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dans l'Empire russe**

From *soslovie* to voluntary associations

New patterns of collective identities in late Imperial Russia

*Des soslovie aux associations volontaires : nouveaux modèles d'identités
collectives à la fin de la Russie impériale*

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“СТАВ ОДНИМ ИЗ ЛИДЕРОВ КОНСТИТУЦИОННО-ДЕМОКРАТИЧЕСКОЙ ПАРТИИ, МОЙ ОТЕЦ ТЕМ САМЫМ ПРЕЗРИТЕЛЬНО ОТВЕРГ ВСЕ ТЕ ЧИНЫ, КОТОРЫЕ ТАК ОБИЛЬНО ШЛИ ЕГО ПРЕДКАМ. НА КАКОМ-ТО БАНКЕТЕ ОН ОТКАЗАЛСЯ ПОДНЯТЬ БОКАЛ ЗА ЗДОРОВЬЕ МОНАРХА – И ПРЕСПОКОЙНО ПОМЕСТИЛ В ГАЗЕТАХ ОБЪЯВЛЕНИЕ О ПРОДАЖЕ ПРИДВОРНОГО МУНДИРА.”¹

“ВЕДЬ И Я ИМЕЮ НЕСЧАСТЬЕ ПРИНАДЛЕЖАТЬ К ЭТОМУ НЕЗАВИДНОМУ СОСЛОВИЮ [ИНТЕЛЛИГЕНЦИИ]... ДА, НЕСИМПАТИЧНОЕ СЛОВО. – НИКОГДА НЕ ПИШУ ЕГО БЕЗ КАВЫЧЕК. ТОЛЬКО ТЕМ КАК ДВОРЯНИН И УТЕШАЮСЬ.”²

- 1 The epigraphs to this article, taken from works written by two very different authors in widely diverging circumstances – Vladimir Nabokov’s reminiscences of his father and conservative legal expert B.V. Nikol’skii’s notes on his conversations with Nicholas II – both highlight one distinctive character of social life in Imperial Russia: the growing variety of collective identities and the opportunity to choose among them, which, in turn, testified to the multiplicity of available social frameworks. The study of this phenomenon, however, has been complicated by the discrepancy between the broad range of multifaceted identities and the rather limited conceptual means available for their exploration (and classification). Even nineteenth-century thinkers regarded the legal terminology of ranks and estates (*chiny* and *sosloviia*) as only partly satisfactory.

They tried to resolve this problem either by suggesting a return to genuine *soslovnost'* in social life (as Nikol'skii proposed) or by introducing new categories – such as *intelligentsiia* and *meshchanstvo* – for describing those social groups that were perceived as *vnesoslovnye* and *vneklassovye* (as advocated by R.V. Ivanov-Razumnik).³ Nonetheless, twentieth-century scholarship appropriated the “historical” terminology of *soslovie* and class but ascribed to them the status of theoretical concepts. As a result, the very terms that had been used in the late-nineteenth-century public discourse became analytical tools for exploring that discourse and the social context of its emergence.

- 2 The problematic nature of this usage has been discussed by Russianists in recent decades, and was raised again by the late Michael Confino in an article that turned out to be one of the last writings of this great scholar.⁴ However, the discussion has still revolved around the same class/*soslovie* opposition, although, as Confino pointed out, both concepts are too vague and have too many limitations to be regarded as universal instruments for analyzing the complex fabric of pre-revolutionary Russian society. Elise Kimerling Wirtschafter, whose works are indispensable for studying the issue of social identity and social structures in Russia of the Old Regime, has assumed in her recent essay on social categories of Russian imperial history that “better solutions will be forthcoming” but has nonetheless chosen to place her analysis “within the existing historiography based on official and elite sources.”⁵ It seems, however, that what is needed is not better answers to the old questions but rather new approaches and new questions that can enable us to read available materials via new prisms, and to add to the corpus of our sources those documents that, although available, remain unused since they have been irrelevant to existing theoretical contexts. One such approach is a study of associational life in Imperial Russia. The exploration of voluntary associations as significant elements of the Russian social landscape started in the 1990s when Russianists began to employ new methodological tools such as the concepts of the public and the public sphere. Douglas Smith's and Raffaella Faggionato's writings on Russian Masonry, Adele Lindenmeyr's work on charitable societies, and Anastasiia S. Tumanova's and Lutz Häfner's publications on local voluntary associations all created an impressive picture of lively associational life.⁶ At the same time, Joseph Bradley in his fundamental research on learned societies undertook a path-breaking attempt to conceptualize and contextualize the topic of voluntary associations as part of a theoretical discussion concerning civil society in Imperial Russia.⁷ Consequently, the issue of voluntary associations has attained the status of an autonomous topic in Russian historiography. However, there has been almost no correlation between the developing research on associational life and the general (and more traditional) scholarship on social structures and social identities in Imperial Russia.⁸ It is time, therefore, to take the next step and to place the issue of voluntary associations within the broader context of Russian social history, rethinking the question of social classification with reference to voluntary associations.
- 3 As we know from existing research, voluntary associations appeared in eighteenth-century Russia, at the time when the system of ranks and estates was under construction. It is indeed significant that the emergence of voluntary associations was interconnected with the formation of that system. Free societies and assemblies (*vol'nye obshchestva i sobraniia*), followed by friendly societies (*druzheskie obshchestva*), clubs and, later, *soiuzy and kruzhki*, began to proliferate from the 1760s, precisely when the *sosloviia* institutions were being shaped. Although encompassing only the small educated elite, the first voluntary associations played a significant role in fashioning the *modus vivendi* of the new

estates' bodies, in particular with regard to the noble estate. Regardless of their particular goals, these voluntary societies became a kind of greenhouse for promoting and refining the norms of educated sociability, which became essential for all members of the noble *soslovie*: as Marc Raeff wrote, "No one who lacked a Western-type general education could in truth be considered a member of good society or (in fact if not in law) claim all the privileges of noble status."⁹ Furthermore, appropriation of this type of education and the corollary mode of sociability served those who officially belonged to non-noble *sosloviia* (or fell into interstices between legal definitions, being considered *raznochintsy*) as a ticket for entering the elite group – a cultural phenomenon that has been analyzed in particular in Catriona Kelly's study of Russia's polite culture.¹⁰ Yet, as Marc Raeff, Iurii Lotman and Douglas Smith have demonstrated in different ways, these earlier voluntary associations' internal structure was influenced by the existing rank system.¹¹ Moreover, their everyday practice rested on the patronage mode of relationships, which crossed the boundaries of legally defined estates and correlated not only to the ladder of ranks but also to the patriarchal hierarchy characteristic of another powerful institution of Russian imperial society – the *obshchina*. While constituting a kind of complementary framework for legally defined *sosloviia* until the mid-nineteenth century, voluntary associations became much more significant – and numerous – from the period of the Great Reforms, when Russia embarked on its transition to modernity.¹² At this stage they became the focus of public life, providing a variety of alternatives to increasingly outdated *soslovie* institutions.

- 4 The existence of the expanding network of "informal" voluntary associations alongside "formal," legally defined social structures might explain, perhaps, the flexibility, dynamism and cultural richness of social life in Imperial Russia. The latter was described by Wirtschafter as a "society where social grouping can be understood as contiguous relationships in specific contexts and where the shifting, changeable boundaries between such groupings represented contingent moments of cohesion in response to concrete conditions and events."¹³ It might be assumed, then, that voluntary associations, which constituted the most dynamic element of Russia's social body, served as essential frameworks for shaping and reshaping these social groupings. It seems useful, therefore, to shift the emphasis of inquiry from relatively stable *sosloviia* to changeable voluntary associations and examine the issue of social classification in late Imperial Russia through the particular prism of these social institutions. For this purpose, however, it is necessary to focus on particular voluntary associations in order to inquire how people changed, invented and confirmed their identities via participation in voluntary activity, or, as Wirtschafter formulated it, how they "reconciled the idea of society with the reality of social experience."¹⁴

The case of the Society of Zealots of Russian Historical Education

- 5 According to Joseph Bradley, there were approximately as many as ten thousand voluntary associations in Russia at the beginning of the twentieth century. In view of this proliferation, the existing studies have explored only the tip of this iceberg. Bradley noted one paradoxical characteristic of the current state of affairs: "although many scholars have used materials generated by Russian societies to tell other stories – of farming, of imperial exploration, of charity, of education, of public health, of the

professions, for example – no one studies associations collectively as a coherent phenomenon.”¹⁵ Consequently, only a small number of voluntary associations – especially those that had already produced their own histories in the nineteenth century – have attracted scholarly attention, and there are many which, despite their remarkable impact on their contemporaries, have been overlooked by historians.

- 6 The Society of Zealots of Russian Historical Education (*Obshchestvo revnitelei russkogo istoricheskogo prosveshcheniia*), which is the focus of this article, belongs to the latter category. Created in 1895 by a group of twelve courtiers, high-ranking state officials and academicians, it numbered 976 members five years later and increased its membership even more, to 1,084, in the following year.¹⁶ Remaining active until 1918, the Zealots (*Revniteli*) had local branches in major guberniias of the Russian Empire, established a network of libraries extending from the Baltic region to Siberia, published their own historical journal and newsletters and issued books and booklets devoted to various aspects of history and contemporary politics.¹⁷ The Society of Zealots might be regarded as a typical example of Russian voluntary associations: its structure and operational methods were characteristic of the majority of learned societies that existed in Russia at the time. The goals of this society, however, were hardly compatible with the customary assumption regarding the emancipatory impulse purportedly inherent in voluntary associations as such. Its founders’ world view was essentially conservative; by establishing the society they sought to give expression to their anti-liberal and monarchist inclinations. At the same time, the Society of Zealots promoted the importance of associational activity, championed the principle of voluntarism and propounded a vision of society as a sphere that was autonomous from the realm of government. The founders of the Society of Zealots presented themselves as defenders of Russia’s type of autocracy which, they believed, was embodied in the image and politics of Alexander III. Therefore they established the society in order to commemorate that tsar, to promote knowledge about the historical significance of his reign and to advance studies in national history “in the spirit of Russian principles (*v dukhe russkikh nachal*).”¹⁸
- 7 Significantly, the founders of the society assigned the aim of promoting this kind of historical education to society, not to the state. “Only social forces (*obshchestvennye sily*), which will voluntarily and consciously adhere together under the banner (*khorugv*) of Russian national identity, will be able to fulfill this difficult, but urgent task, this sacred service,” declared the memorandum (*Zapiska*) on the society’s basic principles.¹⁹ Written by Count Arsenii Arkad’evich Golenishchev-Kutuzov, a well-known lyric poet and one of the Zealots’ leading figures, this document presented a distinctive version of social classification which apparently ignored legal categories of rank or *soslovie*. Instead, it used the concepts of class, nation and confession without reservation, sporadically employed the terminology of generation and family, and used the notion of voluntary association (*dobrovol’nyi soiuz*) for delineating what Golenishchev-Kutuzov defined as social forces. Generally, he divided the Empire’s social body into the common people (*narodnye massy*), the governing classes, educated society, and “the so-called intelligentsia.” While depicting the *narodnye massy* as bearers of national and religious (Orthodox) identity, the document opposed the *narod* to the intelligentsia which appeared in the *Zapiska* as a transmitter of foreign influence. The intelligentsia, Golenishchev-Kutuzov argued, were “cut off from their native soil, [had] ceased to understand their own history, and [had] become overflowing with disdain toward their country’s past and its sacred behests (

zavety)." As a result, "the intelligentsia embarked upon its destructive labor of forcing alien ideals upon the Russian people, and alien ideas into state, social and family life."²⁰

- 8 This view of the intelligentsia as an anti national social group was by no means a new phenomenon; more important, for our particular case, was the blending of social, national and religious aspects characteristic of that approach.²¹ Furthermore, Golenishchev-Kutuzov apparently rejected the identification of the intelligentsia with educated society. Claiming that the former constituted only a small part of the latter, he suggested creating "an association of like-minded Russian people" from among that segment of educated society which distanced itself from the Westernized intelligentsia. Such an association, he believed, would be "able to strive toward a peaceful educational goal," defined in the *Zapiska* as the dissemination of the ideal of national monarchy "to every stratum of Russian society, especially among the younger generation." The terminology of generation appeared again in the context of the Zealots' proposed mode of action: "gradually, through unity and harmonious educational activities, it could try to attain moral influence among Russian society and Russian youth engaged in learning (*russkoi uchasheisia molodězhi*)." In order to gain such moral influence, it was claimed, the Zealots should act like a "like-minded harmonious family (*druzhnaia sem'ia*)" able to "unite their efforts."²²

Formalized equality and hierarchy of membership

- 9 The memorandum, therefore, presented the Society of Zealots as an association of private people who had voluntarily come together in order to pursue certain educational goals. At the same time, it apparently demanded from its future members "like-mindedness" (*edinomyслиe*): the acceptance of a particular ideology, on the one hand, and the adherence to certain moral obligations, on the other. In so doing, it conceived of a kind of "moralized collectivism" as defined by Jane Burbank in relation to a different type of contemporaneous association.²³ This vision assumed a particular type of collective identity characterized by shared values and voluntary acceptance of rules and discipline imposed by an association on its members. A model for molding such an identity was outlined in the statutes (*Ustav*) of the Society of Zealots. These statutes were by no means unique: their clauses were similar to the regulations of the existing learned societies. Moreover, Golenishchev-Kutuzov, who wrote the *Ustav* simultaneously with the *Zapiska*, mentioned in his letters to Count Sergei Dmitrievich Sheremetev the names of those particular societies whose statutes served as examples for him: the Free Economic Society (*Vol'noe ekonomicheskoe obshchestvo*), the Society of the Lovers of Russian Literature (*Obshchestvo liubitelei rossiiskoi slovesnosti*) and, especially, the Society of the Lovers of Ancient Literature (*Obshchestvo liubitelei drevnei pis'mennosti*), which Sheremetev himself had headed since 1888.²⁴ On the other hand, the statutes of the Zealots also resembled the regulations of cultural and educational societies which appeared later, after temporary rules on societies and associations had been issued by the government in 1906.²⁵ The statutes of the Society of Zealots were, however, more detailed, which is precisely why a close reading of their *Ustav* is so revealing.
- 10 The statutes envisaged the Society of Zealots as a voluntary but disciplined organization, based not only on its members' free desire to contribute, but also on solid financial foundations, sophisticated methods of control, and a carefully thought-out structure. Significantly, the statutes imposed no explicit restrictions on membership. A future

member, it was implied, was supposed to share the society's aims, but there were no educational or professional requirements, nor any limitations based on social status, religion, nationality or gender. On joining the society, members were eligible to take part in the meetings of the society, to participate in the elections to the society's offices and to be informed of the state of its budget. Imposition of assignments on the society's members was subject to their agreement. The desire of local members of the society, and the agreement of the local authorities, were presented as preconditions for opening a local branch of the society. The statutes, therefore, invented its membership as a network of participation, cooperation, and feedback.²⁶

- 11 Nonetheless, the same structure could easily be transformed from a channel of cooperation into a means of subordination and restraint: it was as divisive as it was cohesive, and as exclusive as it was inclusive. Thus, the lack of preliminary conditions for joining the society meant also a lack of clear-cut criteria for accepting new members, which in practice depended on the preferences of the society's managing body – its council. The members of the society were divided according to their membership status: “full members” (*deistvitel'nye chleny*), “corresponding members” (*chleny-sotrudniki*) and “honorary members” (*pochëtnye chleny*). At the top of the membership hierarchy were the founders (*uchrediteli*) – the twelve people who had founded the society, set up its council and become the society's first full members. Other full members were to be elected by the council from among candidates proposed by the chairman or by three members of the council. The same principle of selection from above characterized the process of designating honorary members.
- 12 The different ranks of membership were expressed in different rights and duties. Only full members could participate in the society's meetings with a right to vote, while corresponding members had the right to speak at the meetings, but not vote, and honorary members were to be “invited to participate in the Society's general meetings, but remain free from any duty.”²⁷ Full members also had more opportunities for active participation: they could enroll (*pripisat'sia*) into one of the society's three departments (the historical, publishing or executive department).²⁸ The full members could be charged by the council with managing libraries and reading rooms, organizing discussions and meetings, and issuing and distributing the society's publications.²⁹ They were also granted the right “to make written proposals regarding what they thought was useful for the society.”³⁰ In the case of corresponding members, the statutes did not designate any specific responsibilities or spheres of activity, while honorary members were not obliged to fulfill any duties at all. Despite these differences in rights and obligations, there was a noteworthy common denominator among all members: they did not have the right to elect the council of the society.
- 13 The council would determine its own composition (*sam obrazuet svoi sostav*) – in other words, it would be formed by the founders of the society. In the future, the statutes assumed rotation among the council members and the cooptation of new associates into this upper body. Every three years one member of the council, who would be chosen by drawing lots (*po zhrebiiu*), would be replaced by a new one, selected from the list of the full members. This procedure was characterized by meticulous attention to its formal aspects, on the one hand, and the deliberate exclusion of any element of competition between candidates, on the other. Not only did chance determine which member would be removed from the council, but there was only one candidate to replace him. This procedure may have been intended to reduce personal conflicts, painful choices and

possible arguments among the members, and, consequently, to strengthen the role of the council and its chairman. The council's preeminent role in determining the society's personal composition constituted only one aspect of its power. In practice, the statutes endowed this body with overarching authority in all spheres of the society's activity. Its fields of responsibility included establishing the society's new institutions and opening its new branches; controlling its financial operations; and even, if necessary, preparing suggestions for changing the statutes of the society. With such a wide scope of responsibilities, the council not only had the ability to maintain the proposed procedural frameworks but also had the potential to change "the rules of the game." At the same time, the statutes suggested that the council should inform the general meetings in advance of the most important matters "in order to utilize the personal opinions and diligence of the Society's members."³¹ In some (mainly financial) cases, the general meeting had to confirm the council's decisions.

- 14 The same interplay between authoritative and corporative components was reflected in the statutes' perception of the functions of chairpersons, including the chairman of the society, the chairmen of the local branches and the chairs of the departments.³² While giving the chairmen broad authority, the statutes also presented a scrupulously elaborated election procedure for the position of chair at the different levels based on the common principle of election from among the members of the society and secret ballots, but with variances in the period of tenure.³³ Since they were elected by their peers, chairpersons had to be accountable to them, being obliged to report on their activities not only to the council of the society but also to a meeting of the members at the appropriate level.³⁴ Combined with the regular reports to the council by the secretary and treasurer, this type of accountability included elements of both bureaucratic subordination and peer control. The conception of the Society of Zealots, as it emerges from the statutes, contained, therefore, an intrinsic contradiction. On the one hand, the society was based on the principle of free will, electiveness, and accountability. On the other hand, the principle of hierarchy was no less characteristic of its organizational structure.
- 15 The society's official documents demonstrate that it duly adhered to the principles of electiveness and accountability in its daily routine. Protocols of the council's meetings recorded regular elections of its full and corresponding members as well as heads of its departments and local branches.³⁵ They also indicated that the meetings of the society, its departments and local branches were held with sufficient frequency.³⁶ In due time (in November 1904), the council of the society reminded its members that the nine-year term of the society's chairman and his deputy had come to an end and hence new elections had to be arranged.³⁷ Discussions on the society's publications, on the opening of its libraries and on contests and awards announced by the society reflected its intensive activity.³⁸ Regular confirmations and acknowledgments of the exchange of published materials between the Zealots and other learned and educational societies as well as ongoing communication among these bodies revealed the existence of a rich network of voluntary associations and the lively working relations among them.³⁹ The Society of Zealots was part and parcel of an associational world which, although sanctioned by and interacting with governmental bodies, lived according to its own self-imposed rules and procedures. It had its own hierarchy different from the official estates and rank system; and this world was intended to be open for any person to join.

- 16 Data on the Zealots' membership show that this society was indeed inclusive. It admitted women to its ranks: in 1900 there were 153 women among the 946 registered Zealots.⁴⁰ Women participated actively in establishing and maintaining the society's libraries; they were welcomed by its publishing department as translators. Moreover, women were represented in the society's commissions and committees. Nadezhda Sergeevna Timasheva, a corresponding member of the society, eventually became a member of the society's important committee responsible for publishing *Starina i novizna*, the anthology (*sbornik*) of historical materials issued twice a year.⁴¹ Women – E.P. Sheremeteva and I.I. Sheremeteva, A.P. Sipiagina and A.S. Saburova – constituted half of the members of the special commission on preparing a catalogue of literature for the society's libraries. As emphasized in the society's documents, E.P. Sheremeteva made a major contribution to producing this catalogue.⁴² However, all the women who participated in the society's elected bodies were related to the Zealots' leading male members. Furthermore, not all members of the society saw such signs of gender equality as beneficial to the society. Thus, an organizer of its Moscow branch, I.F. Tiutchev (the son of the famous poet), mentioned in one of his letters that he did not rely too much on the society's "ladies' (*damskii*) element": women, he believed, were capable of deeds of pure charity, but hardly suited to a task such as the Zealots took upon themselves.⁴³ Perhaps because of such doubts one of the Zealots' subsequent official documents stated that the society was interested in admitting new members of both sexes, without any limitations in regard to their status (*polozhenie*), but with concern for their ability to contribute.⁴⁴ Moreover, as follows from the rather cumbersome title of the manuscript submitted to the council of the society by a priest, Simeon Dmitrievich Pospelov – "On the mission of the Russian woman in the field of public activity in the spirit of the Orthodoxy" (*O missii russkoi zhenshchiny na pochve obshchestvennoi deiatel'nosti v dukhe pravoslavnykh nachal*) – the Zealots sought to reconcile women's new public role with the traditional status of women prescribed by the Orthodox church.⁴⁵ It is also interesting that, although emphasizing the Russian and Orthodox character of the society, the Zealots were proud to admit the Emir of Bukhara and some of his high officials – all of them Muslims – to their ranks.⁴⁶
- 17 The society's membership comprised on apparently equal footing the scions of the most noble families (the Sheremetevs, Golitsyns, Iusupovs, Viazemskii), wealthy merchants and industrialists (Aleksei Bakhrushin and Ivan Rukavishnikov), along with provincial nobles, petty *chinovniki* and clerics from all levels of the church hierarchy, including numerous village priests. What is most striking, however, is the presence among the members of the society of people who might be seen as border-crossers, such as a former revolutionary, Lev Tikhomirov, who became one of the most devoted ideologists of the monarchy; a former university professor, Sergei A. Rachinskii, who left Moscow to become the founder of a village school; a former successful *chinovnik* Iosif Fudel, who had abandoned his promising career in order to be a priest (at the time he joined the society he served in that capacity at the Moscow transit [Butyrskaiia] prison); and last but not least, an ethnic German, converted Protestant and future leader of the Black Hundreds, Vladimir Gringmut.⁴⁷ Joining the Society of Zealots – and, in the cases of Rachinskii and Tikhomirov, attaining eminent status amongst its members – might be seen as part of a quest for a new identity instead of the one that they so radically rejected. Does this mean that the Society of Zealots might be regarded as one of the social institutions where the *vnesoslovnyi* collective identity of the *obshchestvennyi deiatel'* – in the case of the Zealots, of overwhelmingly conservative and nationalist thrust – was molded? Its rules, procedures,

and membership composition suggest that this was indeed the case. However, the picture becomes more complicated if we shift the focus from the society's regulations and official procedures to its practices and forms of sociability.

The Zealots in the mirror of sociability

- 18 Following Daniel Gordon's definition, the term sociability is employed here in the sense of "a mode of exchange free of the ritualistic constraints of corporate hierarchy" or "egalitarian interaction among individuals with different corporate standing," where egalitarianism is limited, however, to the sociable environment that produces it. Delineating sociability as "a system of coordination for people who had stepped out from the hierarchy of estates in search of less ontologically grounded forms of interaction," Gordon examined models of associational activity in eighteenth-century France.⁴⁸ But can this notion help us to grasp the specific nature of associational life in late-nineteenth-century Russia?
- 19 An examination of the Zealots' way of "stepping out" from their legally defined statuses toward the ideal of being members of a "like-minded harmonious family" reveals that interaction within the society, despite its reciprocal and formally equal character, did not produce "comradely relations" (*tovarishcheskie otnosheniia*).⁴⁹ Rather, it generated a combination of new formalized connections of membership with pre-existing or newly created bonds of kinship, friendship or patronage. Despite (or, probably, because of) the formalized election and rotation procedure, the same person – Sheremetev – served as head of the society throughout its existence, while the core of the society's leadership consisted of people connected to him by personal links.⁵⁰ The informal communications within this cliquish group underlay the Zealots' official deliberations. Thus, the formal election of new heads of the societies' departments in 1901 was preceded by an exchange of letters between Sheremetev and his friend, relative and one of the cofounders of the society, D.S. Sipiagin. "I suggest Chechulin as head of the Historical Department," wrote Sheremetev. "[...] With regard to the head of the Publishing Department, it might be Khrushchëv. In the land of the blind the one-eyed man is king (*na bezryb'e i rak ryba*), if we do not proceed the situation will be even worse. Khrushchëv is free now, he is looking for a post (*ishchet dolzhnosti*) [...] He is very familiar with publishing matters. What do you say about it?"⁵¹ The dialogue, according to Sipiagin's note, was supposed to be continued during a subsequent meeting between them and we do not know what Sipiagin's answer was. In any event, both N.D. Chechulin and I.P. Khrushchëv were elected in December 1901 as heads of the corresponding departments via strictly formal procedures, each of them competing against two other candidates.⁵² On another occasion a frustrated member of the society, a high-ranking official and amateur historian, S.S. Tatishchev, noted that Sheremetev's message of displeasure with his, Tatishchev's, fulfillment of the society's assignment, had been conveyed to him via Sheremetev's close associate N.P. Barsukov. One of three brothers, who were historians, archivists and fellow-Zealots, Barsukov acted in this situation not as the society's functionary, but as Sheremetev's proxy (*doverennoe lits*).⁵³
- 20 Indeed, belonging to the Society of Zealots provided myriad opportunities for seeking support and protection which extended far behind the boundaries of this particular voluntary association. Thus, in a letter to Sheremetev in July 1897 on the society's

libraries, I.P. Barsukov, N.P. Barsukov's brother, included a request to help him obtain the post of supervisor of the Palace Archives (*mesto zavedyvaiushchego Dvortsovymi arkhivami*).

Oh, if only you, Your Excellency, would help me gain a position that I have been waiting for so long! You would be doing a truly good deed, because you would thereby rescue me by extricating me from the Ksenievskii Institute, where I feel like a fish out of water, and where I have perforce found myself for a while.⁵⁴

- 21 Similarly, Chechulin, during his ongoing correspondence with Sheremetev about *Starina i novizna*, asked the powerful Count to help him obtain an appointment to the position of deputy director of the Imperial Public Library.⁵⁵ Chechulin continued approaching Sheremetev with requests of support even after he left his voluntary service as head of the society's historical department in 1915 and became a *popechitel'* of the Vil'na educational district.⁵⁶ At this stage Chechulin requested help not only for himself, but also on behalf of his protégé. His letters provide a graphic illustration of how "patronage schemes" were supposed to work. Thus, in January 1917 Chechulin asked Sheremetev "to provide some assistance" (*okazat' neкое sodeistvie*) to his acquaintance, Baron Boris Borisovich Klodt von Iurensburg, a chief clerk (*deloproizvoditel'*) at the Ministry of Education. The latter, wrote Chechulin, had requested that he assist him in gaining an appointment (*sposobstvovat' ego naznacheniiu*) as a corresponding member at the Imperial Archeographic Commission headed by Sheremetev. Chechulin formulated his appeal with remarkable candor:

He is a very good man, and I would be very glad to fulfill his request (*mne bylo by ves'ma priiatno pros'bu ego udovetvorit'*). I will not conceal from you, dear Count Sergei Dmitrievich, that he has no connection to scholarship, or to archeography in particular; this appointment is important to him for obtaining the rank of *statskii sovetnik*. But he nonetheless might to some extent be useful for the Commission in some issues connected to the Ministry of Education, in which he undertakes to provide all possible assistance. I have every reason to think that he will indeed be helpful at times. This gives me the courage to beg that you regard his appointment as a member of the commission favorably. I have already discussed this matter with Sergei Fedorovich Platonov and Vasilii Grigor'evich Druzhinin, and have taken the liberty of approaching you after consulting them.⁵⁷

- 22 Based on personal relationships, the hidden command and patronage structure of the society had, however, a particular *soslovie* dimension: personal bonds presumed belonging to the same milieu, which in the Zealots' case meant, essentially, belonging to the nobility.
- 23 Alongside its salient paternalistic tendency, the Zealots' mode of sociability reveals a distinct style of behavior. The special significance of etiquette and decorum in the Russian cultural context has been explored in the works of Lotman and more recent studies of Catriona Kelly; it is significant, therefore, that the accepted pattern of interaction among the Zealots was based on noble etiquette animated by the language of mission and devotion.⁵⁸ Both the minute details of the society's daily routine and the ways it dealt with internal conflicts attested that despite the egalitarian stance of their statutes, the Zealots' code of behavior reflected the norms of noble courtesy. This means that while having an opportunity to communicate in what Gordon terms "a mode of exchange free of the ritualistic constraints of corporate hierarchy," as formally equal members of a voluntary society, the Zealots adhered to the manners associated with the particular noble *soslovie*. To some extent, this was entirely natural for a body that was conceived during "soirées" held at the residence of Count Golenishchev-Kutuzov on prestigious Admiralty Embankment in St. Petersburg, and whose offices and meetings

were hosted in Count Sheremetev's palace on Fontanka, 34 – the famous *Fontannyi Dom*.⁵⁹ Such an arrangement was anything but unique: one can recall Nabokov's colorful description of the Kadet party leadership's meetings in his father's fashionable home on Great Morskaya Street, and some recent studies have paid special attention to the role of private salons as frameworks for the consolidation of political *kruzhki* and pre-party organizations of that time.⁶⁰ Although the location was chosen partly for reasons of expediency, it inevitably added a touch of conviviality to the supposedly formal events, and helped to wrap even the fiercest arguments in the cloak of kindness and hospitality. A striking example is provided by an exchange of letters between Sheremetev and Tatishchev at a time when they were deeply divided over an issue that was of supreme importance to both men and to the society as a whole: publication of the biography of Alexander III, which Tatishchev had written under the supervision of the Society of Zealots. Deeply insulted by Sheremetev's intervention in his work, Tatishchev did not hesitate to reprimand him for interfering in "the writer's creative freedom" (*svobodnoe tvorchestvo pisatel'ia*) and reminded Sheremetev that "non-independent historical work would be of no value and significance." The same letter, however, was replete with reminiscences about the pleasure of attending Sheremetev's hospitable home, where the manuscript (which finally remained unpublished) had been presented to and discussed by the Zealots.⁶¹

- 24 Significantly, the prevailing norms of noble etiquette in the Zealots' interpersonal relations did not have an exclusionary effect. The society's everyday activities provided multiple opportunities for its members from diverse social origins to become accustomed to these norms, which, in turn, helped them to overcome *soslovnye* barriers. The society's socialization function is reflected in a letter from Rachinskii concerning his former pupil, a peasant artist, Nikolai Bogdanov-Bel'skii, who joined the Society of Zealots in 1898. Rachinskii expressed his cordial appreciation for Sheremetev's attention to the young man and, while mentioning gratefully Sheremetev's commission of Bogdanov-Bel'skii's paintings, also referred to the importance of admitting someone from his background into Sheremetev's close circle:

You understand the danger that lies in transferring a boy from the peasant environment to the artistic and fashionable milieu. But in this case, he is evidently helped by God's grace – among others, through you.⁶²

- 25 The prevalence of the norms of noble etiquette was not unique, of course, to this particular voluntary association. As indicated in recent research, an alternative standard of polite behavior had not yet emerged among the Russian cultural elite even though it already included representatives of different *sosloviia*.⁶³ Therefore, mixed social groupings of *literati*, irrespective of their ideological affiliation, tended to follow the etiquette of noble behavior, which had a certain stabilizing and integrating effect. Probably the most paradoxical example of the predominance of this code of behavior was provided by Sheremetev in one of his last letters to an old friend, S.F. Platonov, the best-known historian among the Zealots, written in February 1918. While describing the expropriation of his family property, the old Count added ironically: "Lunacharskii's behavior toward me was quite proper in the matter of the requisition (*byl so mnoiu korrekten v dele rekvizitsii*). An aesthete (*éстет*)!"⁶⁴
- 26 Yet, in the Zealots' case the primacy of noble patterns of behavior was not limited to adherence to the norms of politeness. Not only might a council session be canceled when, for example, one of its members, N.A. Zverev, informed his colleagues that he "*ne*

vyezshaet” on that day, or when it coincided with the Sheremetevs’ “*priëmnyi den*,” but the entire timetable of the society’s sessions was adapted to the calendar of noble life.⁶⁵ The statutes assumed a long break in the Zealots’ meetings in the period between March and October, when noble families habitually moved from the capital cities to their *imeniia*. This did not mean, however, that the society ceased its activity for six months every year. Rather, the stay in the *imenie* provided opportunities for engaging in other kinds of the society’s activities, such as exploring the estates’ archives and establishing public libraries in the estates or nearby villages. These undertakings expanded the scope of associational practice but also placed an emphasis on the leading role of local landlords. Belonging to a voluntary society, in these cases, placed them in a position of cultural leadership and, consequently, strengthened their *soslovnyi* status.

Associationalism and *soslovnost*

- 27 The predominance of the noble code of behavior and the estate-oriented chronotope of the society’s activities suggest that in the case of the Zealots (and, probably, in some other cases) voluntary associations provided an institutional framework not only for creating new social arrangements, but also for preserving the existing ones. If so, did the quest for new ways of restoring the nobility’s cultural leadership in a period when its political influence and economic dominance were being seriously challenged mean also subscribing to the idea of *soslovnost*’ as such, even though this notion was absent from the society’s founding *Zapiska*? Some of the Zealots’ practices confirm this assumption.
- 28 Thus, in 1898 the society launched its program of special awards for historical studies on Alexander III’s reign. The list of recommended topics included, *inter alia*, “The Restoration and Strengthening of the Estate Principle in Russia’s Governmental Practice (*Vosstanovlenie i ukreplenie soslovnogo nachala v gosudarstvennoi zhizni Rossii*).” In particular, it was suggested that candidates write about changes in the local administrations and the introduction of *zemskie nachal’niki* (land captains) as well as the *krest’ianskoe delo* in 1881-1894 and the struggle against the 1891-1892 famine.⁶⁶ The special attention paid to the particular *soslovnyi* dimension of contemporary public life can also be discerned in the society’s publishing practice. While aiming its publications at two different audiences – “developed readers” and the *narod*, it actually applied the latter term to literate peasants, or, as Khrushchëv defined them, *sel’skie gramotniki*.⁶⁷ The Zealots thus transformed the ideologically constructed *narod* of the society’s founding memorandum into a *soslovie*-bound peasantry. Moreover, the society’s main organ, *Starina i novizna*, which was intended for the “developed readers,” became a kind of tribune for presenting the nobility as a leading estate. Initially, it had been intended to publish both “original documents” and articles relating to the period of Alexander III.⁶⁸ Eventually, however, the society’s commission responsible for issuing *Starina i novizna* began publishing materials from the archives of individual noble families. A precedent was created when the collection of Rachinskii’s family materials were published as a special supplement to *Starina i novizna* under the title *Tatevskii sbornik*.⁶⁹ Rachinskii drew the attention of the society’s council to the potential that private archives offered the society, “which – he claimed – by its very composition included representatives of the families that played a prominent role in Russia’s political and intellectual life.”⁷⁰
- 29 Despite the neutrality of the term “family materials”, the element of *soslovnost*’ embedded in such publications was obvious both to editors of the anthology and to its readers.

Moreover, in the atmosphere of the late 1890s such publications were interpreted as a political statement. This nuance was underlined by a member of *Starina i novizna's* editorial commission, N.P. Barsukov: "You are participating in a difficult endeavor," he wrote to Sheremetev in 1897, when the first issue of the anthology was published. "It is difficult because it is uncertain and very unpopular. Just remember the enthusiasm and unanimity with which the noble way of life was destroyed forty years ago! [...] And, most important: how few remain of those who are noble according to their feelings, rules and actions (*Kak malo ostalos' dvorian po chuvstvam, pravilam, deistviiam*) [...]."

30 In addition to the transparent hint at the allegedly anti-noble policy of Alexander II's early years, Barsukov also pointed to internal discussions about the nature of the anthology when he noted that "despite Tikhomirov's assertion that *Starina i novizna* might be interesting only for specialists, it has already attracted, and will attract even more, the attention of people from all estates (*liudei vsekhn soslovii*)."⁷¹ Indeed, a year later the same Barsukov sent Sheremetev a list of provincial marshals of the nobility who expressed their desire to join the Zealots; all of them, he believed, could be "useful and decent" members of the society.⁷² Later, in 1902, when local branches of the society were established, a conference of marshals and delegates of the nobility from Tula *guberniia* decided to award Tula's branch of the Zealots with a 300-ruble grant intended for any of the society's needs.⁷³

31 The political significance of the Zealots' adherence to the principle of *soslovnost'* increased when Sipiagin, one of the most active members of the society, became Minister of Interior in 1900. Sipiagin was identified with the *soslovie*-oriented tendency of governmental policy: V.I. Gurko in his well-known memoirs characterized him as "a representative of the old Russian gentry (*barstvo*)" who in the early twentieth century still viewed Russia as a patrimony (*votchina*) that "should be governed paternalistically (*otcheski*) by the Russian Tsar."⁷⁴ A.A. Kizevetter's sarcastic description of Sipiagin's policy unintentionally but unmistakably echoed the Zealots' views:

Assigning to the landowning nobility a privileged position in all fields of the state's life and subjecting all other segments and groups of the population to the nobility as the ruling class were now declared to be the historical distinctiveness of the Russian way of life. Efforts were made to present the policy of "counter-reforms" as a return to the national traditions of pre-Petrine Moscow olden times (*starina*) [...] Liberal fantasies were proclaimed a leprosy brought from foreign lands, while retrograde politics was declared to be traditional Russian wisdom.⁷⁵

32 The notions of associationalism and *soslovnost'* became interwoven in a very distinctive manner in what the Zealots saw as the society's most successful enterprise, namely, the establishment and maintenance of its network of free public libraries. From 1898, the society invested considerable money and human resources in establishing such libraries in different regions of the Russian Empire, including the most remote ones; in spring 1903, for example, the council of the society approved opening a library at the Algachinsk convict prison in Siberia.⁷⁶ Most of its libraries, however, were located in the rural areas of central and western guberniias. Through its tireless efforts to establish rural public libraries, the Society of Zealots took part in the vigorous public movement initiated in 1893-1895 by the St. Petersburg Committee of Literacy. The participation of numerous educational societies, committees as well as village communities and, especially, *zemstva* in establishing rural libraries made this movement an impressive example of joint associational activity. One of the most devoted supporters of establishing such libraries, V.P. Vakhterov, noted in 1896 the considerable increase in their number – about 300 as

compared with a few dozen in the early 1890s.⁷⁷ By 1898 there were already more than 3,000 public libraries in 34 *zemskie gubernii*s, and their number had risen to 4,500 by 1904.⁷⁸

- 33 The Zealots published statistics of their own libraries only until 1904; according to these data, they founded 81 libraries between 1898 and 1902. Since this was the period in which there was the greatest increase in the number of rural libraries, the Zealots' project was very timely. The reports of the society's executive department show that its libraries were well attended. Thus, in 1901, according to the statistical reports submitted by 29 of the society's libraries, these libraries were attended by 10,795 readers who had borrowed 19,429 items (books and journals); two thirds of the readers were adults, and one third were adolescents.⁷⁹ Rachinskii wrote about the particular popularity of the library opened on the society's behalf at his school in Glukhov by a former pupil, the artist Bogdanov-Bel'skii.⁸⁰ A provincial educator and local historian (*kraeved*), Valerii Liaskovskii, enthusiastically welcomed the society's libraries as a "direct educational aid for the peasantry."⁸¹
- 34 The Zealots' libraries turned out to be a durable enterprise: the last time they were mentioned was in a letter from Sheremetev to Platonov in May 1918. The libraries were still operating, but Sheremetev was worried that they were being targeted by the new government.⁸² Yet, while the libraries exemplified the society's affiliation with the associational movement, they also revealed the distinctiveness of the Zealots' policies. Whereas such public bodies as the Committees of Literacy or F.F. Pavlenko's endowment endeavored to encourage cooperation with *zemstva* and other agencies in the case of each particular library, the Society of Zealots strove to establish libraries independently and to retain complete control of their collections and staff.⁸³ Only full members of the society were allowed to open libraries on its behalf. The society's rules on its public libraries (written by Sipiagin) assumed no cooperation with any other bodies, while the policy of its executive department encouraged the society's members to provide newly opened libraries with appropriate premises and give them private financial support.⁸⁴ As a result, the majority of the libraries were located in or near the estates of their landowning members, who were personally responsible for their supervision and subsidizing. The society's rules did allow a library's day-to-day administration to be transferred to a substitute with proved qualifications; usually it was a local priest. Presumably, there was a certain connection between the local priests' personal involvement in the Zealots' libraries and the call to the Russian clergy to take part in the society's activities announced by the Church's official weekly, *Tserkovnye vedomosti*, in 1901.⁸⁵
- 35 The predominance of local landowners and clergy in the supervision of the society's libraries meant that they had acquired control over an important channel of the peasants' extracurricular education. The Zealots employed this channel skillfully. The carefully chosen literature collected in accordance with the society's compulsory, meticulously compiled catalogues projected a particular vision of a literate but traditionally minded Russian peasant. A vivid example of this ideal image can be found in a report of the executive department, which described a peasant who borrowed books from the library of Countess N.N. Meshcherskaia located in the village of Khot'kovo in Sychevsk *uezd*, Smolensk *guberniia* in order to read them aloud at *posidelki* (peasants' leisure gatherings):

In so doing, he read 12 volumes of Karamzin's *Istoriia gosudarstva rossiiskogo* [History of the Russian State], 28 volumes of the journal *Dosug i delo* [Leisure and Work], 20

volumes of *Troitskie listki* [Troitsk Leaflets] and 10 volumes of the *Bog pomoshch'* [God's Help] supplement to *Sel'skii vestnik* [Village Messenger].⁸⁶

- 36 This image of a peasant who borrowed books from the library of the enlightened Countess and read volumes of historical writings and moralistic journals at traditional *posidelki* was in stark contrast to the vision of the liberal leaders of the library movement, who saw libraries as transmitters of social progress intended to renew rural life.⁸⁷ Nonetheless, this image reflected the Zealots' notion of rural libraries as a buttress against social change and a channel for safeguarding the traditional way of life including, they believed, the component of *soslovnost'* adapted to the modern era.⁸⁸ That, however, was *soslovnost'* in a cultural and social, rather than a legal sense. The conservative Zealots' perception of *soslovnost'* as a primarily cultural phenomenon might be among the first signs of what Freeze defined as the reconceptualization of *sosloviia* as *kul'turno-bytovye gruppy* or "social groups defined by their subculture and peculiar life styles."⁸⁹ This approach was clearly articulated by Sheremetev in his *Zapiska* on establishing special institutions for noble girls (an additional project of his, not related directly to the Society of Zealots). While claiming that "it cannot be doubted that education as such should not be a privilege of any single estate (*soslovie*)," he also insisted on the necessity of preserving the estate principle (*soslovnoe nachalo*) in the school system.⁹⁰ Some years later, in 1905, Golenishchev-Kutuzov put it even more plainly at the Peterhof Conference (*Petergofskoe soveshchanie*) when he referred to the nobility and peasantry as *bytovye* rather than juridical groups, which "despite the laws that smooth out the borders dividing them, remain fully organized, united not only by their material interests, but also for the sake of more fundamental spiritual (*dukhovnye*) ideals."⁹¹
- 37 "Soslovnost' as mentalité," as Freeze defined it, was intrinsic, therefore, to the Zealots' concepts and practice.⁹²

Associational life and multifaceted identities

- 38 Did the salient features of paternalism, patronage and noble etiquette within the society, together with the Zealots' attempts to contribute to a revitalization of *soslovnost'* in their activities, nullify the society's egalitarian stance? This was not necessarily the case. Rather, there was constant tension between formalized equality and the *soslovie*-bound code of behavior, between the formal structure and personal ties, and, essentially, between old hereditary and new voluntary, ideology-driven frames of social grouping. There was also an opportunity to choose which norms or rules should or might be employed in each particular situation. Furthermore, the very format of a voluntary association made it possible to discuss, interpret and re-interpret the society's goals and to negotiate the directions of its activity, which eventually led to disputes about the meaning of its fundamental ideological precepts, presented in the Zealots' programmatic memorandum as "Russian principles." The Zealots' heated arguments about the nature of Russianness contributed to problematizing the most complex of collective identities – the national one (a topic that merits special investigation in another article).
- 39 This freedom of choice and interpretation created some serious conflicts in the society: contrary to the initial expectations, it was anything but a "harmonious family." Thus, Tiutchev, who was asked personally by Sheremetev to organize the society's Moscow branch, was shocked to discover that some participants of the founding session had taken the election rules literally and proposed another candidate for a post he had been invited

to assume. Tiutchev described this unpleasant incident in a letter to Sheremetev: “Gringmut, Tikhomirov and priest Fudel attended the session and proposed V.K. Istomin for the post of chair; Gringmut excluded me completely from the list of the branch’s officials, while one of the others granted me the position of deputy chair (*zhaloval menia tovarishchem predsedatelia*).”⁹³ On another occasion the society’s council found itself in a real quandary when Golenishchev-Kutuzov, deeply impressed by the monarchist stance of Tikhomirov’s writings, proposed him as a candidate to the society’s governing body. In spite of the fact that from an ideological point of view Tikhomirov was “*plus royaliste que le roi*” and his devotion to the society’s program was unquestionable, the council rejected him because of his revolutionary past: “it was difficult to nominate (*vydvigat’*) a recent participant in the affair of 1 March 1881 as a guardian (*okhranitel’*) of our most cherished principles!” Sheremetev subsequently wrote.⁹⁴

- 40 On another occasion, a difference of opinion on an ideological issue regarding religious policy in the Western guberniias led to acute conflict, as a result of which one of the founding members, Prince Esper Esperovich Ukhtomskii, was forced to leave the society. This crisis arose despite the fact that Ukhtomskii belonged to the old Russian aristocracy (his family traced its lineage to the Rurik Dynasty), had previously served as Tsarevich Nicholas’s tutor on his Asian grand tour, which had led to friendly relations with the tsar, Nicholas II, and was the publisher and editor of the popular newspaper *Sankt-Peterburgskie vedomosti*.⁹⁵ But it was precisely such conflicts that demonstrated that membership in a voluntary association provided an opportunity not only for identifying with a new social grouping or for confirming pre-existing identification with older social frameworks, but also for developing a multifaceted identity. The Ukhtomskii affair was most revealing in this regard. Attacked by ultra-rightist members of the society for his newspaper’s criticism of the enforced Russification of the empire’s Polish subjects, Ukhtomskii wrote a number of letters in which he presented, alongside his ideological standpoint, a variety of self-perceptions. In a personal letter to Sheremetev, Ukhtomskii presented himself first and foremost as a noble Russian: “It is not for me to judge how many generations of various Gringmuts and company served Orthodoxy and Russia, but I am deeply and piously aware of my thousand-year-long ancestral connection, in spirit and blood, with those who founded, built and created our Motherland from the dawn of our historical life.”⁹⁶ In another, more official letter, Ukhtomskii presented himself as a supporter of conservative ideology and as an *obshchestvennyi deiatel’* (the latter with somewhat ironical overtones).⁹⁷ Then, deeply disappointed with the position of the society’s leadership, Ukhtomskii moved the emphasis from his estate status and ideological credo to his professional occupation. He declined an invitation to a meeting of the council on the pretext of his journalistic obligations and asked sarcastically that the matter of his expulsion be postponed until he had completed his editorial duties.⁹⁸ It is interesting that Ukhtomskii’s ability to maneuver among these various identities was accepted and, in a sense, confirmed by Golenishchev-Kutuzov, who wrote in response to another of Ukhtomskii’s letters:

Your letter has finally convinced me that there are two men inside you. One, my dear Esper Esperovich, whom I have known and loved for more than twenty years [...] This one is our co-member who – not for a moment do I doubt this – will remain as he has always been until his and our last days. And there is another one I hardly know – the editor of *Sankt-Peterburgskie vedomosti*, who changed the word “I” to “a group of people” in my first article and who wrote a sharp and unjust response not only about Gringmut (with whom he is hardly acquainted) but even about Tikhomirov (whom he has never seen!).⁹⁹

- 41 When accusing Ukhtomskii-the-editor, Golenishchev-Kutuzov used the term “our party” to describe the Zealots and their ideological allies; but he used the language of comradeship when he promised that Ukhtomskii’s friends would wait patiently until he changed his mind. Ukhtomskii did not waver and left the Society of Zealots; about ten years later he joined the Circle for Equal Rights and Brotherhood (*kruzhok ravnopravii i bratstva*), organized by I.I. Tolstoi.¹⁰⁰ Nonetheless, this victory of the Zealots’ radical members confronted the leadership of the society with a new dilemma: to become a political association or to continue functioning as a learned historical society. Sheremetev and his close circle chose the second path. As a result, a group of ultra-nationalists that emerged from within the ranks of the Zealots took part in launching a new voluntary association with an overwhelmingly political agenda: the Russian Assembly (*Russkoe sobranie*) which intended to become the first Russian ultra-monarchist party.¹⁰¹
- 42 As a result of this internal split, the Society of Zealots underwent what Sheremetev termed a certain “academization” which enabled those of its members who were (and perceived themselves as) amateur historians to obtain semi-professional status.¹⁰² This transformation can be seen, first and foremost, in the head of the society, Count Sheremetev, who had no professional training and, indeed, no formal higher education at all, but was deeply interested in history, collected, investigated and published historical documents, and was a devoted member of the Russian Historical Society. Sheremetev’s leading role in the Society of the Lovers of Ancient Literature, and his chairmanship of the Society of Zealots of Russian Historical Education gave him influence and created his reputation among the emerging community of historians. Still, he was very cautious with regard to official posts in the Academy of Sciences that were recurrently offered him, fearing that they could put him in an uncomfortable position. For the same reason Sheremetev had some initial doubts about the post of head of the Archeographic Commission which he finally assumed in 1900. Sheremetev shared his personal doubts and deliberations with his collaborators in both societies – the Lovers and the Zealots, and as illustrated by a letter written by Nikolai Barsukov, they tried to support him:
- You have not the slightest reason to reject [this offer]. You have always been interested in the Archeographic Commission, and now you will be a supervisor of this secluded place where the sources of Russian History are hidden (*taitsia*). The members of the Commission are more or less known to you. They are either the Lovers (*liubiteli*) or the Zealots (*revniteli*), and all of them want to have you as their chair. This is not like being a vice-president in the Academy.¹⁰³
- 43 This letter reflects the perception of history as a field of expertise, and the historical profession as a community of experts before it became stringently connected with a certain type of formal education. At the same time, the figure of Count Sheremetev – a courtier, a noble, a conservative nationalist, a powerful patron, an activist in the associational movement and a historian – personifies the phenomenon of multifaceted identities as it had been developing in late Imperial Russia.

Conclusion

- 44 The “triangular” model of society proposed by Ernest Gellner might be useful for understanding the particular structure of Russian society under the old regime, in which state-constructed *sosloviia* coexisted with archaic *obshchiny* on the one hand and modern

obshchestva (voluntary associations) on the other. According to this model, there are three basic types of social order: (1) “the segmentary communities,” where “the roles are generally conceived and defined in kin terms, and may in fact frequently be filled in terms of the kin positions of their occupants,” and where “political, economic, ritual, kin and other kinds of obligations are superimposed on each other;” (2) “centralization which grinds into the dust all subsidiary social institutions or sub-communities, whether ritually stifling or not;” and (3) “a cluster of associations” which might be joined and left freely, while unsanctified, instrumental, temporal links between their members create a flexible, adjustable and responsive network of civil society.¹⁰⁴ Gellner assumed that the effective functioning of voluntary associations would eventually produce “modular man,” who is capable of combining into “effective associations and institutions, without these being total, many-stranded, underwritten by ritual, and made stable through being linked to a whole set of relationships, all of these being tied in with each other and so immobilized. He can combine into specific-purpose, *ad hoc*, limited associations, without binding himself by some blood ritual. He can leave an association when he comes to disagree with its policy without being open to the charge of treason.”¹⁰⁵ The associational life of late Imperial Russia rarely provides examples of modular men in Gellner’s sense. In the distinctive Russian social context, voluntary associations were still deeply interconnected with both estate and state structures and were permeated by strands of patronage and etiquettes of “polite society.” Nonetheless, the development of these associations contributed to the growing flexibility and diversity of the Russian social body. By providing a kind of institutionalized framework for those social groupings that emerged within or beyond the legally defined divisions of society, voluntary associations were conducive both to the creation of new social arrangements and to the preservation and refashioning of the existing ones that were threatened by the new developments. They thus facilitated an increasing variety and sophistication of the existing collective identities.

- 45 Although the phenomenon of multifaceted identities was unable to prevent the exacerbating social crisis and the events of 1917, its significance was salient in the course of that crisis. When revolution canceled both legally defined and socially recognized statuses, it was the less structured, still ambiguous professional identity and the corresponding network of interpersonal connections that proved to be resilient. Sheremetev’s personal story provides a striking example. In September 1918, the Union of the Members of the Petrograd Archaeological Institution appealed to the commissar of Education of the Petrograd Labor Commune, Anatolii Lunacharskii, to give certificates of protection to the honorary members of the Institute, “*gr. Sergeiu Dmitrievichu Sheremetevu*” and “*gr. Pavlu Sergeevichu Sheremetevu*.” The abbreviation *gr.* which had previously been used to designate the Sheremetevs’ title of Count (*graf*), and here designated citizen (*grazhdanin*), might have appeared confusing in this document, which presented the former Count as a well-known researcher of ancient Russian history, and his son as the author of valuable historical monographs on Russia’s cultural treasures. The commissar of Education responded favorably (and promptly) to this appeal, and issued the necessary certificate. In his reply, Lunacharskii also corrected the appeal’s ambiguity, writing that “*grazhdane Sergei Dmitrievich i Pavel Dmitrievich Sheremetevy*” were well known to him personally as “reliable workers” (*nadëzhnye rabotniki*), and asked the revolutionary authorities to provide them with all possible support (*okazyvat’ vsiacheskoe sodeistvie*).¹⁰⁶

46 This attempt to ascribe to the former Count the status of *rabotnik* – which was advantageous under the new hierarchy – accorded with the Bolshevik policy of “ascribing class,” but also radically contradicted its logic, which labeled all *byvshie* as bourgeois and, in so doing, produced what Sheila Fitzpatrick defined as a new, Stalinist *soslovnost*.¹⁰⁷ Yet there was a certain continuity with the previous practices: once again, but now at a much more crucial moment, personal connections and the ability to contribute to a public enterprise became the important factors in establishing one’s social status. It was freedom of choice that disappeared: the appearance of a new designation, that of “reliable worker,” heralded the era of one-dimensional, not modular, man.

NOTES

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Vladimir Nabokov, “Drugie berega,” in *Sobranie sochinennii v chetyrëkh tomakh*, vol. 4 (M.: Izd. Pravda, 1990), 240.

2. B.V. Nikol’skii, “Iz dnevnika” in *Sokrushit’ kramolu* (M.: Institut Russkoi tsivilizatsii, 2009), 92.

3. B.V. Nikol’skii, “Iz dnevnika”, 79, 187; R.V. Ivanov-Razumnik, “Chto takoe intelligentsiia?” in *Istoriia russkoi obshchestvennoi mysli*, vol. I (SPb.: Tipografiia M.M. Stasiulevicha, 1911), 3-20.

4. Michael Confino, “The Soslovie (Estate) Paradigm: Reflections on Some Open Questions,” *Cahiers du Monde russe*, 49, 4 (Oct.-Dec. 2008): 681-699. The discussion on *soslovie* as a paradigm of historical research was opened by Gregory L. Freeze, “The Soslovie (Estate) Paradigm and Russian Social History,” *American Historical Review*, 91, 1 (Feb. 1986): 11-36; it was developed further by Abbott Gleason, “The Terms of Russian Social History,” and Alfred J. Rieber, “The Sedimentary Society,” in Edith W. Clowes, Samuel D. Kassow and James L. West, eds., *Between Tsar and People: Educated Society and the Quest for Public Identity in Late Imperial Russia* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), 15-27, 343-366; Boris Mironov, *A Social History of Imperial Russia, 1700-1917*, vol. 2 (Colorado & Oxford: Westview Press, 2000), especially the subchapter “Did Social Estates Exist in Russia?” 198-203, and, more thoroughly, in the works of Elise Kimerling Wirtschafter: *Structures of Society: Imperial Russia’s “People of Various Ranks”* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1994); *Social Identity in Imperial Russia* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1997); “The Groups between: Raznochintsy, Intelligentsia, Professionals,” in *The Cambridge History of Russia*, vol. 2 (Cambridge: Cambridge University

Press, 2006), 245-263; and “Social Categories in Russian Imperial History,” *Cahiers du Monde russe*, 50, 1 (Jan.-march 2009): 231- 250.

5. Wirtschafter, “Social Categories in Russian Imperial History,” 232.

6. Douglas Smith, *Working the Rough Stone: Freemasonry and Society in Eighteenth-Century Russia* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1999); “Freemasonry and the Public in Eighteenth-Century Russia,” in Jane Burbank and David L. Ransel, eds., *Imperial Russia: New Histories for the Empire* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1998); Raffaella Faggionato, *A Rosicrucian Utopia in Eighteenth-Century Russia: The Masonic Circle of N.I. Novikov* (Springer, 2005); Adele Lindenmeyr, “The Rise of Voluntary Associations During the Great Reforms: the Case of Charity,” in Ben Eklof, John Bushnell, and Larissa Zakharova, eds., *Russia’s Great Reforms, 1855-1881* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994), 264-279; Idem, *Poverty Is Not a Vice: Charity, Society and the State in Imperial Russia* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996); Anastasiia S. Tumanova, *Obshchestvennye organizatsii g. Tambova na rubezhe XIX-XX vekov (1900-1917 gg.)* (Tambov: Tambovskii gosudarstvennyi universitet imeni G.R. Derzhavina, 1999); Lutz Häfner, “‘The Temple of Idleness’: Associations and the Public Sphere in Provincial Russia,” in Susan P. McCaffray and Michael Melancon, eds., *Russia in the European Context 1789-1914: A Member of the Family* (Palgrave: Macmillan, 2005), 141-160.

7. Joseph Bradley, *Voluntary Associations in Tsarist Russia: Science, Patriotism and Civil Society* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009). See also his earlier articles: “Subjects into Citizens: Societies, Civil Society and Autocracy in Tsarist Russia,” *American Historical Review*, 107, 4 (Oct. 2002): 1094-1123; “Voluntary Associations, Civic Culture and *Obshchestvennost’* in Moscow,” in Clowes, Kassow, and West, eds., *Educated Society and the Quest for Public Identity*, 131-148; “Merchant Moscow after Hours: Voluntary Associations and Leisure,” in James L. West and Jurii A. Petrov, eds., *Merchant Moscow: Images of Russia’s Vanished Bourgeoisie* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), 133-143; “Russia’s Parliament of Public Opinion: Association, Assembly, and the Autocracy, 1906-1914,” in Theodore Taranovski, ed., *Reform in Modern Russian History: Progress or Cycle?* (Cambridge: Woodrow Wilson Center Press & Cambridge University Press: 1995), 212-236. A discussion of the complex topic of civil society as such and its vicissitudes in the context of late Imperial Russia is beyond the scope of this article. For a useful survey of the notion of civil society and its application to Russian imperial history, see Christopher Ely, “The Question of Civil Society in Late Imperial Russia,” in Abbott Gleason, ed., *A Companion to Russian History* (Chichester, UK; Malden, MA: Wiley Blackwell, 2009), 225-242; and Wayne Dowler, *Russia in 1913* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2010), 90-140.

8. A rare example is Wayne Dowler’s recent monograph, *Russia in 1913*, but even there the question of voluntary associations and the issue of estates and classes are discussed in separate chapters.

9. Marc Raeff, *Origins of the Russian Intelligentsia: The Eighteenth-Century Nobility* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1966), 145.

10. Catriona Kelly, *Refining Russia: Advice Literature, Polite Culture, and Gender from Catherine to Yeltsin* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).

11. Raeff, *Origins of the Russian Intelligentsia*; “At the Origins of a Russian National Consciousness: Eighteenth-Century Roots and Napoleonic Wars,” *The History Teacher*, 25, 1 (Nov. 1991): 7-18; Iu.M. Lotman, “Ocherki po istorii russkoi kul’tury XVIII-nachala XIX

veka,” in *Iz istorii russkoi kul'tury*, vol. 4 (M.: Iazyki russkoi kul'tury, 2000), 13-346; Smith, *Working the Rough Stone*, 99-112.

12. For a discussion of Russian modernity, see David L. Hoffman and Yanni Kotsonis, eds., *Russian Modernity: Politics, Knowledge, Practices* (London: Macmillan Press & New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000), especially, David L. Hoffman, “European Modernity and Soviet Socialism,” 245-260: 246, 247.

13. Wirtschafter, *Social Identity in Imperial Russia*, 98.

14. Wirtschafter, “Social Categories in Russian Imperial History,” 249.

15. Bradley, *Voluntary Associations in Tsarist Russia*, 1-2.

16. “Otchët Obshchestva revnitelei russkogo istoricheskogo prosveshcheniia v pamiat' imperatora Aleksandra III za 1900-1901,” in *Izvestiia Obshchestva revnitelei russkogo istoricheskogo prosveshcheniia v pamiat' imperatora Aleksandra III* (hereafter *IOR*), no. 4 (26 Feb. 1902), 2; “Otchët Obshchestva revnitelei [...] za 1901-1902 god,” in *IOR*, no. 5 (26 Feb. 1904), 2.

17. *Izdaniia Obshchestva revnitelei russkogo istoricheskogo prosveshcheniia v pamiat' imperatora Aleksandra III* (SPb., 1908).

18. *Ustav Obshchestva revnitelei russkogo istoricheskogo prosveshcheniia v pamiat' Aleksandra III s izmeneniami i dopolneniami* (SPb., 1904) (hereafter *Ustav*), 1-2.

19. “Zapiska s podrobnym izlozheniem osnovanii i sposobov deiatel'nosti predpolagaemogo obshchestva,” *IOR*, no. 1 (26 Feb. 1900), 2.

20. *IOR*, no. 1 (26 Feb. 1900), 4.

21. On the hostility to the intelligentsia (or *intelligentofobiia*) among certain segments of Russian educated society, see Boris Kolonitskii, “Identifikatsiia rossiiskoi intelligentsii i intelligentofobiia (konets XIX-nachalo XX veka),” in D.A. Sdvizhkov, ed., *Intelligentsiia v istorii: Obrazovannyi chelovek v predstavleniakh i sotsial'noi deistvitel'nosti* (M.: RAN, Institut Vseobshchei istorii, 2001), 150-170; Nathaniel Knight, “Was the Intelligentsia Part of the Nation? Visions of Society in Post-Emancipation Russia,” *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History*, 7, 4 (2006): 733-758; Gary Saul Morson, “The Intelligentsia and Its Critics,” in Gleason, ed., *A Companion to Russian History*, 261-278.

22. *IOR*, no. 1 (26 Feb. 1900), 5-6.

23. Jane Burbank, “Discipline and Punish in the Moscow Bar Association,” *Russian Review*, 54 (Jan. 1995): 53

24. RGADA, (Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi arkhiv drevnikh aktov), f. 1287, op. 1, d. 411, Pis'ma S.D. Sheremetevu ot A.A. Golenishcheva-Kutuzova, l. 14, 15 ob.

25. “Vremennye pravila ob obshchestvakh i soiuzakh: Vysochaishii ukaz 4 marta 1906 g,” in A.S. Tumanova, *Samoderzhavie i obshchestvennye organizatsii v Rossii 1905-1917 gody* (Tambov: Izdatel'stvo TGU im. G.R. Derzhavina, 2002), Appendix I, 440-447. For examples of the statutes of earlier learned societies see: *Ustav Imperatorskogo vol'nogo Ekonomicheskogo obshchestva*. (SPb., 1859); *Ustav Russkogo istoricheskogo obshchestva* (SPb., 1866); *Ustav Obshchestva liubitelei drevnei pis'mennosti* (SPb., 1877). For examples of the regulations of cultural and educational (including historical) societies established after 1906, see G. Assar, *Proekt primernogo ustava kul'turno-prosvetitel'nogo obshchestva* (Riga: Izdanie latyshskogo obshchestva kul'tury, 1910); *Ustav Obshchestva oznakomleniia s istoricheskimi sobytiiami Rossii* (M., 1911); *Ustav Obshchestva liubitelei stariny* (M., 1914).

26. *Ustav*, clauses 46, 47, 49, p. 13; 51, 53, 55, p. 14; 56, p. 15; 93, p. 22.

27. *Ibid.*, clauses 10, p. 3-4; 17, p. 5; 21, 22, p. 6; 25, 26, p. 7.
28. *Ibid.*, clause 2, p. 1-2.
29. *Ibid.*, clauses 16, p. 5; 18, p. 5-6.
30. *Ibid.*, clause 19, p. 6.
31. *Ibid.*, clause 31, p. 8.
32. *Ibid.*, clauses 59, p. 15; 67, p. 17; 95, p. 22.
33. The chairman of the society (as well as his deputy) was to be elected for a term of nine years; the tenure of department chairmen was not defined at all; and chairmen of the branches would be elected for a term of three years. *Ibid.*, clauses 59, p. 15; 67, p. 17; 95, p. 22.
34. *Ibid.*, clauses 51, p. 14; 65, p. 17; 69, p. 17-18; 102-103, p. 23-24.
35. RGIA (Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi istoricheskii arkhiv), f. 747, *Obshchestvo revnitelei russkogo istoricheskogo prosveshcheniia v pamiat' imperatora Aleksandra III*, op. 1, d. 12, *Povestka dnia zasedanii soveta Obshchestva revnitelei russkogo istoricheskogo prosveshcheniia*, l. 1, 3, 4, 5, 7, 13, 17, 18, 22, 38, 39.
36. *Ibid.*, l. 1, 2, 4, 5, 7, 13, 18, 22, 38.
37. *Ibid.*, l. 8.
38. *Ibid.*, d. 12, l. 9, 11, 19; d. 28, *Kopii protokolov i vypiski iz zhurnalov zasedanii, perepiska o deiatel'nosti Izdatel'skogo otdeleniia*, l. 71, 71 ob, 74, 81 ob.
39. RGIA, f. 747, op. 1, d. 12, l. 13, 17, 17 ob, 18.
40. "Spisok chlenov obshchestva," *IOR*, no. 2 (20 Oct. 1900), 22-36.
41. *Otchët Obshchestva revnitelei russkogo istoricheskogo prosveshcheniia v pamiat' imperatora Aleksandra III za 1897-1898 god* (SPb., 1898), 18-21; *Otchët Obshchestva revnitelei [...] za 1898-1899 god* (SPb., 1899), 21; RGIA, f. 747, op. 1, d. 33, *Delo komissii po izdaniiu sbornika "Starina i novizna."*
42. *IOR*, no. 2 (26 Feb. 1902), 8.
43. RGADA, f. 1287, *Sheremetevy, Lichnyi arkhiv S.D. Sheremeteva*, op. 1, d. 1754, *Pis'ma S.D. Sheremetevu ot I.F. Tiutcheva*, 25 March 1898, l. 30 ob.
44. *Ocherk glavnykh osnovanii deiatel'nosti mestnykh otdelov Obshchestva revnitelei russkogo istoricheskogo prosveshcheniia v pamiat' imperatora Aleksandra III* (SPb., 1900), 8-9.
45. RGIA, f. 747, op. 1, d. 28, l. 81 ob.
46. *Otchët Obshchestva revnitelei [...] za 1898-1899 god* (SPb., 1899), 3-4, 55-56.
47. "Spisok chlenov obshchestva," *IOR*, no. 2 (20 Oct. 1900), 22-36.
48. Daniel Gordon, *Citizens without Sovereignty: Equality and Sociability in French Thought, 1670-1789* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 29, 33, 242.
49. See, for example, the description of *tovarishcheskie otnosheniia* amongst the members of the Moscow Bar Association in Burbank, "Discipline and Punish," 53-54.
50. The chairman of the society was to be elected by secret ballot, on the basis of a simple majority, at a Council meeting attended by not less than three quarters of its members, *Ustav*, clause 59, p. 16.
51. RGADA, f. 1287, op. 1, d. 1554, *Pis'ma S.D. Sheremetevu ot D.S. Sipiagina*, n.d., l. 55.
52. RGIA, f. 747, op. 1, d. 12, l. 3, 4; "Otchët Obshchestva revnitelei [...] za 1901-1902 god," in *IOR*, no. 5 (26 Feb. 1904), 2.

53. RGIA, f. 1088, Sheremetevy, op. 2, S.D. Sheremetev, d. 28, Perepiska S.D. Sheremeteva s Tatishchevym S.S. o knige ob Aleksandre III, l. 1, 17 ob-18.
54. RGADA, f. 1287, op. 1, d. 67, Pis'ma S.D. Sheremetevu ot I.P. Barsukova, 3 July 1897, l. 17 ob.
55. RGADA, f. 1287, op. 1, d. 1898, Pis'ma S.D. Sheremetevu ot N.D. Chechulina, 26 Feb. 1914, l. 57-57 ob.
56. RGIA, f. 747, op. 1, d. 12, l. 40.
57. RGADA, f. 1287, op. 1, d. 1898, Pis'ma S.D. Sheremetevu ot N.D. Chechulina, 6 Jan. 1917, l. 62-63.
58. Lotman, "Ocherki po istorii russkoi kul'tury"; Kelly, *Refining Russia*.
59. S.D. Sheremetev, "Vospominaniia o rodstvennikakh i druž'iakh," in K.A. Vakh and L.I. Shokhin, eds., *Memuary grafa S.D. Sheremeteva*, vol. 3 (M.: Indrik, 2005), 399, 403; RGIA, f. 747, op. 1, d. 12, l. 21.
60. Nabokov, "Drugie berega," 242; D.I. Stogov, *Pravomonarkhicheskie salony Peterburga-Petrograda (konets XIX-nachalo XX veka)* (SPb.: Dmitrii Bulavin, 2007); K.A. Solov'ev, *Kruzhok "Beseda": v poiskakh novoi politicheskoi real'nosti 1899-1905* (M.: ROSSPEN, 2009).
61. RGIA, f. 1088, op. 2, d. 28, l. 18, 20 ob.
62. RGADA, f. 1287, op. 1, d. 1420, Pis'ma S.D. Sheremetevu ot S.A. Rachinskogo, 15 May 1898, l. 3 ob.
63. S.A. Chuikina, *Dvoriaskaia pamiat': "byvshie" v sovetskom gorode (Leningrad, 1920-30-e gody)* (SPb.: Izdatel'stvo Evropeiskogo Universiteta v Sankt-Peterburge, 2006), 200-201.
64. OR RNB (Otdel rukopisei rossiiskoi natsional'noi biblioteki) f. 585, S.F. Platonov, op. 1, d. 4627, [S.D. Sheremetev to S.F. Platonov, 3 (16) Feb. 1918], l. 4.
65. RGIA, f. 747, op. 1, d. 12, l. 30; RGADA, f. 1287, op. 1, d. 2082, Pis'ma S.D. Sheremetevu ot B.M. Iuzefovicha, l. 3-3 ob.
66. *Otchët Obshchestva revnitelei [...] za 1898-1899 god*, 13.
67. RGADA, f. 1287, op. 1, d. 1420, l. 2 ob; IOR, no. 5 (26 Feb. 1904), 7.
68. *Starina i novizna*, vol. 1 (SPb., 1897), V.
69. RGADA, f. 1287, op. 1, d. 1420, Pis'ma S.D. Sheremetevu ot S.A. Rachinskogo, 6 Nov. 1898, l. 22 ob, 28, 28 ob; *Otchët Obshchestva revnitelei [...] za 1898-1899 god*, 11.
70. RGADA, f. 1287, op. 1, d. 1420, Pis'ma S.D. Sheremetevu ot S.A. Rachinskogo, 1 June 1898, l. 4 ob.
71. RGADA, f. 1287, op. 1, d. 71, Pis'ma S.D. Sheremetevu ot N.P. Barsukova, l. 14, 14 ob.
72. *Ibid.*, l. 52 ob.
73. "Otchët Obshchestva revnitelei [...] za 1901-1902 god," IOR, no. 5 (26 Feb. 1904), 5.
74. V.I. Gurko, *Cherty i siluety proshlogo: pravitel'stvo i obshchestvennost' v tsarstvovanie Nikolaia II v izobrazhenii sovremennika* (M.: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 2000), 84.
75. A.A. Kizevetter, *Na rubezhe dvukh stoletii: Vospominaniia* (Cambridge: Oriental Research Partners, 1974), 320-321.
76. IOR, no. 5, 26 Feb. 1904, 20.
77. V.P. Vakhterov, *Vneshkol'noe obrazovanie naroda* (M.: Tipografiia tovarishchestva Sytina, 1896), 33.

78. Mary Stuart, “‘The Ennobling Illusion’: The Public Library Movement in Late Imperial Russia,” *Slavonic and East European Review*, 76, 3 (July 1998): 411.
79. *IOR*, no. 5 (26 Feb. 1904), 8.
80. RGADA, f. 1287, op. 1, d. 1421, Pis’ma S.D. Sheremetevu ot S.A. Rachinskogo, 30 Nov. 1901, l. 71 ob; *IOR*, no. 5 (26 Feb. 1904), 14.
81. *IOR*, no. 1 (26 Feb. 1900), 30.
82. OR RNL, f. 585, op. 1, d. 4627, [S.D. Sheremetev to S.F. Platonov, 7 (20) May 1918], l. 18-18 ob.
83. Stuart, “The Public Library Movement,” 411-412.
84. “Pravila o besplatnykh narodnykh bibliotekakh Obshchestva revnitatei russkogo istoricheskogo prosveshcheniia v pamiat’ imperatora Aleksandra III,” in *Narodnye biblioteki Obshchestva revnitatei russkogo istoricheskogo prosveshcheniia v pamiat’ imperatora Aleksandra III* (SPb., 1899): 29-35.
85. RGIA, f. 747, op. 1, d. 28, l. 55.
86. *IOR*, no. 5 (26 Feb. 1904), 8.
87. Jeffrey Brooks, *When Russia Learned to Read: Literacy and Popular Literature, 1861-1917* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985); Stuart, “The Public Library Movement,” 422-425.
88. Mary Stuart in her study of the public library movement contrasts the position of the Russian library activists with that of the leaders of the public library movement in America who, she claims, “conceptualized libraries as a bulwark against social change.” The Zealots, while constituting a conservative minority in an overwhelmingly liberal movement, assumed a standpoint more resembling the American approach. See Stuart, “The Public Library Movement,” 440.
89. Freeze, “The Soslovie (Estate) Paradigm and Russian Social History,” 34; see also Confino on *kul’turno-bytovye gruppy* in “The Soslovie (Estate) Paradigm,” 690.
90. *Zapiska grafa S. Sheremeteva o sozdanii osobykh dvorianskikh zhenskikh uchebno-vospitatel’nykh zavedenii*, 24 Nov. 1898 g. (n.p., n.d.), 5.
91. The Peterhof Conference was convened by the tsar in July 1905 for deliberations on the composition and competence of the future State Duma – see *Petergofskie soveshchaniia o proekte Gosudarstvennoi Dumy* (Petrograd, 1917), 78-161.
92. Freeze, “The Soslovie (Estate) Paradigm and Russian Social History,” 35.
93. RGADA, f. 1287, op. 1, d. 1754, Pis’ma S.D. Sheremetevu ot I.F. Tiutcheva, 25 March 1898, l. 30 ob.
94. RGADA, f. 1287, op.1, d. 4116, Chernovaia zametka S.D. Sheremeteva “Iz vospominanii o vzniknovenii Obshchestva revnitatei,” l. 4 ob.
95. For Ukhtomskii’s biography and ideological views, see David Schimmelpenninck van der Oye, *Towards the Rising Sun: Russian Ideologies of Empire and the Path to War with Japan* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2001), 42-60.
96. RGIA, f. 1088, op. 2, d. 26, Perepiska S.D. Sheremeteva s izdatelem *Peterburgskikh vedomostei*, l. 18.
97. RGIA, f. 1088, op. 2, d. 26, l. 80 ob, 81.
98. RGIA, f. 1088, op. 2, d. 26, l. 29.

99. RGIA, f. 1072, Ukhtomskii Esper Esperovich, op. 1, d. 10, Pis'ma E.E. Ukhtomskomu, l. 1 ob, 2.
100. B.V. Anan'ich, *I.I. Tolstoi i peterburgskoe obshchestvo nakanune revoliutsii* (SPb.: "Liki Rossii" RAN, Sankt-Peterburgskii institut istorii, 2007), 67-82.
101. RGADA, f. 1287, op. 1, d. 4116, l. 2; RGADA, f. 1287, op. 1, d. 4146, Chernovaia zametka S.D. Sheremeteva o Russkom Sobranii, l. 1-1 ob; *Spisok uchreditelei Russkogo Sobraniia* (SPb., 1901); *Programma Russkogo Sobraniia* (SPb., 1907). For secondary sources on Russkoe sobranie see I.V. Lukoianov, "Russkoe Sobranie" in *Rossii v XIX-XX vv.: Sbornik statei k 70-ii R.Sh. Ganelina* (SPb.: Dmitrii Bulanin, 1998), 165-171; Iu.I. Kir'ianov, *Russkoe Sobranie, 1900-1917* (M.: ROSSPEN, 2003).
102. For literature on history as a profession, including the issue of nonacademic historians and their status, see Thomas Sanders, ed., *Historiography of Imperial Russia: The Profession and Writing of History in a Multinational State* (Armonk, New York and London: M.E. Sharpe, 1999).
103. RGADA, f. 1287, op. 1, d. 71, Pis'ma S.D. Sheremetevu ot N.P. Barsukova, 12 July 1900, l. 78.
104. Ernest Gellner, "The Importance of Being Modular," in John A. Hall, ed., *Civil Society: Theory, History, Comparison* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1995), 33, 35, 42.
105. Gellner, "The Importance of Being Modular," 41-42.
106. RGADA, f. 1287, op. 1, d. 3739, Otnoshenie soiuza chlenov Petrogradskogo arkheologicheskogo instituta, l. 1-2.
107. Sheila Fitzpatrick, "Ascribing Class: The Construction of Social Identity in Soviet Russia," *Journal of Modern History*, 65, 4 (Dec., 1993): 745-770.

ABSTRACTS

Abstract

According to both historical and sociological research, the appearance of voluntary associations played an important role in refashioning the social order based on rigid social-legal divisions. By introducing new social arrangements, voluntary associations undermined the very idea of closed corporative worlds organized around rank or estate. While recent studies have demonstrated the significant dimension of associational activity in late Imperial Russia, the role of voluntary associations in shaping new collective identities has not yet been addressed. This article seeks to consider this issue by examining these associations' practices of voluntary membership, norms of interpersonal communication, and mechanisms for disciplining those who did not meet the ideological or moral standards imposed on their members. The article focuses on the activity of the Society of Zealots of Russian Historical Education (*Obshchestvo revnitelei russkogo istoricheskogo prosveshcheniia, 1895-1918*), whose unique archive has not yet been utilized in historical research. From the methodological point of view, the article demonstrates that applying the concept of sociability makes it possible to discern the new tensions and conflicts that arose from the coexistence of old hereditary and new voluntary frameworks of social grouping.

Résumé

Selon les recherches historiques et sociologiques, l'apparition des associations volontaires a joué un rôle important dans le remodelage de l'ordre social basé sur des divisions sociales et légales rigides. En introduisant de nouveaux aménagements sociaux, les associations volontaires ont ébranlé l'idée même de mondes corporatifs fermés, basés sur le rang ou l'ordre. Alors que de récentes études ont démontré la dimension significative de l'activité associative à la fin de la Russie impériale, le rôle des associations volontaires dans la formation de nouvelles identités collectives n'a pas encore été abordé. Cet article tente de considérer cet aspect en examinant les pratiques d'adhésion volontaire de ces associations, les normes de communication interpersonnelle et les mécanismes mis en œuvre pour discipliner ceux qui ne répondaient pas aux critères moraux et idéologiques imposés aux membres. Cet article pointe sur l'activité de la Société des zéloteurs de l'éducation historique russe (Obščestvo revnitelej russkogo istoričeskogo prosveščeniija, 1895-1918) dont les archives uniques n'ont pas encore été exploitées par les chercheurs. D'un point de vue méthodologique, l'article démontre que l'application du concept de sociabilité permet de discerner les nouvelles tensions et conflits qui naquirent de la coexistence de l'ancien cadre de groupement social hérité du passé avec le nouveau, de type volontaire.

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