society. The tsarist government was a driving engine of large-scale industry during the reign of Peter the Great and again in the third quarter of the nineteenth century. Not only merchants and burghers—typical bourgeoisie—but also peasants (women as well as men) and nobles manufactured and sold products of all kinds for the domestic market and for export (de Madariaga 1990, 155; Edelman 1980, 16–17; Blum 1961, 290–92, 343, 390–413; Platonov 1995; Ruckman 1984, 50–51; Glickman 1992, 54–72). Entrepreneurs evaded restrictions on corporations and raised capital by forming closed partnerships (*tovarishchestva*) or expanding small-business (*kustar'*) operations into larger ones (Owen 1991b; Conroy 1994, 137–61; Ruckman 1984, 50–62). Property and profits gave entrepreneurs autonomy. Business owners provided the bulk of funds for philanthropy, schools, and cultural projects. Employment raised living standards and increased numbers of those participating in extracurricular activities.

Associations formed by and for citizens of all types, usually initiated without stimulus from the government, were the chief component parts of the abstraction that we call “civil society.” Emerging in the late eighteenth century, such associations particularly proliferated by the second half of the nineteenth century, due to the emancipation of the serfs; tolerance by the central (and sometimes local) governments; the government’s need for financial and administrative assistance; increased prosperity, education, and self-awareness on the part of the populace; and more convenient transportation and communication.

A few caveats must be noted. As has been mentioned, the central government did hover over civic associations. To operate legally, they were supposed to be officially chartered. However, some societies operated for a few years before becoming registered. They were not illegal or revolutionary but simply ignored cumbersome rules. Most civic associations were not large and did not involve the majority of the populace. But they did connect different *sosloviia* or groups for the benefit of a larger good, and they proved that the inhabitants of late Imperial Russia were self-starting and capable.

Adele Lindenmeyr regards private charitable organizations, which supplemented charity doled out by the central and local governments, as seedbeds of civil society. Including both sexes from all walks of life, private charities grew remarkably in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In 1803, there were 389 registered charitable institutions; by 1862, there were 768 (Lindenmeyr 1996, 233). The Orthodox Church was active in philanthropy. In 1878 there were about 11,500 parish guardianships, although Lindenmeyr asserts that they devoted 85 percent of their

monies to church construction and only paltry sums to charity (ibid., 160). In general, according to Lindenmeyr, most charity offered in cities came from private sources. Wealthy merchants gave generously, particularly those in Moscow (ibid., 58, 207–8). In 1895, there also were 16,500 noble “trusteeships,” with property worth 243 million rubles; Moscow nobles alone sponsored 61 institutions. Twenty-eight independent societies that still existed in 1901 had been founded in the first quarter of the nineteenth century. By 1855, these had nearly doubled to 40 private charity organizations funding 73 institutions. By 1880, private charity organizations had increased nearly eightfold, to 348, and supported 225 institutions. By the beginning of the twentieth century private philanthropic organizations doubled again to 750, sponsoring some 3,224 charitable institutions, more than half those in the empire (ibid., 122). In 1900, Moscow spent more per capita on charity than Paris, Berlin, or Vienna (Ruckman 1984, 88).

An educated populace is the foundation of civil society. The enormous percentage of peasants in the empire meant that, in the aggregate, their education programs pushed civil society forward. Ben Eklof considers peasants “the driving force behind the progress in literacy registered in official statistics” between 1864 and 1890 (1986, 84), for peasants supplemented state, local, and Orthodox church schools by learning on their own, or on their own initiative inviting teachers to their villages. Peasant village communes paid for schools, voluntarily or involuntarily, in fact supporting many schools attributed to the *zemstvos* (Eklof 1986, 83–87; Seregny 1996, 172). The most dramatic example of an individual peasant’s contribution to national education in the eighteenth century was Mikhail Lomonosov. In the nineteenth century, that honor belonged to Ivan Sytin, whose rise from illiterate state peasant to millionaire publisher is recounted compellingly by Charles Ruud (1990). Merchants, above all, subsidized schools. Isabel de Madariaga enthuses that “some merchants had already made substantial gifts for the setting up of schools” even before the Statute on National Schools appeared in 1786. Following the statute, “more voluntary gifts to the schools were made by merchants and townspeople than any other social group; eminent citizens of Moscow . . . each gave five hundred rubles.” At the end of the eighteenth century, the majority of pupils in six central provinces “where support for the schools was particularly noticeable were children of merchants or townspeople” (de Madariaga 1990, 158).

Nobles complemented merchants in advancing education for society at large. In the early nineteenth century, merchants and nobles on their own initiative founded primary parish schools and secondary country schools and, as significantly, pledged to fund them over the long term (Walker 1984). In the reign of Nicholas I, according to Cynthia Whittaker, “the financial contributions of landowning nobility were largely responsible for doubling the number of parish schools . . . and for supporting forty-seven *pansions* and six noble institutes. At the same time,” she continues, “non-nobles . . . contributed to the gymnasias and, along with various strata of the ‘obligated’ [poll-tax-paying] middle classes, supported private institutions which came to represent 27 percent of all the schools under the educational ministry.” Indeed, in the middle of the

nineteenth century, private lower and middle schools were more numerous than state-supported schools and the over one thousand parish schools were entirely privately funded (Whittaker 1984, 151). Various voluntary societies founded schools and fostered literacy in other ways in the nineteenth century (Brower 1990, 165–87). At the end of the empire, business people were active in supporting trade schools, teacher training schools, and schools and hospitals for peasants (Ruckman 1984, 94, 98). Most girls' schools were privately financed, often by businessmen, so that by the early twentieth century, according to Patrick Alston, one out of three girls attended secondary school versus one out of four boys (the latter, of course, often left school for work) (Alston 1969, 202–4). Cooperation between central and local governments, the State Duma, the Orthodox Church, and the private sector resulted in the near doubling of teacher-training and elementary schools between 1908 and 1914, although Russia still needed twice as many lower schools again to achieve universal primary education (Seton-Watson 1967, 639). All eight dental schools in the empire were privately established and supported by tuition, women forming a sizable proportion of the student body, although the Ministry of Internal Affairs regulated the schools, and students completing the courses were required to take state qualifying examinations. ((*Zubovrachnyi vestnik* 1885, 1891, 1892, 1897).

Fewer handicapped children—blind, deaf, and retarded—were in special schools in Imperial Russia than in West European countries in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, but a number of Russian schools were established and supported privately, supplementing those sponsored by the Empress Marie Trusteeship, the imperial family, Boards of Welfare, and subsequently zemstvos (Conroy 1985; McCagg 1989, 40, 48–49; Ruckman 1984, 94).

Russians' efforts to promote education among indigenous peoples of the empire represented a facet of civil society, for that process linked the dominant ethnic group with minorities and enabled the latter to become more vocal and take more control over their own lives. Educator N. I. Il'minskii and the Brotherhood of St. Gurii pioneered private bilingual schools for Finns and Turkic-Tatar Muslims in the Volga region in the mid-nineteenth century. By 1870, there were 43; by the early twentieth century there were some 120 schools with an enrollment of over 4,000 (Dowler 2001, 33–45, 54–61, 90–97). Orthodox clergy furthered literacy among national minorities of the Ural-Volga region, particularly the Mordvin, Cheremi, and Mari peoples, for example, by writing and publishing a Mordvinian–Russian dictionary (Matsuzato 2002, 38–39).

National minorities were not passive recipients of Russian culture. Some Polish, Estonian, and Jewish societies were revolutionary. Nationalist organizations that were not overtly revolutionary, though, ought to be considered under the rubric of civil society, for they represented popular as opposed to official initiatives. Sizable numbers of Poles lived outside Russian Poland; there were about seventy thousand in St. Petersburg in the early twentieth century. They established a Catholic school next to St. Catherine's Church on Nevskii Prospect. The Polish Benevolent Society, established in 1884, conducted fund raisers and social activities and published a newspaper

(Conroy 1994, 114–15). In the second half of the nineteenth century, Estonians formed agricultural societies and clubs for “the advancement of music, theater, adult education, and temperance,” although Estonian song festivals, some of which included thousands of participants, were more ambiguous politically (Raun 1987, 70, 76). The Finnish peoples in Kazan, Viatka, and Kostroma provinces maintained a strong sense of their identity. Their prayer services, sometimes attended by four to five thousand people, at which they sacrificed horses and sheep and venerated a sacred stone, caused conflict with tsarist officials (Matsuzato 2002, 67–73, 84–95, 117–21). Although this would seem to confirm the arguments of historians who charge that divisions tore Imperial Russia apart, it also must be acknowledged that Russian outreach programs enlarged the world of the indigenous peoples and improved their ability to articulate their needs and rights. The Finnish animists, for example, insisted that “[t]he tsar himself could not change their beliefs” (*ibid.*).

Mutual aid societies for clerks, printers, and members of other occupations, which existed since the first half of the nineteenth century, showed working people taking charge of their own fate, an important ingredient of civil society (McKean 1990, 163–68; Ramer 1996, 120; Seregny 1996, 178). Professional societies of engineers, feldshers, teachers, and physicians testified to the growth of civil society in the second half of the nineteenth century (Balzer 1996a; Ramer 1996; Seregny 1996). The first society of pharmacists had opened even earlier, in 1818. By 1913, there were some 10,000 pharmacists (out of a total population of some 144 million), and pharmacy societies functioned in eighteen cities of the empire, disseminating information on developments in the field through meetings and journals (Conroy 1994, 219–28). The Pharmacists’ Pension Fund amassed 0.5 million rubles from staff pharmacists and pharmacy owners and was quite effective in succoring members during the first decade of its existence, before revolutionary pharmacists took over its assets (Conroy 1994, 229–53). Dentists organized their first professional society in January 1885. In the 1890s, they appealed to the Governing Senate to prevent unqualified persons from assuming the title *zubnoi vrach* (dental doctor) (*Zubovrachebnyi vestnik* 1885, 1897).

Some historians imply that associations of business owners like the Association of Southern Coal and Steel Producers, the Russian Industrial Society, and the Baku Petroleum Association were too exclusive and even xenophobic to qualify as components of civil society (Friedgut 1994, 25–40; Owen 1991a, 75–89). Yet, indisputably, they do belong under that rubric, for they reflected the cohesion of individuals, albeit with a specific agenda, acting independently from the government—the definition of civil society.

A number of societies contributed to the protection and promotion of public health. Pharmacy societies cooperated with cities in promoting clean water and unadulterated foodstuffs (Conroy 1994, 193). The Society for the Preservation of Public Health was small, with only three hundred members and a treasury of about 1,900 rubles in 1880. The society had been formed in St. Petersburg, but branches, duly approved by the government, gradually fanned out across the empire—to Odessa, Kazan, and

Theodosia on the Black Sea. The society sponsored research and was engaged in raising public awareness of health and hygiene (*ibid.*, 196). The Free Economic Society was a particularly lively example of an emerging civil society. Founded in the eighteenth century, the society cooperated with Orthodox parishes, *zemstvos*, *feldsher* schools, and other institutions to promote smallpox vaccination until it closed in 1906. It was largely self-funded (Pratt 2002, 566, 568, 573, 575).

Religious groups were somewhat exclusive, yet they promoted civil society through their social and educational activities. The Orthodox Church, the favored religion, was connected to the government, since a board (the Holy Synod) headed by a government-appointed layman, managed the Church and fulfilled government mandates, such as establishing elementary schools. Nevertheless, the Orthodox Church was not an extension of the government. In implementing social programs, Orthodox parishes operated fairly autonomously, especially as they were privately funded. In addition to educational activities, some clerics were involved in working for social justice, although they sometimes blurred the line between constructive and revolutionary activity, the best-known exponent of this ambiguity being Father Gapon (Sablinsky 1976).

Brenda Meehan's sensitive study of five Orthodox nuns notes that the women's "monastic communities" that "spread throughout rural Russia in the second half of the nineteenth century . . . were self supporting, primarily through the communal labor of the sisters." These communities "offered" poor as well as prosperous "women an opportunity to develop their leadership abilities and to exercise considerable responsibility." Women's religious communities "managed and worked large agricultural properties." They also "ran schools, almshouses, and orphanages, and supervised the feeding, housing and religious life of the community." Religious communities increased members' literacy and gave them some business training, such as making and selling icons, handicrafts, and decorating churches (Meehan 1992, 13–14).

Despite the preeminence of Orthodoxy, other religions operated in Russia and engaged in secular activities. Those of Catholic Poles have been noted. Baron Gintzburg's Society for the Spread of Enlightenment among the Jews of Russia (the OPE) could be classified as a civic organization, one of whose purposes was to bring Christians and Jews closer (Klier 1995, 245–62). Pavel Riabushinskii likewise tried to mainstream the "Old Belief" (West 1991, 41–56).

Masonic societies, which emerged in the eighteenth century, were only quasi-religious. Nevertheless, those societies, as well as the philosophical circles of the 1830s and 1840s (such as the Slavophiles and Westerners) and occult groups that appeared especially in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, were elements of civil society. Some philosophical groups, like the Durov circle to which Fedor Dostoevsky belonged, had revolutionary proclivities but others focused on the gradual betterment of society within the prevailing system. Slavophiles like Aleksei Khomiakov tried to work out the finances of emancipating the serfs in the first half of the nineteenth century (Christoff 1961, 240–42). W. Bruce Lincoln details how informal groups emerging from salons and circles of the 1830s and 1840s produced the "enlightened

bureaucrats" who orchestrated the Great Reforms of the 1860s and 1870s (Lincoln 1982, esp. 139–67).

Spiritualists and Theosophists, though considered aberrant by the Orthodox Church and the tsarist government, nevertheless pushed civil society forward. According to Maria Carlson, "hundreds of occult societies and circles, registered and unregistered, were formed in every major city and in the provinces" in the last decades of the nineteenth century and the first decades of the twentieth. The societies provided private space for members' activities such as seances but also galvanized the public through lectures, the publication of "more than eight hundred occult titles" between 1881 and 1918, and other activities. They introduced Russians to Buddhism and Hinduism, if in garbled form. Following the October Manifesto's proclamation of greater civil liberties in 1905, the Moscow Spiritualist Society, which had operated openly since 1897, applied for official registration, was duly chartered in 1906, and held a congress that attracted about seven hundred people later that year. The Theosophical Society gave public lectures, had its own academy, restaurants, and a dacha near St. Petersburg, and engaged in many philanthropic projects. Members established a dormitory for working women in St. Petersburg; managed vegetarian cafeterias and food kitchens for the poor; organized kindergartens and day care centers; assisted in hospitals; helped the elderly; distributed food, books, and toys to children; implemented Maria Montessori's educational methods; and promoted peasant handicrafts. During World War I, the society assisted soldiers and their families, often in conjunction with other relief organizations, such as the International Red Cross (Carlson 1993, 22, 24, 26, 28, 66–69, 76, 78–80).

Groups focusing on art, theater, and music proliferated in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. They furthered civil society because they originated and operated independently from the government and, in some cases, educated the public and provided jobs. Through traveling exhibits of paintings that focused on Russian history, nature, and sometimes the plight of the poor and political dissidents, the Wanderers (*Peredvizhniki*) sought to raise the social awareness as well as the artistic sensibilities of provincial dwellers (Valkener 1977). The Artistic Circle, founded in 1867 by Aleksandr Nikolaevich Ostrovskii, and the Moscow Association of Russian Playwrights, organized in 1870 and chartered by the Senate in 1874, helped protect the material interests of playwrights and translators and encouraged aspiring writers. By 1876, the Moscow society had some seventy members and contracts with seventy-two theaters. By 1884, the society had 330 members and working capital of 67,000 rubles (McReynolds 2003, 39–42). The less commercial World of Art movement advanced civil society by blending together businessmen and -women, male and female painters, theater actors, opera and ballet artists, and impresarios. The nucleus of the group, which was fascinated with eighteenth-century subjects and the clarity of realistic as well as the curvilinear Art Nouveau style, began holding meetings in the 1880s. In the 1890s and the early twentieth century, they established a journal, held art exhibitions, and sponsored musical performances. The World of Art group did not register with the authorities, and some members propounded radical political as well as cultural ideas (Kamensky 1991, esp. 18–19).

A number of Moscow businessmen consciously combined cultural patronage and social responsibility. Savva Mamontov, Petr Ivanovich Shchukin, Stepan Riabushinskii, and Pavel Tret'iakov amassed impressive collections of art and in Shchukin's case, historical artifacts. Mamontov and his wife also supported music and Vladimir Nemirovich-Danchenko's Moscow Art Theater. Extending personal enjoyment of their acquisitions, Shchukin donated his collection of manuscripts and books to the Historical Museum; and Tret'iakov built an art museum to display his icons and paintings. Savva Mamontov not only gathered painters at his estate of Abramtsevo near Moscow and fired ceramics himself but also established workshops to promote peasant handicrafts, both to preserve Russian heritage and increase peasant income (Bradley 1991, 137–41; Norman 1991, 93–107; Ruckman 1984, 84, 89, 97–98, 103, 105, 155–58).

Leisure pursuits helped construct civil society, in Joseph Bradley's opinion. Whereas in the early nineteenth century, aside from charitable organizations, Moscow had only a handful of clubs for the elite, by 1912 there were "more than six hundred societies, organizations, clubs, and associations," including vocational, technical, and medical societies; automobile, aviation, and other hobby clubs; Chautauqua-like self-improvement clubs; and voluntary societies such as those devoted to science or to founding museums, which bound together the middle and lower classes (Bradley 1991, 135–48). Self-improvement and recreational clubs sprouted in other cities as well (Hamm 1993, 164–72). Louise McReynold's delightful *Russia at Play* details the burgeoning of societies devoted to leisure and reminds us that while recreational societies might be considered frivolous, they reflected the growing self-confidence of the middle classes, increased living standards, and popular initiative and independence.

Equestrian-related activities had a long history. As early as 1739, there were 10 private stud farms; by 1814, there were 1,339. The Moscow Hunting Society was established in 1834. Horse races were held in the Moscow Hippodrome in the 1830s; in 1880, races took place in twenty-four cities; and by 1905, there were races in fifty-nine cities, with prizes amounting to 2.75 million rubles (www.horse.spb.su/history). "Between 1854 and 1907," McReynolds adds, "the number of registered [horse]-breeding societies jumped from 96 to 3,700; the number of race horses" increased from 260 to 3,000; and "the number of hippodromes nearly tripled, from 20 to 54" (McReynolds 2003, 81). In contrast to elitist British hunting societies, Russian hunting societies were egalitarian, including peasants among their members. The Moscow Hunting Society received a charter in 1862. "The charter underscored civic concerns" related to gaming laws, protection of the environment, and "the breeding of hounds" (ibid., 83). There were over thirty hunting societies in the early twentieth century (ibid., 83–87). Physical culture and wrestling gained popularity in the late nineteenth century, fueling the establishment of amateur athletic societies. These strengthened civil society as well as the physiques of their members because "they offered opportunities for participation across a broad social spectrum," "pulled thousands of Russians into the public sphere," and at least psychologically, helped knit together disparate socioeconomic groups, since "virtually all club charters declared themselves open to membership of all social estates" (ibid., 92–93, 88, 90, 94–95).

Soccer clubs were first organized in 1879 by British managers at Russian factories. By 1911, there were thirteen clubs in Moscow. These "football" clubs had a leveling effect because they were associated with factories and neighborhoods and included workers as well as engineers and junior management (*ibid.*, 102–5). Bicycle clubs also included members of different social classes. The first was established in Moscow by 1888; there were nineteen clubs by 1892. By 1897, the St. Petersburg club had five hundred members (*ibid.*, 96).

McReynolds points out that women pursued sport (*ibid.*, 107–8). It should be noted that women also promoted education, health care, and culture, increasing the viability of civil society in the bargain. Women established schools for girls in the early nineteenth century. In the second half of that century, women lobbied for admission to institutions of higher education (Johansen 1987, 29, 35–40, 60). Over two thousand women were certified as medical practitioners from the 1870s on. About seven hundred finished medical courses and became certified midwives. Over sixteen hundred women were enrolled in medical schools in the early twentieth century. Women were heavily involved in the new field of school hygiene, and they established medical clinics and schools for peasants. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, women received permission from the tsarist government to publish journals and establish societies, the foci of which included self-improvement, facilities for training destitute women and prostitutes, and the general betterment of society (Clyman and Vowles 1996; Ruane 1994, 93–113; Figner 1991, 54–56; Conroy 1981; Noonan and Nechemias 2001, 3–123).

Some individuals stand out among female social activists. Antonina Lesnevskaja, one of the first women pharmacists, founded a pharmacy entirely staffed by women in 1901 and in 1903 started a women's pharmacy school that graduated around two hundred pharmacists by the time of World War I. The school helped professionalize pharmacy, and some graduates contributed to medical research (Conroy 1994, 109–36, 396, 410).

Wendy Salmond depicts the prominent role that women played in preserving traditional wood carving, lace making, embroidery skills, and patterns, while buoying up peasant women financially by establishing *kustar'* industries, retail shops selling crafts, and international exhibitions publicizing them. Although there were some fissures, in addition to furthering culture, those activities strengthened civil society, for they created links among women from various socioeconomic groups, and with male patrons and ultimately the government. Wealthy nobles and merchant wives like Princess Maria Tenisheva, Elizaveta Mamontova, and Mariia Iakunchikova, whose workshops were founded during the famine of 1891–92, relied on the artistic talents of Elena Polenova, the product of an upper-middle-class family of artists and intellectuals, and on Sofiia Davydova and Natalia Shabel'skaia and her daughters, historians and promoters of Russian arts and crafts from humbler backgrounds. These famed women inspired Ekaterina Chokolova, a railroad engineer's wife, to promote traditional art. All the patronesses depended on nameless peasant women in Tver, Vitebsk, and other Russian and Ukrainian provinces to execute their designs and produce wares.

The women's arts and crafts movement stimulated the Moscow *zemstvo* to open a *kustar'* museum in 1885, which sold peasant handicrafts, and on the eve of World War I prompted the central government to establish official agencies to promote peasant handicrafts, bureaucratizing the movement but giving it wider scope (Salmond 1996, esp. 15–45, 65–66, 82–83, 115–45, 164).

Women's civic activities propelled them into the political arena. The Russian Women's Mutual-Philanthropic Society counted sixteen hundred members at its high point in 1899. Some women joined subversive groups. Over two thousand became Social Democrats before 1905, railed against the Russo-Japanese War, and orchestrated strikes in 1905, May Day parades in 1914, and strikes during World War I. The women's suffrage movement was more mainstream, although it included Social Democrat Alexandra Kollontai, supporters of the Socialist Revolutionaries, and supporters of the Constitutional Democrats (Kadets, then fairly radical) like Anna Miliukova and Ekaterina Shchepkina. Only one woman spoke for female suffrage at the banquets that radical liberals organized in the fall of 1904 to demand a parliament and expanded civil rights. In January 1905, however, some 150 women signed a petition for women's suffrage, and in the spring of that year the Union of Equal Rights for Women began to push for women's civil and political rights (Edmondson 1992, 79–80, 81, 85–87; Conroy 1994, 125–26, 129). Only in Finland, however, were women permitted to participate in elections for the unicameral regional parliament, the *Sejm*, that was established in 1906.

Civil society did not wither during World War I despite some shortages and problems. Peasants did not seize estate land, probably because they already owned 80 percent of the arable land, and an estimated 20 percent of the peasants were prosperous (Matsuzato 1998; Gatrell 1994, 226–28; Wheatcroft and Davies 1994, 62). Large-scale industry increased productivity and output (Davies 1994, 135; Conroy 1994, 320–48). A flourishing film industry, theater, and the arts (Tsivian et al. 1989; Jahn 1995; McReynolds 2003, 1–3) document that many citizens lived a fairly normal life during the war. About 1,000 to 1,600 strikes erupted in 1915 and 1916, but organizers labored to call them and many workers were cool to revolutionary blandishments (Friedgut 1994, 221, 224, 228; McKean 1990, 369–94; Conroy 1994, 350–63). Refugees strained the infrastructure in some cities, but civic as well as governmental organizations assisted them (Gatrell 1999). Unfortunately, civil society began to weaken in 1917, partly due to demagogues who stressed inequality between socioeconomic strata rather than the possibility for social and economic advancement. The fate of civil society in Russia after the Bolshevik Revolution in October 1917 is the subject of the next chapter.

Conclusion

The examples above do not exhaust the potentially relevant evidence. They do not purport to prove that all was harmonious in late Imperial Russia or that civil society was stronger than the government. However, they indicate that many Russian citizens

were self-starters and joined in cooperative activities to bring about educational, social, and cultural improvements. In broad terms, this analysis implies that Russian society was symbiotic and synergistic as well as adversarial. There were those who worked to destroy the existing political and social order but also various socioeconomic groups that worked in concert for larger goals within the system. The embryonic civil society was buttressed by the ownership of private property; a growing economy (Gregory 1994, 14–84; West and Petrov 1998; Crisp 1976; Davies 1994, 32–135); a government that, although authoritarian, abided by a codified system of rules; and a fairly responsive and honest judicial system. Though the tsarist state was far from democratic, it allowed space for many independent initiatives by citizens, and in many cases even encouraged nonstate organizations as a means of gaining assistance in serving national interests. It is the consensus of a large number of scholars that during the last decades of tsarist Russia, the efforts of a wide variety of people had generated the vibrant associational activity that indicated the emergence of a nascent civil society.

Note

1. This generalization is based on the author's conversations with students and citizens during thirty years of teaching Russian history.

References

- Alston, Patrick. 1969. *Education and the State in Tsarist Russia*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Balzer, Harley D. 1996a. "The Engineering Profession in Tsarist Russia." In Balzer 1996b, 55–88.
- Balzer, Harley D., ed. 1996b. *Russia's Missing Middle Class: The Professions in Russian History*. Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe.
- Blum, Jerome. 1961. *Lord and Peasant in Russia from the Ninth to the Nineteenth Century*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Bradley, Joseph. 1991. "Voluntary Associations, Civic Culture, and *Obshchestvennost'* in Moscow." In Clowes, Kassow, and West 1991, 131–48.
- Brower, Daniel R. 1990. *The Russian City between Tradition and Modernity, 1850–1900*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Carlson, Maria. 1993. "*No Higher Religion Than the Truth*": *A History of the Theosophical Movement in Russia, 1875–1922*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Christoff, Peter K. 1961. *A. S. Khomjakov: An Introduction to Nineteenth-Century Russian Slavophilism*. S-gravenhage, UK: Mouton and Co.
- Clowes, Edith W., Samuel D. Kassow, and James L. West, eds. 1991. *Between Tsar and People: Educated Society and the Quest for Public Identity in Late Imperial Russia*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Clyman, Toby W., and Judith Vowles, eds. 1996. *Russia through Women's Eyes: Autobiographies from Tsarist Russia*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Conroy, Mary Schaeffer. 1976. *Peter Arkad'evich Stolypin: Practical Politics in Late Tsarist Russia*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
- . 1981. "School Hygiene in Late Tsarist Russia." *Slavic and European Education Review* vol. 5, no. 2: 17–26.

- . 1985. "Education of the Blind, Deaf, and Mentally Retarded in Late Tsarist Russia." *Slavic and European Education Review* vol. 9, nos. 1–2: 29–49.
- . 1994. *In Health and In Sickness: Pharmacy, Pharmacists, and the Pharmaceutical Industry in Late Imperial, Early Soviet Russia*. Boulder, CO: East European Monographs (distributed by Columbia University Press).
- Conroy, Mary Schaeffer, ed. 1998. *Emerging Democracy in Late Imperial Russia*. Niwot: University Press of Colorado.
- Crisp, Olga. 1976. *Studies in the Russian Economy before 1914*. London: Macmillan.
- Davies, R. W. 1994. "Industry." In Davies, Harrison, and Wheatcroft 1994, 131–57.
- Davies, R. W., Mark Harrison, and S. G. Wheatcroft, eds. 1994. *The Economic Transformation of the Soviet Union, 1913–1945*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- De Madariaga, Isabel. 1990. *Catherine the Great: A Short History*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Dowler, Wayne. 2001. *Classroom and Empire: The Politics of Schooling Russia's Eastern Nationalities, 1860–1917*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press.
- Edelman, Robert. 1980. *Gentry Politics on the Eve of the Russian Revolution*. Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.
- Edmondson, Linda. 1992. "Women's Rights, Civil Rights, and the Debate over Citizenship in the 1905 Revolution." In *Women and Society in Russia and the Soviet Union*, ed. Linda Edmondson, 77–110. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Eklöf, Ben. 1986. *Russian Peasant Schools: Officialdom, Village Culture, and Popular Pedagogy, 1861–1914*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Eklöf, Ben, and Lynne Viola, eds. 1992. *Russian Peasant Women*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Figner, Vera. 1991. *Memoirs of a Revolutionist*. DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press.
- Friedgut, Theodore H. 1994. *Iuzovka and Revolution*, vol. 2. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Gatrell, Peter. 1994. "The First World War and War Communism, 1914–1920." In Davies, Harrison, and Wheatcroft 1994, 216–37.
- . 1999. *A Whole Empire Walking: Refugees in Russia during World War I*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Glickman, Rose L. 1992. "Peasant Women and Their Work." In *Russian Peasant Women*, ed. Beatrice Farnsworth and Lynne Viola 1992, 54–72. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Gregory, Paul R. 1994. *Before Command: An Economic History of Russia from Emancipation to the First Five-Year Plan*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Hamm, Michael F. 1993. *Kiev: A Portrait, 1800–1917*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Hamm, Michael F., ed. 1976. *The City in Russian History*. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky.
- Hanchett, Walter. 1976. "Tsarist Statutory Regulation of Municipal Government in the Nineteenth Century." In Hamm 1976, 91–114.
- Jahn, Hubertus. 1995. *Patriotic Culture in Russia during World War I*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Johansen, Christine. 1987. *Women's Struggles for Higher Education in Russia, 1855–1900*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press.
- Kamensky, Alexander. 1991. *The World of Art Movement*. Leningrad: Aurora.
- Kassow, Samuel D., James L. West, and Edith W. Clowes. 1991. "Introduction: The Problem of the Middle in Late Imperial Russian Society." In Clowes, Kassow, and West 1991, 3–14.
- Klier, John Doyle. 1995. *Imperial Russia's Jewish Question*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Koniushennyi prikaz, gosudarstvennoe konnozavodstvo i pervye ippodromy. 2003. www.Horse.spb.su/history, pp. 1–2; *Gosudarstvennoe konnozavodstvo v XIX veke*, *ibid.*, p. 1.

- Kucherov, Samuel. 1953. *Courts, Lawyers, and Trials under the Last Three Tsars*. New York: Praeger.
- Lincoln, W. Bruce. 1982. *In the Vanguard of Reform: Russia's Enlightened Bureaucrats, 1825–1861*. DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press.
- Lincoln, W. Bruce, ed. 1990. *The Great Reforms: Autocracy, Bureaucracy, and the Politics of Change in Imperial Russia*. De Kalb: Northern Illinois University Press.
- Lindenmeyr, Adele. 1996. *Poverty Is Not a Vice: Charity, Society, and the State in Imperial Russia*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Matsuzato, Kimitaka. 1998. "Interregional Conflicts and the Collapse of Tsarism: The Real Reason for the Food Crisis in Russia after the Autumn of 1916." In Conroy 1998, 243–300.
- Matsuzato, Kimitaka, ed. 2002. *Vesna narodov: Etnologicheskaia istoriia Volgo-Ural'skogo regiona. Sbornik dokumentov*. Sapporo: Hokkaido University Press.
- McCagg, William O. 1989. "The Origins of Defectology." In *The Disabled in the Soviet Union: Past and Present, Theory and Practice*, ed. William O. McCagg and Lewis Siegelbaum, 39–61. Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press.
- McKean, Robert B. 1990. *St. Petersburg between the Revolutions*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- McReynolds, Louise. 2003. *Russia at Play: Leisure Activities at the End of the Tsarist Era*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Meehan, Brenda. 1993. *Holy Women of Russia: The Lives of Five Orthodox Women Offer Spiritual Guidance for Today*. San Francisco: Harper.
- Melancon, Michael. 1990. *The Socialist Revolutionaries and the Anti-War Movement, 1914–1917*. Columbus: Ohio State University Press.
- Nardova, V. A. 1984. *Gorodskoe samoupravlenie v Rossii v 60–kh–nachale 90–kh godov XIX v. Leningrad: Nauka*.
- Noonan, Norma Corigliano, and Carol R. Nechemias, eds. 2001. *Encyclopedia of Russian Women's Movements*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.
- Norman, John O. 1991. "Pavel Tret'iakov and Merchant Art Patronage, 1850–1900." In Clowes, Kassow, and West 1991, 93–107.
- Owen, Thomas C. 1991a. *The Corporation under Russian Law, 1800–1917*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- . 1991b. "Impediments to a Bourgeois Consciousness in Russia, 1880–1905: The Estate Structure, Ethnic Diversity, and Economic Regionalism." In Clowes, Kassow, and West 1991, 75–89.
- Platonov, O. 1995. *1,000 let russkogo predprinimatel'stvo*. Moscow: Sovremennik.
- Porter, Thomas, and William Gleason. 1998a. "The Zemstvo and the Transformation of Russian Society." In Conroy 1998, 60–87.
- . 1998b. "The Democratization of the Zemstvo during the First World War." In Conroy 1998, 228–42.
- Pratt, Joan Klobe. 2002. "The Free Economic Society and the Battle against Smallpox: A 'Public Sphere' in Action." *Russian Review* vol. 61, no. 4 (October): 560–78.
- Ramer, Samuel C. 1996. "Professionalism and Politics: The Russian Feldsher Movement, 1891–1918." In Balzer 1996b, 117–42.
- Raun, Toivo U. 1987. *Estonia and the Estonians*. Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press.
- Ruane, Christine. 1994. *Gender, Class, and the Professionalization of Russian Teachers, 1860–1914*. Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press.
- Ruckman, Jo Ann. 1984. *The Moscow Business Elite: A Social and Cultural Portrait of Two Generations, 1840–1905*. DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press.
- Ruud, Charles A. 1990. *Russian Entrepreneur: Publisher Ivan Sytin of Moscow, 1851–1934*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press.
- Sablinsky, Walter. 1976. *The Road to Bloody Sunday*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.