The Donald W. Treadgold Papers
In Russian, East European, and Central Asian Studies

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No. 28
May 2001

The Henry M. Jackson School of International Studies
The University of Washington

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ISSN 1078-5639

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About this series

The *Donald W. Treadgold Papers* publication series was created to honor a great teacher and great scholar. Donald W. Treadgold was professor of history and international studies at the University of Washington from 1949 to 1993. During that time, he wrote seven books, one of which — *Twentieth Century Russia* — went into eight editions. He was twice editor of *Slavic Review*, the organ of the American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies, and received the AAASS Award for Distinguished Contributions to Slavic Studies, as well as the AAASS Award for Distinguished Service. Professor Treadgold molded several generations of Russian historians and contributed enormously to the field of Russian history. He was, in other ways as well, an inspiration to all who knew him.

The *Treadgold Papers* series was created in 1993 on the occasion of Professor Treadgold's retirement, on the initiative of Professor Daniel Waugh. Professor Treadgold passed away in December 1994. The series is dedicated to the memory of a great man, publishing papers in those areas which were close to his heart.

Sabrina P. Ramet
Editor

About the authors of this issue

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Acknowledgments

A deep and enduring debt is owed to Donald W. Treadgold, my teacher, colleague, and friend. He was not only an exceptional scholar and mentor but quite simply one of the finest human beings I have ever had the privilege to know.

Thomas E. Porter

Our appreciation to Aleksandr Nikolaevich Kostiukov and Kimitaka Matsuzato, and to the Center for Russian and East European Studies (University of Toronto) and the Slavic Research Center (Hokkaido University) for their research support and assistance.

John F. Young

The many challenges of post Soviet Russian state building and political transition are not limited to national institutions in Moscow. Two tasks critical to the overall political and social success of contemporary Russia include strengthening the reach of the state through effective local administration and empowering local governments with sufficient autonomy and capacity to address local concerns. These two tasks might at first glance appear mutually exclusive. But the challenge of reform is to resolve such apparent tension in a manner which could foster both the penetration of the state throughout its territory and the bridging of the gap between state and society. Both tasks are much more than consequences of the collapse of the Soviet Union. They are also part of a much broader historical challenge of modern Russia to achieve an effective demarcation and distribution of power. In this sense, the post Soviet Russian political landscape is by no means a clean sheet of paper upon which any institutional arrangement might be designed. The historical and cultural context within which the challenge of state building occurs is an integral part of the challenge, and therefore requires the attention of those who hope to understand contemporary Russia.

This study reviews the history of local government reform in modern Russia and highlights the repeated reluctance of existing power structures to foster the authority and capacity of local governments and the civic initiatives they spawned. This reluctance has inhibited the opportunity of Russian society to assume a significant role in the administration of its own affairs, and has repeatedly undermined the overall process of political reform. This is as true of the *zemstvo* experience of the nineteenth century as it was for the late Soviet reforms of local government. One primary burden of state building through Russian history is to reconcile local and societal movements with the requirements of both administrative order and central power. Why this burden has proven too onerous for modern Russia, and the consequences of failed reconciliation are outlined below.

The zemstvo reforms

The word *zemstvo* derives from the Russian word *zemlia*, land. It, or terms closely related to it, has been used for centuries in Russia to refer to local government. A notable early instance was a system created by Ivan IV (1533–84). Of this system V. Storozhev wrote,

> the local *(zemskoe)* self-government of the sixteenth century was produced by the needs of the state treasury and bore a compulsory character; it was not created to serve the interests of the population of a given region and rapidly was converted from privilege to an obligation, often very burdensome for the region.[1]

Several variants of local government, ultimately dependent on the central power, preceded the nineteenth century. This strong statist tradition was the biggest obstacle to local government reform.

The debacle and final defeat Russian forces experienced in the Crimean War led the new Tsar, Alexander II, to accept the necessity of extensive and fundamental reform of Russian society, of which the nineteenth century *zemstvo* was a vital part. On 25 March 1859, an imperial order *(povdenie)* raised the question of how local government ought to be affected by the emancipation of the serfs then in preparation (which would be proclaimed in 1861). The upshot was the issuance of the statute *(polozhenie)* of 1 January 1864, creating the *zemstvo* on the county *(uezd)* and province *(gubernia)* levels. A few years later Prince A. I. Vasilchikov called that measure the "foundation stone *(osnovanie)* of self-government in Russia." The new institutions of local self-government were based on the suffrage of the local inhabitants including the newly-freed peasants. The development of the *zemstvo* institution was thus of great importance for Russia.[2]

Almost immediately following the issuance of the 1864 statute, a movement developed in favor of extending the *zemstvo* both downward to the lower levels of society (the *volost' zemstvo*), and upward to the national level ("crowning the edifice" was the description given to the desired action).[3] However, the chief architect of the *zemstvo* statute, interior minister P. A. Valuev,

wanted to ensure that the role allotted to society would be minimal. Although he did advocate a limited degree of independence for the organs of local self-government as compensation for the landowners' lost authority, his principal concern was to maintain the primacy of the central power and to stifle society's request for more autonomy and jurisdiction in local affairs. He considered the *zemstvo* to be

> only a special organ of one and the same state power and from it [it] receives its rights and authority; the *zemstvo* institutions, having their place in the state organism, are not able to exist outside of it, and, equally with other institutions, are subject to those general conditions and to that general guidance which are established by the central authority.[4]

Valuev was a proponent of the state theory of self-government. According to this theory local government takes on the administration of particular state functions. There is no independent activity by the organs of local self-government; there is merely a de-concentration of power wherein the central power retains ultimate control but assigns specific duties to these bodies. Thus, local self-government exists as administrative tentacles of the central state, and serves to implement state policies. This idea, deeply rooted in Russian political culture, is reflected in the term generally used to describe Russian local self-government, *samoupravlenie* (literally "self-administration"). However, many of the nobles who stood for election subscribed to a different theory of local self-government. These men drew distinctions between state affairs and local interests and thought that society's interests could and should be distinguished from the interests of the state. From the perspective of this societal theory of local self-government, the *zemstva* would be an independent institution standing outside of the governmental apparatus. Thus the *zemstvo* activists *(zemtsy)* called for a devolution of governing authority.[5]

The *zemstva* were established in the European provinces and counties of the empire. These institutions consisted of an assembly (which was to have decision-making powers) elected for a three-year term and an executive board to implement policies. The *Zemstvo* Statute defined the duties of the new organs

of local self-government as the management of "local economic welfare and needs" with fourteen different areas of jurisdiction.[6] Of crucial import was the prohibition on inter*zemstvo* contacts; Article 3 limited the activity of the *zemstva* to the boundaries of the province or county (although exceptions were on occasion allowed for provincial *zemstva* to coordinate inter-county endeavors such as road building). This restriction was designed to ensure that the *zemstva* would have no lateral contacts between themselves and would therefore be only a link in the administrative chain stretching from St. Petersburg to the countryside. In addition, the *zemstva* were reliant upon the central power to enforce those measures which were passed.

The *zemtsy*, however, understood that the massive problems which beset Russia could not be addressed without the active and coordinated participation of the educated public. The nebulous language in the statute was in part responsible for the friction which developed between state and society over the issue of local self-government. For example, some responsibilities were transferred in their entirety to the *zemstva* for management, while other duties remained under the aegis of the state with the *zemstva* merely acting as the government's agent. While given the authority "to look after" the development of trade and industry, the *zemstva* were only allowed the opportunity "to cooperate" with the government in the prevention of cattle disease or the preservation of crops from destruction by insects. They were also granted the dubious right "to participate...mainly in economic terms" in the administration of public health and education. The government's intention to utilize the *zemstva* merely as an extension of the central power was made evident by the statute's requirement that they assist "in the fulfillment of demands that might be placed upon them by the civil and military administration."[7]

More important, however, was the fact that the elective principle was inaugurated. In keeping with the emancipation's intention of making the peasants "free rural inhabitants" and ultimately dismantling Russia's medieval society of orders with one's ascriptive status decided by birth, the elections for the *zemstva* were based on the type of property held and not on the estate to which the voter had formerly belonged. All males over the age of twenty-five who held (1) private rural property, (2) private urban property, or (3) allotment land (land granted to the communes upon emancipation in order to prevent the peas-

antry from falling into peonage) were eligible to vote in one of these three *curia*. Thus, peasants who held private rural property were allowed to vote in the first *curia* along with their former masters. This served to give legal sanction to the peasantry's new status in society; ostensibly Russia was moving away from its society of orders toward a nation composed of socio-economic classes with all of its citizens equal before the law.

Of course, the nobles would come to wield an influence in the assemblies all out of proportion to their numbers and they would also completely dominate the executive boards. The abolition of serfdom had also served to reduce their dependence on St. Petersburg, and this in turn allowed some of their number to act more vigorously in pressing the government for a greater degree of autonomy in the management of local affairs. The increasingly independent attitude of the *zemtsy* sparked the conflict characterized by Maklakov and other liberal publicists as one between the "state" and "society".[8] This struggle between the *zemtsy* and the central power over the limits of society's sphere of competence would continue unabated until the end of the Romanov regime.

In 1865, some members of the Moscow provincial assembly called for the crowning of the new political edifice by the establishment of a national *zemstvo*.[9] The government's refusal to do so was viewed with equanimity by the *zemtsy*. They remained convinced that sheer logic and common sense would compel the central power to institute this desired reform in order to facilitate the governance of the nation. They held that as soon as

> the *zemstvo* institutions have grown strong and have acquired the final confidence of the government through conscientious execution of its tasks on a strictly legal basis – at that moment, probably, the *zemstvo* will not be refused [by the government] acceptance of this higher body to the extent that the government considers it essential to the interests of the whole people.[10]

However, in 1866 the Senate reaffirmed the prohibition contained in the statute on the formation of any kind of interregional organization.[11] In December of the same year provincial governors were given the right to refuse in office any person

elected by the assemblies but considered "undesirable" by the authorities.[12] Clashes also occurred over the issue of taxation powers. The 1864 statute had granted only limited powers to the *zemstva*, the result of Valuev's intention to hold down local revenues and force dependence on government largesse. The *zemtsy*, however, contended that they had the right to tax income as well as property. In order to clarify this ambiguity in the statute, Valuev issued a new law which allowed the *zemstva* to tax only immovable property and manufacturing certificates.[13]

The new law unleashed a storm of protest from the *zemstva*. The *zemtsy* were especially embittered by the arbitrary manner in which the law was promulgated. They complained that it "was produced in complete secrecy, there hadn't been any kind of hint concerning it in the papers, this law struck the *zemstva* like a bolt from the blue."[14] The decree forced the *zemstva* to alter hastily their revenue estimates "in order to bring them into accord with the new law."[15] The Moscow provincial *zemstvo* complained about the impossible position in which the law had placed them. In a petition of redress they noted that they "had found it necessary to curb their activities" and that "the very character of the law had altered the general statute concerning the *zemstva*."[16]

The controversy reached its climax in January 1867 when the St. Petersburg provincial assembly demanded that the government rescind the new tax law. Valuev responded by shutting down the assembly and suspending all *zemstvo* activity in the province for an indefinite period. Valuev seized this opportunity to dissolve the St. Petersburg assembly because it had been a continual thorn in his side since its very first session in 1865.[17] These events served only to deepen Valuev's conviction that the *zemstva* would act irresponsibly unless they were brought firmly under state control. The statute of 13 June 1867 was promulgated with precisely this goal in mind. The law gave the chairman of the assemblies sweeping new powers. Included among them was the right to exclude topics from the agenda which were considered to be outside of the sphere of *zemstvo* competence. The chairman would henceforth be held responsible for the conduct of the delegates and their proposals.[18] This law would in effect make the chairmen governmental representatives, thus realizing the bureaucracy's goal of manifesting its presence on the local level. And the suspicion with which the government viewed the idea of interregional *zemstvo* coop-

eration can be seen in article 16 of the law, which forbade the discussion of resolutions on national issues or any proposals to make contact with other *zemstva*.

The *zemtsy*, however, continued to debate vigorously the role of the *zemstvo* and the proper jurisdiction for its activities. One *zemets*, S. V. Volkonskii, speaking for those delegates who had advocated a more limited role, related that he had "noticed that on every occasion when someone has raised a serious question of any kind in the assembly, the matter is immediately expanded beyond the sphere of *zemstvo* competence."[19] Another, more radical, member of the assembly, K. M. Afanas'ev, defended this practice since the *zemstva* were "so closely connected with all the governmental institutions...that it is almost impossible not to touch upon matters outside of the official sphere of activity."[20] These quotes illustrate the dissent which at times racked the assemblies. Restricted by the government, the effectiveness of the *zemtsvo* was hampered further by internal turmoil and discord. A scant decade after their inauguration the *zemstva* were largely impotent. The *zemstvo* had become a tolerated but obviously unwelcome stepchild of the central power, its inefficiency was plainly evident, and its reorganization "was among the pressing issues of the day."[21] This paralysis continued until 1878 when, after the outbreak of war with Turkey, many *zemtsy* again began to demand a more meaningful role in local administration as the government was forced to call upon educated society for its support in the war effort.

Several provincial assemblies used this opportunity to state again the need for reform. Their proposals included the establishment of an all-Russian *zemstvo*. The address from the Kharkov *zemstvo* read in part: "The *Zemstvo* would like to unite its forces, not only for the sake of its own economic needs, but also for the sake of the country as a whole, so that its support will be of real value to the government."[22] The interior ministry reacted quickly by instructing its provincial governors to prevent similar acts of insubordination in the future.[23] However, the regime did allow several *zemstva* assemblies to act jointly in order to succor the wounded. One of the most radical of the *zemtsy*, Ivan Petrunkevich of Chernigov, took advantage of this opportunity to organize a congress of activists and other public figures, but this unauthorized meeting was quickly broken up by the police.[24]

Petrunkevich's activities undoubtedly contributed to the

suspicion with which the government had come to view the *zemstva*; his attempt to force reform during a period of crisis was seen as disloyal and would have serious repercussions. The regime now equated the idea of a *zemstvo* union with political activism and subsequent attempts to coordinate *zemstvo* activity would be restricted; however, the government would be forced on several occasions to allow regional congresses to convene in order to deal with pressing problems. Such congresses were to consider only the specific reasons for which they were called. In December 1880 a congress met in Kharkov to discuss measures to be taken to combat a diphtheria outbreak; in February 1881 another congress was allowed to meet in Odessa to take steps to alleviate damage caused by an infestation of crop-damaging beetles.[25] These problems were of such magnitude that they knew no boundaries and inter*zemstvo* cooperation was necessary to guarantee the maximum efficiency of operations.

Thus, the *zemstvo* occupied an anomalous and ambiguous status in Russia, as finance minister Witte would argue in his famous memorandum, *Autocracy and the Zemstvo* (1899). Given its shortage of personnel, the government needed the *zemstvo* to assist in rural administration and economic development. Yet, as an elected institution, it ran counter to Russia's autocratic traditions and served as a wellspring for constitutionalist aspirations. And, as mentioned above, the *Zemstvo* Statute provided for elected representation on the basis of property qualifications, not on the traditional social estates' *(soslovie)* ascriptive affiliation. Thus, local self-government also brought to a head the conflict within the bureaucracy over the road Russia was traveling from a servile to a civil society. The result was not only jurisdictional and political friction between state and *zemstvo* officials but a struggle between those tsarist officials who believed in the spirit of the Great Reforms and those who wished to maintain the *status quo ante* while making rural administration more efficient in the tradition of the *Rechtsstaat*.[26]

These debates came to a head in 1880 when a score of *zemtsy* signed a treatise in which they complained that the suppression of public initiative could not but lead to further revolutionary unrest. The *zemtsy* and other public activists again called for an elected assembly to "participate in state life and activities." This call emerged due to the fact that educated society had acquired a consciousness of the concept of civic duty.

Nobles who participated as delegates to the assemblies gained confidence as a result of their experience in local self-government. Likewise, the non-noble technical specialists (the so-called "Third Element") who implemented the policies adopted by the *zemstva* also had come to consider themselves to be engaged in public service as opposed to those who were in the tsarist civil service.[27] In addition, the vast majority of the Third Element specialists as well as many of the liberal noble *zemtsy* no longer thought of themselves as being members of the *soslovie* system since the pre-emancipation system of social orders with their traditional assemblies no longer fit a rapidly modernizing Russia.

There had been those ministers who, although firmly convinced that the state should continue to be the preeminent force in the Russian polity, had agreed with these sentiments and had advocated granting the *zemstvo* more autonomy. Loris-Melikov and several other moderate government officials sought to create an administrative system which would allow the *zemstvo* greater influence upon rural affairs and ultimately provide for the acculturation of the peasantry to the norms and values of a civil society by extending all-estate government to the local *(volost')* level. There had even been discussion of allowing public figures to participate in a consultative capacity in the formulation of state policy. But the assassination of Alexander II in 1881 brought his deeply conservative and unimaginative son Alexander III to the throne.

Under the baleful influence of his tutor, the reactionary Pobedonostsev, who thought all of the reform efforts under review would lead inevitably to "the ruin of Russia," Alexander III moved to reassert the autocratic principle and to restore the regime's authority in the countryside. Loris-Melikov and several other like-minded tsarist officials had resigned in protest, but still others continued to call for the strengthening of the authority of the *zemstva* administration. One of their number, M. S. Kakhanov, headed a commission which had as its aim the reorganization of rural administration.[28] However, the writing was on the wall when Dmitrii Tolstoi, an avowed opponent of Alexander II's administrative reforms, was appointed minister of the interior in May 1882. Tolstoi was determined to restore the autocratic authority which he thought had been diminished by the Great Reforms. He believed that the *zemstvo* should have as its primary responsibility the implementation of

imperial commands.[29] Accordingly, he began to integrate it more fully into the bureaucratic apparatus. First, Tolstoi moved to undermine the position of those government officials who still believed in the goals of the reform period; in March 1885, he ordered Kakhanov to stop his commission's discussion of reform projects.

Although Tolstoi died before his plans were put into effect, subsequent legislation bore the imprint of his desires to return Russia to its estate structure and once again to make the nobility the bulwark of tsarist authority in the countryside. The first step toward the systematic establishment of bureaucratic control over the *zemstvo* was the Statute of 12 July 1889. The new law installed a government agent selected from the ranks of the nobility in every *volost'* in Russia; these officials, known as *zemskie nachal'niki* (land captains), were directly responsible to the interior ministry and were given wide powers over the peasantry. These powers included a combination of both executive and judicial authority which directly contravened the intent and spirit of the Great Reforms.[30] But the land captain statute proved to be simply the prelude to the complete evisceration of the reforms accomplished with the promulgation of the second *Zemstvo* Statute.

The second statute, the result of nearly a decade of preparation, was issued on 12 June 1890. The imperial *ukaz* which announced the introduction of the statute explained that the first statute was being modified so that the *zemstva* "in proper unity with other governmental institutions could carry out with greater success the important state business entrusted to them."[31] The regime had underscored its contention that the *zemstvo* was but a part of the bureaucratic apparatus. The language of the statute itself underscores this point. Article 1 of the 1864 Statute had defined the duties of the *zemstvo* as being "the management of local economic welfare and needs" but the corresponding article in the 1890 Statute read simply "local welfare and needs." The word economic had been dropped because proponents of *zemstvo* autonomy had long argued that since local economic interests crossed provincial borders, some kind of regional coordination outside the government's purview needed to be organized.

The wording of the Statute of 12 June 1890 unequivocally delineated the sphere of *zemstvo* competence. Article 3 again limited the activity of the *zemstvo* to the boundaries of the prov-

ince or county and sweeping new regulatory provisions strengthened those which were already in force. Article 77 reaffirmed the chairman's role in the conduct of assembly meetings, once again making him liable for any actions which exceeded the limits of *zemstvo* competence. Article 118 stipulated that all members of the executive boards at both the county and provincial levels had to be confirmed in office; members of the boards and the county board chairmen had to be confirmed by the governor of the province, while chairmen of the provincial executive boards had to be confirmed in office by the interior minister. The 1864 Statute had only required that the chairmen of the executive boards be confirmed in office. Article 119 of the 1890 Statute also provided for the appointment of chairmen by the interior minister if those men elected by the assemblies were not confirmed a second time.

The new statute clearly shows the central power's desire to control *zemstvo* activity and to quash initiatives that did not coincide with the regime's goals. The use of Article 119 to stifle independent *zemstva* was confirmed by the historian of the *zemstvo*, Veselovskii.[32] The government's intention to turn the *zemstva* into organs of state administration is confirmed by the requirements of Article 124 of the 1890 Statute which declared that all executive board members were in the state's service. Other provisions of the statute created an entirely new organ of control, the provincial bureau of *zemstvo* affairs. This bureau, which was subordinated to the interior minister, was authorized "to consider, in appropriate cases, the correctness and legality of the enactments and orders of *zemstvo* institutions and for the resolution of other matters."[33] The governors' supervisory duties were also reaffirmed and other the provisions of Article 103 given the right to audit and inspect the *zemstva*. Even more significant was the fact that the 1890 Statute abolished the "non-class" character of the *zemstva* since the new statute called for the division of the electorate by estate. It also curtailed the elective principle insofar as the peasantry was concerned.

The "counter-reforms" undertaken during the reign of Alexander III were designed to once again make the nobility into a bulwark of the regime and to freeze the socio-political evolution which had been occurring as a result of the government's modernization drive. Ironically, the autocracy would continue to espouse its outdated ideals and extol the

virtues of the nobility while pursuing an industrialization process which would fundamentally alter Russian society. As this process deepened, the archaic division of Russian society into estates would simply cease to have any meaning; many noblemen would take up professions while others would seek either employment with or election to the *zemstva*.[34] They were joined by the technical specialists, doctors, veterinarians, agronomists, and statisticians of the Third Element in forging a new ethos of independent public initiative. But for the moment the government had seemingly succeeded in its efforts to subordinate the *zemstvo* to itself. More than a quarter century after the establishment of the *zemstvo* institutions, the men in St. Petersburg thought that they had finally created the single, integrated bureaucratic apparatus from which it would be possible to provide for the general welfare of the Russian people.

Public initiative and the zemstva

This new governmental apparatus was almost immediately put to the test; the serious crop failures of 1891 in seventeen of Russia's most important grain-producing provinces produced the worst famine in memory.[35] When the scope of the disaster became apparent, I. N. Durnovo, the interior minister, turned immediately to the *zemstvo* for assistance. Robbins contends that this reflected the regime's awareness of its own institutional weakness. Lacking both the personnel and infrastructure to manage relief, it instead relied upon the *zemstvo* to play the major role in the food supply campaign.[36] To that end, Durnovo promulgated a policy which allowed the *zemstvo* a maximum freedom of action. The policy laid down general guidelines for its relief efforts but specified that the *zemstva* should not be prevented "from taking any measures with regard to food supply which they saw fit, in accordance with local conditions."[37] Durnovo also worked to forestall attempts by some governors to limit the activities of the *zemstva* or to exclude them from relief work altogether.

Educated society greeted this development with unconcealed delight. The regime had sanctioned the initiatives of the public sector. One important result was the subsequent revitalization of the movement for an interregional *zemstvo* union. The necessity for such a union was stressed by many *zemtsy*. A. A.

Ostaf'ev noted in a report to the Nizhnii Novgorod assembly that conferences "of representatives of all the *zemstva*" were necessary for the proper management of relief efforts. "Then," wrote Ostaf'ev, "we might escape these scenes of deplorable clashes and completely unnecessary competition [with the government], which have given rise to the current conditions of every provincial *zemstvo*." He added that it was

> necessary to issue a petition to the government to authorize elected representatives of various *zemstva* to gather in order to subject general questions of *zemstvo* economic life to the systematic investigation of all the beneficial measures drawn up by the separate *zemstva*... It is necessary to strengthen the cultured influence of the *zemstvo* on the course of the people's life. Only the general, harmonious, mutually agreed upon development of social forces will be able to lead our fatherland from out of this situation of chronic misfortune.[38]

The Nizhnii Novgorod assembly endorsed this proposal and other *zemstva* quickly followed suit. Veselovskii states that "these were the first signs of the reanimation of *zemstvo* life after a decade of repression."[39] It is no coincidence that the *zemtsy* addressed hopeful and accommodating messages to Tsar Nicholas II upon his accession to the throne in 1894. His chairmanship of the Special Committee had brought him into close contact with educated society's loyal and selfless endeavors; the *zemtsy* assumed that more responsibility would now devolve upon them in light of recent developments. But Nicholas angrily dismissed their entreaties as "senseless dreams". Despite the new tsar's frigid response, several efforts were begun to reform the *zemstvo* institutions. The Fifth All-Russian Congress of Agriculturalists passed several resolutions calling for the expansion of *zemstvo* work in education and agronomy as well as for regional meetings to coordinate *zemstvo* activity.[40] The congress also demanded the creation of the all-estate *volost'* level *zemstvo*.

This demand for a *melkaia zemskaia edinitsa* (small *zemstvo* unit) served notice that the *zemtsy* were determined to make the *zemstvo* into a true organ of local self-government. By ex-

tending the all-estate *zemstvo* down to the local level, where peasants lived under different laws and voting procedures, it was hoped that Russia's educated society would serve as *Kulturträger* and thereupon acculturate the peasantry to the norms and values of civil society. The new drive to extend the *zemstvo* both downward to the local level and upwards toward a national union was coupled with an attempt to ensure uniformity of action between the provincial *zemstvo* and the various county *zemstva* within it. This began yet another internecine *zemstvo* battle. The leader of this movement, D. N. Shipov, was the chair of the Moscow provincial assembly executive board. Shipov, known as the "grand old man" of the *zemstvo* movement, had also been the motive force behind the idea of a *zemstvo* union. One of the most respected men in the "public movement", Shipov hoped to rationalize the *zemstvo* apparatus so that it could be of real assistance to the peasantry; however, Shipov and his followers would remain loyal to the throne throughout their campaign to perfect the system.

Shipov thought that the more prosperous regions of a province should contribute to the expenditures of those counties which were unable to satisfy their needs from their own resources. He thought that if provincial and county *zemstva* had identical objectives all efforts should be directed towards "satisfying the needs of the whole population more completely and more uniformly while employing the smallest possible amount of staff and materials."[41] Shipov redoubled his efforts to rationalize the *zemstvo* and to bring it into accord with the intentions of the Great Reforms, despite opposition both from within and without. His attempt to hold a joint *zemstvo* meeting in honor of the tsar's coronation in 1896 was expressly forbidden.[42] Ivan Goremykin, the new interior minister, even refused to allow the *zemtsy* to present a gift in honor of the tsar's coronation under the dubious pretext that such an action might provide a precedent for future joint *zemstvo* activity! Shipov did, however, manage to hold unofficial, "private" meetings with other chairmen of the provincial *zemstva* at the annual fair in Nizhnii Novgorod. At this gathering it was decided to hold annual meetings of *zemstvo* board chairmen and to elect a permanent organizational bureau, which would be headed by Shipov.

Goremykin ordered the dissolution of the bureau and prohibited the *zemtsy* from holding joint meetings in the future.[43]

As the century came to a close, Shipov and other like-minded *zemtsy* held another meeting in Moscow, a gathering dedicated to the memory of the tsar-liberator, Alexander II. Their request for an all-*zemstvo* newspaper was brusquely rejected. They then voted a plaque for Alexander's statue and quietly dispersed. That the *zemtsy* merely desired more autonomy and responsibility for the organs of local self-government can be seen in the following statement by Shipov:

> As a vigorous and societal undertaking, the *zemstvo* can proceed and develop successfully only if the necessary independence is guaranteed to it. We *zemstvo* people believe deeply that local needs can only be met with the broad development of independent public activities within the framework of the historically developed system of government in Russia.[44]

The central bureaucracy, however, still viewed the *zemstvo* as a potential threat to its primacy and thought that any expansion of local self-government was incompatible with autocracy. This sentiment was made clear in 1899 by Sergei Witte, the minister of finance and chief architect of Russia's industrial development. In his memorandum entitled *Autocracy and the Zemstvo*, Witte argued that any expansion of local self-government's sphere of competence would only strengthen its inherent constitutional principle. This could not be allowed as it would eventually destroy the state authority. The primary purpose of the *zemstvo* should be to provide "steadfast support [to the regime] and to be an absolutely reliable instrument of administration in complete accord with the government."[45] Witte did, however, concede that society should be allowed to express its views. Accordingly, the government should keep "its finger on the pulse of society" while remembering that it did not "come under the command of society, remaining a judicious power and consistent state authority, constantly aware of its goals and also of the means of attaining them."[46] In his treatise Witte seemed to intimate in some passages that a gradual evolution toward a constitutional state was possible. Years later he would claim that he was speaking in "Aesopian language" and was in fact in favor of liberal reforms. However, Witte's true intentions were revealed when he wrote "...it is impossible to

give any further expansion of activity to the *zemstvo*, [and] it is necessary to lay down a clear line of demarcation for it; it is not permitted in any respect to cross that line...He who rules in the country must also be master in its administration."[47]

In response, *zemstvo* activists formed *Beseda* (Symposium), in order to discuss measures necessary to defend what they considered to be society's prerogatives. These men, who "did not want to utilize their civic and patriotic feelings for work in the machinery of state," instead "met in Moscow two or three times a year in order to confer about the more effective conduct of particular facets of *zemstvo* affairs."[48] *Beseda* represented twenty-one of the thirty-four *zemstvo* provinces; all of its members supported the expansion of the legally permissible activities of the *zemstvo*, including the right to form an interregional union. They also called for a devolution of governing authority to the *zemstva*, the restoration to the *zemstvo* of its original non-class based character, the creation of an all-class small *zemstvo* unit, and the education of the peasantry in order to hasten their acculturation.[49] Thus, the turn of the century saw an intensification of the conflict between local self-government and the central power. The campaign by the *zemtsy* "to facilitate the understanding and identification of the basic conditions of *zemstvo* activity" continued.[50] From 1900 on they ignored "governmental decrees and began almost openly to conduct private congresses," which were "attended by such a collection of persons that they in fact had the character of congresses."[51] Pretexts for such gatherings were provided by miscellaneous exhibitions, seminars, and professional gatherings of doctors, teachers, veterinarians, etc. Veselovskii recounts a speech at the 1901 Moscow Agronomic conference by one *zemets* who declared:

> similar agricultural and economic needs cannot be limited to the territory of an administrative unit, of an individual county or province. They occur in several provinces with similar agricultural and economic conditions, and they give rise to the ideal of a permanent area organization consisting of elected representatives from the *zemstva* concerned and of local agronomists. Such an organization would be able to meet these needs more deeply and more pertinently than the present *zemstvo* organization.[52]

The congress had reiterated society's demand for the establishment of autonomous, non-class *zemstvo* units at the local level. This continued emphasis on the rationalization of the *zemstvo* apparatus reveals the concern felt by the *zemtsy* over the government's proven inability to deal adequately with any kind of widespread crisis. In June 1901 the *Beseda* group sent a circular to other activists exhorting them to continue the fight for a more rational and effective institution of local self-government. The letter from the "old *zemstvo* men" *(starye zemtsy)* attacked Witte's policies and his anti-*zemstvo* stance. It again presented society's demands for the removal of restrictions on *zemstvo* tax prerogatives, the extension of its jurisdiction to cover all local needs and wants, and more autonomy in the fields of education, health, and food supply. More important, the *starye zemtsy* demanded that the *zemstvo* be given "the right to contact one another as well as to hold all-*zemstvo* congresses of representatives."[53] The increased belligerence of these *zemstvo* activists was given still more impetus in January 1902 by Witte's creation of a Special Conference on the Needs of Agriculture which ignored the elected *zemtsy* and instead relied upon the provincial governors and the marshals of the nobility to select hand picked delegates. It was apparent that Witte was trying to subvert the *zemstvo* idea and that the time had come to confront the central power head on.

Once more it was Dmitrii Shipov who led the way. A meeting of *zemstvo* leaders was held at Shipov's home in the spring of 1902. There were fifty-two participants from twenty-five provinces, including sixteen *Beseda* members.[54] Again calling for the rationalization of the *zemstvo* apparatus, they asserted that "the needs of agriculture cannot be satisfied by separate and partial measures. Hence, before starting to look for ways of improving agriculture, it is necessary to remove those general conditions which hinder its development."[55] They also voted to establish a bureau charged with the organization of annual *zemstvo* congresses. However, the assassination of Sipiagin in April 1902 led to the appointment of V. K. Plehve, an implacable foe of *zemstvo* independence, as minister of the interior. Plehve had duly noted the demands of the *zemtsy* and thought the congress little more than a conspiracy against the throne. He convinced Nicholas II to send a reprimand to all the participants, which warned them that,

> one more attempt on their part to bring about unity of action by the *zemstvo* institutions...and especially further attempts to incite the *zemstvo* assemblies to discuss all-Russian affairs would lead to their being barred from activity in the public institutions.[56]

Plehve subscribed to the state theory of government and thought that "neither the Russian people in general nor the educated circles in particular were sufficiently well trained to be allowed to govern their country or even to take an extensive part in the government."[57] Like most statists, Plehve thought that the best way to ensure Russia's peaceful development would be to perfect the machinery of state. To that end, he sought to realize the longstanding bureaucratic goal of incorporating the *zemstva* into the state apparatus. The new interior minister hoped to convince the *zemstva* to act within the framework of the 1890 statute; this would have resulted in the *zemstva* being simply the local representatives of the tsarist government. Plehve invited Shipov to his *dacha* on 2 July 1902 in an attempt to enlist his support. He first gave Shipov an official reprimand for the unauthorized congress held at his home. The government's objection to any kind of national organization remained firm. But then Plehve stressed his interest in cooperating with society. He noted that "no state structure is imaginable without the participation of society in local self-government" and that its "broad development" would be necessary since it was impossible to govern "solely by means of bureaucrats."[58] Through this conversation and another one with the duplicitous Witte, Shipov came to believe that the government had finally recognized the need to strengthen the *zemstvo*.

Plehve undoubtedly hoped that he could bring the *zemtsy* to work exclusively for state interests and thus forestall any further attempts toward the formation of a union since the interior ministry itself would function as one. In a revealing statement to Shipov in April 1903, Plehve stated that "our conferences in the ministry on the basis of practical matters draw you together with representatives of the ministry, facilitate common work and mutual interaction"; he further added that this was "far better than those secret meetings."[59] But Plehve also would not tolerate any manifestations of independence on the part of either the *zemtsy* or their hired professionals. Administrative

exile and deprivation of political rights, as well as the refusal to confirm elected officials were the main weapons of this enemy of the *zemstvo*. By 1903 Shipov had concluded that Plehve was "a man without conscience and a sense of honor who believes it is possible to deal with everyone through lies and hypocrisy."[60]

In January 1904 Plehve suspended the right of self-government in Tver, which

> aroused the indignation of nearly all public circles, even the most moderate and those most devoted to the existing order. It seemed that the government was suspended in mid-air and that its sole support was the administrative and police apparatus – an apparatus which seemed to function without spirit.[61]

The decades-old struggle between society and the state had reached the boiling point. But Japan's attack on Port Arthur galvanized society; the *zemtsy* immediately ceased their agitation for political reform and *zemstvo* independence and pledged their unconditional support for the government's war effort. The desire expressed by society to participate directly in war relief was not a new one. During the Crimean War, noble women from the best families nursed soldiers in Sevastopol, having "at last induced the emperor to grant them permission to render direct aid to the sick and wounded soldiers."[62] *Zemstvo* leaders had also been allowed to assist the Red Cross during the Russo-Turkish War of 1877–78. Now the *zemtsy* wished to do everything in their power to succor "all those who have suffered in the war and their families."[63]

The Moscow provincial *zemstvo*, led by Shipov, passed a resolution calling for "the formation of a society of *zemstvo* organizations to aid wounded soldiers."[64] Shipov was made chair of the new commission by acclamation. On 12 February Shipov informed fourteen other provincial boards of the contents of the Moscow resolution. Shipov called for these *zemstva* "to recognize the need to take part in the organization of medical-sanitation aid in the Far East and to enter into this matter in union with the Moscow *zemstvo*."[65] Within a matter of weeks almost 800,000 rubles were appropriated for relief operations. At a meeting of the Moscow commission on 20 February, attended

by representatives of the other fourteen *zemstva* involved in the new General *Zemstvo* Organization (*Obshchezemskaia Organizatsiia*), it was decided that assistance would only be rendered "to the ill, wounded and infirm, and not to embarked troops."[66]

It was imperative that some sort of plan be implemented to prevent any duplication of efforts or waste of resources. Shipov proposed that one of two plans be adopted. Either the contributions of the various *zemstva* could be placed in one fund, from which disbursements could be made by representatives of the participating *zemstva*, or the representatives could draw up a plan of action and then allow each provincial *zemstvo* to organize relief detachments in accordance with their own financial resources. The commission adopted the latter alternative since it ostensibly would be within the parameters of the *Zemstvo* Statute as the various provincial *zemstva* would act separately; this would allow the *zemtsy* to sidestep the possibility of becoming embroiled in yet another dispute with the government. It was "resolved that provincial *zemstva* would organize their own medical detachments completely independently of each other, equipping them with all the necessary supplies, and inviting the assistance of local persons."[67]

But rather than view such developments as a net gain for Russian society, the state interpreted the initiative as a sort of Trojan horse, a direct challenge to government authority. The resolution adopted by the Moscow commission went on to state:

> This organization does not exclude the possibility that those *zemstva* not wishing to organize their own independent units can instead contribute their monies to the Moscow *zemstvo*. For their participation in the general *zemstvo* organization's commission, which will work on the overall plan of action, each of these *zemstva* must elect one or more representatives authorized to participate in the deliberations and send them on to the next executive session.[68]

Interior minister Plehve refused to condone these efforts by the *zemtsy* to participate more fully in public life. He thought that

> Article 3 of the Statute on *Zemstvo* institutions limited the sphere of the activity of these institutions to the boundaries of the province or county... A general, empire-wide *zemstvo* organization for aid to the wounded and sick troops must be recognized as being in direct contravention of the law's demands....[69]

In April, Plehve sent a letter to the Moscow provincial board in which he demanded that Shipov answer the following nine questions:

> 1. Was the Moscow provincial *zemstvo* board circulating an invitation to the other provincial *zemstvo* boards to join in a combined effort to aid sick and wounded troops in the Far East?
>
> 2. What was the result of this invitation and what kind of answers were sent from each of the *zemstva*?
>
> 3. Was the Moscow provincial board acting on the authority of its assembly, and how was this authorization expressed?
>
> 4. Under what conditions was the meeting of *zemstvo* representatives convoked for a discussion of joint activity to aid the sick and wounded troops in the Far East?
>
> 5. Who called this assembly together?
>
> 6. In what order was business conducted, who presided, were any minutes kept, and if so, who kept them?
>
> 7. What types of subjects were discussed, and what resolutions were adopted concerning them?
>
> 8. Did the conference establish a permanent executive organ? What are its functions and who constitutes it?
>
> 9. Did the conference result in direct relations between a certain number of *zemstvo* boards, in which chairmen agreed to participate, and in which *zemstva* exactly and concerning what endeavors?

Plehve did not even bother to wait for a reply. He regarded the formation of a united *zemstvo* organization as a dangerous precedent. On 17, April he issued a circular in which he ordered his subordinates to block any meetings of *zemstvo* deputies which took place without his prior written permission. The circular also stated that they "should not under any circumstances allow any further meetings by *zemstva* which have not as of yet joined the organization."[70] Plehve also ordered the seizure of records concerning the union and on 22 April he refused to confirm Shipov's reelection as chairman of the Moscow provincial board. Plehve's non-confirmation of Shipov's candidacy was a direct response to Shipov's continuing efforts to organize a *zemstvo* union. He admitted as much in an interview with Shipov,

> I consider your activity harmful...in the political sense. When one considers political harmfulness...one usually has in mind political unreliability, conspiratorial revolutionary activity, etc. In your case, however, this does not even arise. I consider your activity harmful in the political sense because you consistently strive for the widening of the competence and sphere of activity of the public institutions and for the establishment of an organization which will bring about the unification of the activities of *zemstvo* institutions in various provinces.[71]

The *zemtsy* were shocked when its well-intentioned relief efforts were thwarted by the bureaucracy. Paul Miliukov, the famous liberal leader, recounts hearing a military officer complain: "Is not every spontaneous action doomed? Is there any room for conscious patriotism? Has not even the humble attempt of self-governing (*sic*) assemblies to unite in helping the sick and wounded been denounced as criminal, and forbidden by Plehve?"[72] At this point the *zemtsy* decided "to turn personally and directly to the tsar."[73] Prince G. E. L'vov, the chair of the Tula provincial *zemstvo* assembly's executive board and a long-time proponent of "the *zemstvo* idea," who had been elected by the commission to oversee the organization's activities in the Far East, was dispatched to St. Petersburg.

During his audience with the tsar, Prince L'vov told Nicho-

las that the *zemtsy* were only seeking to cooperate with the Red Cross and army medical corps in their humanitarian relief efforts; L'vov assured him that they "did not want to embark upon such work secretly and sneakily," and that their intentions were wholly apolitical. Nicholas hugged, kissed and blessed L'vov, and expressed his confidence in the abilities of the *zemsty*, asking L'vov to "pass on to the personnel detachments my blessings and every hope for success in your holy cause of philanthropy."[74] The tsar's words were given the widest possible dissemination; however, Tikhon Polner, the elected secretary of the new organization, noted that the persecution instigated by Plehve continued despite the tsar's consent to and blessing of their endeavors. Many *zemstva* that had previously expressed a willingness to enter into the new organization now balked, citing Plehve's circular.[75] Nevertheless, at their final organizational meeting in Moscow on 2 May 1904, twenty-two representatives from twelve provincial *zemstva* agreed to set up medical units in the Far East "along the dirt roads [leading] from the places [where] the troops are positioned to the railroad stations and evacuation wharves at the waterfront."[76] In other words, the *zemtsvo* aid stations were to serve as a conduit between the medical services offered at the front by the army corpsmen and the hospitals in the rear staffed by the Red Cross.

The *zemtsy* believed that this would prove far superior to the uncoordinated, *ad hoc* measures which had marked earlier relief efforts. Most of the provincial assemblies quickly endorsed the Moscow plan and followed the guidelines which had been set up by their board of experts. As S. Musin-Pushkin of the Yaroslavl provincial assembly board noted,

> Without the unification of the various *zemstva* into one general organization, without the centralization of preparatory work in the executive commission established by the Moscow provincial board, the difficult task of establishing and equipping the detachments would, without a doubt not have been completed in such an orderly, uniform and prudent fashion....[77]

The General *Zemstvo* Organization organized twenty-one medical units with 1,050 available beds. Included among the association's 360 personnel were ten plenipotentiaries (eight of

whom volunteered to work *gratis*), forty-three doctors, nine accountants, forty-two paramedics, one hundred nurses, twenty-four cooks, ninety-two orderlies, and forty laundresses. The Tula medical unit was the first to depart for Harbin, leaving on 17 April. Kharkov's detachment left on 4 May while Orel's departed on 6 May and Chernigov's *zemtsy* left for the Far East on the 12th. The remaining *zemstvo* detachments left in two large groups: the Voronezh and Kursk detachments departed Moscow on 19 May, which was the same day the Kostroma and Yaroslavl units arrived in Moscow. On the following day these personnel departed for Harbin, along with the five Moscow detachments.

On average, the 7,400 *verst* (approximately 5,200 miles) journey to Harbin took a little over a month. The quickest trip was twenty days by the Orel unit, which found itself on an express mail train. The longest trip was one of forty days that the Kharkov units were forced to endure. Oppressive heat, poor sanitary conditions, a monotonous diet, and inactivity marked the journey. When the units arrived between 15 May and 22 June they usually "were in quite a depressed mood."[78] By the time the units arrived in the Far East, Port Arthur had been cut off and besieged by the Japanese army; they had also landed troops along the Liaotung Peninsula and had defeated the Russian commander Kuropatkin's army. The Russian forces were compelled to retreat slowly northward while fending off repeated strikes by the three Japanese armies opposing them. As they withdrew, yet another Japanese army was landing unopposed at Dalny on the Kwangtung Peninsula to bring still more pressure to bear upon the surrounded Russian troops at Port Arthur.

The resultant flood of casualties overwhelmed the available medical aid facilities. Throughout the spring and into the summer *Novoe vremia* ran a column entitled "Aid to the Sick and Wounded" *(pomoshch bol'nym i ranenym)* which was devoted to a discussion of medical relief activities in the theater of operations. The contributions of the Red Cross were all duly acknowledged by the pro-government paper, but not once was mention made of the far more extensive operations of the *zemtsy*. By mid-summer it became apparent that society's independent philanthropic activities would indeed be necessary to provide the fullest possible measure of relief to the tsar's stricken soldiers. On 13 July the paper specifically referred to the General *Zemstvo* Organization. It quoted from a telegram dispatched by Prince L'vov,

> The detachments have opened medical provisioning points in all the front line units of the army and along their line of march. All together 1,600 beds have been opened at various points...If circumstances warrant, the field hospitals of the *zemstvo* organization can accept up to 2,500 sick and wounded personnel. The newly opened units will assist in other endeavors as well; they have also set as a goal the feeding of weak and exhausted soldiers.

By July 1904 the General *Zemstvo* Organization had treated 13,181 sick and wounded soldiers and had contributed the staggering sum of 1,071,804 rubles to the cause of medical relief.[79] That same month a terrorist bomb killed Plehve. His successor, Prince Peter Svitopolk-Mirskii, recognized the need for cooperation with society and in an interview with a French newspaper declared that the government would now "allow the *zemstva* the greatest freedom." He also gave official sanction to the organization. In one of his first speeches he declared, "In light of the increased need for the relief of sick and wounded troops the government does not want to act as an obstacle to the implementation of the relief efforts which are arising as a result of the united effort on the part of the *zemstva*."[80] He went on to assert that this

> administrative experience had convinced me that to be successful, the government must base its efforts upon an attitude of sincere trust in public and class institutions and in the people generally. Only in this way can one hope for mutual understanding, and without that, the sound organization of the empire cannot be expected.

A period of possibility known variously as "the spring" or "the era of trust" had begun. Society had never heard such conciliatory words from a government minister. Some observers went so far as to predict that "since public elements wholeheartedly aspire to participate in governmental activities, there is no alternative but to expand their participation and also their responsibilities."[81]

It seemed that the relief crisis engendered by the war would

serve finally to diffuse the tensions between the government and the *zemstva* over the latter's desire to participate in civic affairs. The government's sanction of their endeavors and the favor with which the new interior minister looked upon the meaningful participation of *zemstvo* men in the affairs of state indicated to the *zemtsy* that the era of their ideas being dismissed as "senseless dreams" had come to a close.

In autumn 1904, Prince L'vov left for Moscow in order to deliver a report to Dmitrii Shipov on the activities of the General *Zemstvo* Organization in the Far East. The growing confidence of the *zemtsy* can be seen in the telegram they dispatched to Shipov upon L'vov's departure. It read:

> We are fully cognizant of the fact that it was the personal dignity of Prince L'vov, both as an individual and as a public activist, that made it possible for the *zemstvo* detachments to pursue their work unhindered and also resulted in the removal of the government's prejudices and their assumption of a proper attitude toward this *zemstvo* undertaking.... Firmly and decisively displaying a conviction and fervent belief in the public idea...we hope that the coming of favorable conditions in the internal life of Russia will allow Prince L'vov the opportunity to display properly his talents in the area of public activity and we ask you to express to him our fervent wishes that this activity will be developed as broadly as possible for the glory of the Russian *zemstvo* and Russian society.[82]

In his report, L'vov described the activities of the *zemtsy* and declared that their loyal efforts "had served to remove the obstacles which had hindered the further expansion of the *zemstvo* organization." This was an obvious reference to Plehve's order prohibiting other *zemstvo* or municipal bodies from affiliating with the association. The assembled delegates voted to send L'vov to call on interior minister Sviatopolk-Mirskii and to request that this restriction be removed formally. Two weeks later, on 17 October 1904, the following announcement was published in the *Pravitel'stvennyi vestnik* (Government Messenger):

> General Adjutant Kuropatkin, in a telegram addressed to the minister of internal affairs, has testified to the useful and selfless activity of the medical-sanitation units with the Manchurian army. These units have been maintained and equipped by fourteen provincial *zemstva* and General Kuropatkin has expressed a desire for an increase in the number of those units. By order of His Imperial Majesty, the minister of internal affairs has notified the provincial governors in circular no. 26 dated 6 October, that in view of the need to increase relief measures for the sick and wounded troops, the circular which forbade joint *zemstvo* activity is to be disregarded. All future efforts by the *zemstva* are to be encouraged, including contributions for the further development of those activities currently being conducted by the medical sanitation units, and the formation of new ones.[83]

The next meeting of the General *Zemstvo* Organization's commission was scheduled to coincide with the famous *zemstvo* congress of November 1904. The tsar had given permission for the *zemtsy* to hold a national congress in order "to discuss technical *zemstvo* affairs."[84] Shipov, L'vov, and Petrunkevich visited Sviatopolk-Mirskii in order to inform him of the planned agenda for the congress and to ask that the government consider revising the second *zemstvo* statute to allow for more independent activity on the part of local self-government. Once again, however, the radical Petrunkevich frightened the government with the specter of a movement to "crown the edifice" with a national assembly. Sviatopolk-Mirskii refused to sanction the planned congress but he did tell Shipov, L'vov, and Petrunkevich that he would look the other way and asked to be informed of the outcome of the meeting. He then ordered that all news about the congress be suppressed, but word spread throughout educated society like wildfire; over 5,000 telegrams of support flooded in from every corner of the empire.

The major resolution passed at the November *zemstvo* congress revealed the concern of the *zemtsy* over the deficiencies in the state's governing apparatus. In point one the delegates called these deficiencies "abnormal" and stated that they had arisen because of the gulf between state and society. In points two and three the *zemtsy* complained about their exclusion from "participating in the administration of the state." They noted that the government had sought to centralize all aspects of political life and had done so in an arbitrary manner. The fourth and fifth points were conciliatory and held that the regime could count on educated society's support and assistance provided that administrative arbitrariness was curtailed by the establishment of the rule of law in Russia. Other points in the resolution called for civil liberties and the equalization of the peasant's status with that of the nobility and townspeople.[85]

The most important points were those dealing with organs of local self-government. The *zemtsy* demanded in point nine that they "be put in a position where they can successfully fulfill the responsibilities appropriate for properly and broadly organized organs of self-government." They also continued their decades-old quest for the rationalization of the apparatus by demanding the establishment of *volost' zemstva.* The *zemtsy* could agree on all of these points but there still existed a gulf between moderates who hoped for a less arbitrary autocracy and liberals who desired a constitutional form of government. It must also be kept in mind that the *zemtsy* were only a small percentage of the nobility; the vast majority of nobles were conservatives who had until now eschewed political activity. At the November congress, the liberals held the upper hand and they voted for a legislative assembly, a far cry from the "senseless dreams" which had only advocated a consultative assembly. The minority, led by Shipov, again called for this advisory institution and, out of respect for Shipov's contributions to the public movement it was agreed that both the majority and minority positions would be included in the final report; it was also agreed that out of deference to the wishes of the moderates the word "constitution" would not be used. The *zemtsy* also unanimously adopted a resolution which was sent to their colleagues in the Far East. It read: "the conference of 104 *zemstvo* activists sends to all personnel of the *zemstvo* units its hearty greetings and

deep gratitude for your selfless work which underscores the strength and importance of unity."[86]

As a result of this conference and the subsequent "banquet campaign" modeled on the famous Paris banquets of 1847–48, the tsar convened a council of high officials to consider reforms. At the meeting of 11 December 1904, Sviatopolk-Mirskii advised the tsar to allow for the participation of elected representatives from society in the State Council's deliberations on legislative proposals. But even this modest step was vetoed by Nicholas who declared that "under no circumstances will I ever agree to a representative form of government, for I consider it harmful to the trust God gave me over the people."[87] The tsar's decision demoralized both enlightened bureaucrats such as Mirskii and educated society. The tsar did issue a decree promising full equality for the peasantry and to extend the range of authority for the *zemstva*. But these promises were accompanied by an official warning that "*zemstvo* and municipal assemblies and all types of organizations and societies must not exceed their prescribed limitations."[88] The tsar's promises did little to allay the unrest which gripped all of Russia. In January 1905, a peaceful demonstration in St. Petersburg was fired upon by troops, marking the beginning of the first Russian revolution. It united the previously fragmented opposition to the regime and served to galvanize society into a concerted effort to wrest further concessions from the throne. The regime was faced with an unprecedented wave of strikes. Nicholas sacked Sviatopolk-Mirskii and appointed A. G. Bulygin as interior minister.

A confused attempt at appeasement was soon made by the new government. Bulygin was charged with the organization of a plan to summon "the elected representatives of the people...to participate in the preliminary elaboration and discussion of legislative bills."[89] The tsar also issued an imperial manifesto, which asked all Russians to "stand firm around Our Throne, true to the traditions of Our path...and support the autocracy for the good of all Our faithful subjects." He denounced those who "attack the foundations of the Russian Empire...to create a new government based on principles alien to Our Fatherland." Russian society was somewhat confused by these very different sentiments. The *zemtsy* sent a fourteen member delegation led by Sergei Trubetskoi to request that the tsar clarify his intentions. Trubetskoi concluded his address with the astute ob-

servation "Sire! The renewal of Russia should be based upon trust."[90] Here the tsar had an opportunity to meet society halfway and to bring about a rapprochement, but once again Nicholas hesitated and then lost that opportunity as the crisis escalated.

During the spring and into the summer of 1905 the *zemtsy* continued to succor the army's sick and wounded soldiers. As the secretary of the association noted,

> in the military sanitation camps the soldiers felt themselves to be only soldiers, but in the *zemstvo* aid stations they felt they were not only soldiers, but human beings. Consequently, the soldiers always tried and wished to be transported to the *zemstvo* aid camps.[91]

From 27 May 1904 to 1 September 1905 the *zemtsy* had accepted 50,385 sick and wounded soldiers for medical treatment. They had evacuated 9,068 on the four *zemstvo* trains and provided hot meals for 389,579 men, and distributed bread and tea to another 71,495 soldiers. In the last month of the campaign they had also supplied boiled water to 107,193 men. In order to pay for these endeavors the *zemtsy* had raised the stupendous sum of 2,080,894 rubles.[92]

The war had been lost, but the *zemtsy* were gaining on the political front. The union's leadership voted to make the General *Zemstvo* Organization a permanent fixture of Russia's political scene. In a congress held on 30 August 1905 the assembled *zemstvo* delegates noted,

> The unification of the *zemstva* has been achieved at great cost and only after considerable struggle with the administration. At the present time unification is an accomplished fact and the General *Zemstvo* Organization has earned a deserved reputation and represents a considerable force; it would be an egregious mistake not to make use of this.
>
> Until the present time the administration has always interpreted the *Zemstvo* Statute in such a narrow fashion as to prevent the various provincial *zemstva* from exceeding the sphere of local

welfare and needs. The war forced the government to accept unification and joint activity, and even with the cessation of hostilities there are still circumstances which dictate the need for the continuation of the joint work of the 'Russian *Zemstva*'.

Such a circumstance is the famine which threatens Russia once again... A serious crop failure has enveloped twenty-three provinces of European Russia... According to recent estimates, the population of the region which is afflicted by the crop failure consists of approximately 18 million souls of both sexes.

The impending disaster for these areas will significantly surpass even the crop failure of 1891–92; in the opinion of the *zemstvo* activists of these regions the measures which will be necessary in the next year will exceed by five times all that was done in this regard in 1891–92.[93]

Accordingly, the congress agreed to turn the organization's efforts toward famine relief, voting unanimously "to organize assistance for those who are suffering from the famine."

By October 1905, meaningful concessions had finally been wrested from the throne as a result of the great general strike. Many supporters of the autocracy recognized the need to appease society; even the political chameleon Witte prepared a memorandum in which he noted that Russia had outgrown the existing regime and it was now necessary to institute an order based on civic liberty. He called for the observance of the rule of law and for "a spiritual union with the moderate majority of the people." Even *Novoe vremia* declared that "repression can do far more to undermine the idea of tsarist authority than the legalization of liberty." Consequently, Nicholas II granted the Russian people the fundamental civil liberties and elected assembly which many in the public movement had long demanded. The October Manifesto also provided that no law should be promulgated without the approval of this assembly, thus making it a legislative body. This limitation on the tsar's autocratic powers, combined with the development of independent organs of local self-government, seemed to ensure Russia's continued progress toward a pluralistic, multi-centered soci-

ety. In one stroke of the pen, Nicholas had launched the transformation of autocratic Russia into a constitutional monarchy not unlike the German Empire.

The government continued its policy of cooperation with the *zemstvo* association throughout the famine relief campaigns and peasant resettlement program conducted while Peter Stolypin was chairman of Russia's new cabinet, the council of ministers. The scope and significance of the society's civic activity in both town and countryside suggests that a segment of Russia's educated public was in fact becoming increasingly active and reformist and that a civil society was in the making. The *zemtsy* began a determined campaign to restructure the organs of local self-government, calling once again for the expansion of its sphere of competence and the creation of the all-class *volost'* level *zemstvo* unit. However, the organization ran into opposition from an unexpected source – the *zemstvo* itself. Fearful of peasant violence and the specter of another *Pugachevshchina*, the traditionally minded majority of nobles, who had remained largely passive during the forty years of the experiment in local self-government, now began to rally around the throne and become more involved politically. They accomplished for the regime what all of Tolstoi's and Plehve's efforts had failed to do. The *zemstvo* would for a time become precisely the type of buttress the regime had envisioned in 1864.

The conservative nobility which had come to dominate the *zemstva* generally refused to participate in relief efforts as "many *zemstva* were filled with the new Black Hundred deputies who held the new *zemstvo* union in dim light."[94] The large sums of money voted for the war effort had crippled *zemstvo* finances; accordingly, a broad array of important *zemstvo* functions were shut down in this *likvidatorstvo*.[95] The *zemstvo* organization would have to rely almost exclusively on government monies to carry out their philanthropic activities. Fearful of the further erosion of their privileged position, right-wing deputies attacked the organization because it was "pursuing secret goals which have nothing in common with its official missions."[96] One *zemets* called for the *Okhrana* (secret police) to supervise relief efforts. And the notorious reactionary Count Bobrinskii recommended that the Tula provincial *zemstvo* assembly "not only refuse to participate in the so-called 'general *zemstvo* organization,' but turn the attention of the government...to this matter."[97]

To be sure, the organization did indeed have a political

agenda. And Russia's last great statesman was not entirely unsympathetic to their ideas. Peter Stolypin would curtail government supervision of the *zemstva* and increase their sphere of competence, but most of his projects, such as granting enforcement powers to the *zemstva* and establishing the all-class *volost'* level unit, were never implemented due to the continued influence of the conservative nobility in both the refashioned State Council (the upper house of the legislature) and the *zemstva* themselves. It was indeed unfortunate that these plans were frustrated by noble opposition, especially Stolypin's plan for the establishment of the *volost'* level *zemstvo* in order to allow for the acculturation of the peasantry.

The *zemtsy*, however, continued their struggle for more meaningful participation in the affairs of state, passing a resolution at the organization's conference in June 1906, which read,

> given the existing statutes and the present conditions of governmental activity, any type of participation by the General *Zemstvo* Organization...in alimentary or domestic operations is permissible. With the change in the structure of the higher central and the local administrations as a result of the realization of a state responsible before a legally convoked body of the people's representatives, conditions are ripe for further change by which the *zemstva* and the General *Zemstvo* Organization will be able to embark on other endeavors...until such time as revisions of the existing statutes can be made.[98]

This resolution was essentially a declaration of independence by the *zemstvo* organization. Not only did the *zemtsy* insist that henceforth they would act in concert to fulfill the obligations laid upon them by the *zemstvo* statute, but that the *de facto* tolerance of independent *zemstvo* activity would necessarily have to be recognized *de jure* in keeping with Russia's new political conditions. Stolypin, as is well known, would even attempt to entice both Shipov and L'vov into his cabinet in order to effect a rapprochement with educated society. These moderate *zemstvo* men should have accepted Stolypin's assurances that he was a man of action, not of words, and joined the government. They declined, and another nail went into imperi-

al Russia's coffin. Stolypin did, however, signal his intention to cooperate with society when, in October 1906, he abolished the restriction placed upon *zemstvo* taxation powers by the law of 12 June 1900. This law stipulated that *zemstvo* tax revenues could not be increased by more than 3 per cent per annum. However, many provincial assemblies refused to appropriate more funds for the organization and the *zemtsy* were in dire financial straits when they convened an emergency congress on 28 December 1906. Sixteen deputies from eleven provinces and seven representatives from the organization gathered in Moscow to petition the government "to recognize the need to develop the activities of the General *Zemstvo* Organization." The government agreed and disbursed 2,435,000 rubles for famine relief operations as well as a loan of 3,572,000 rubles for a total expenditure of over 6 million rubles. Including the monies allocated by the *zemstva* and funds collected from abroad, over 8 million rubles were available for these efforts.

The energetic activity of the organization belies the dominant paradigm in the field which contends that after 1905 educated society was demoralized and marginalized, and thus unable to play a constructive role in Russian life, especially after the *zemstvo* reaction set in.[99] The relative neglect of the period 1905-1914 (the so-called "lost decade" of Russian history) in the scholarly literature is largely due to the momentous impact of Russia's revolution in 1917 and to the uncritical acceptance of Trotsky's observation that her revolution in 1905 was but its "dress rehersal." Besides the obvious methodological problem posed by scholars attempting to fit evidence into prearranged political categories, this led many historians to concentrate upon what seemed to be the antecedents of the 1917 revolution, such as the increasing frequency of worker's strikes (which were now legal) and the internecine struggles of the Bolsheviks (when in fact revolutionaries enjoyed only a superficial success, such as the the murders of ordinary policemen), while minimalizing or even ignoring countervailing trends. Perhaps the most intriguing and little studied aspect of the period is the dramatic increase in public initiative displayed by the *zemstvo* in the areas of education, public health, medical and famine relief, agricultural assistance, and peasant resettlement to Siberia and the Far East.[100]

It is important to note that this occurred *after* the rightward shift of the *zemstvo's* political complexion and that the now

dominant conservatives not only reinstated those programs which they had liquidated during the reaction, but also expanded those services installed by their liberal predecessors that still remained and even instituted new ones. By 1909, the conservatives had come to understand that by their actions during the *likvidatorstvo* they had undermined the very rationale for the existence of local self-government and thus had almost made the *zemstvo*, and by extension themselves along with it, virtually irrelevant. Between 1907 and 1914, they voted for dramatic and unprecedented increases in funding for a plethora of programs. For example, expenditures on education went from twenty-five million rubles per annum in 1906 to sixty-six million in 1912; another ten million rubles per annum was was allocated by the Duma for the construction of schools (in order to accomplish Stolypin's goals of peasant acculturation to the values of a civil society and to change their traditional views on land tenure). Fully one-third of *zemstvo* expenditures went towards education while another third went towards health care in Russia's rural communities. In 1912, the overall budget of the thirty-four *zemstva* was 220 million rubles, more than three times as much as was allocated in 1895. By 1914, the total budget for the forty-three *zemstvo* provinces had reached 347 million rubles.[101]

Thus, during the turbulent final decade of the Romanov dynasty, Russian society would time and again demonstrate its newfound confidence and strength by establishing a broad array of *zemstvo* programs to succor famine victims, educate the peasantry, and, during the First World War, assist refugees and the tsar's sick and wounded soldiers.[102] These endeavors show a clear commitment on the part of *obshchestvo* to participate in the regeneration of Russian social and political life. The government dealt directly with the union and allowed it a wide latitude under Stolypin, who thought that the future of Russia in large part would "depend upon the close cooperation of the *zemstva* and of municipal administration with the government." Thus, the government's "supervision over the activity of public agencies must be confined predominantly to observation over the legality of these agencies' activity."[103] Stolypin also sought society's assistance in his efforts to ease the peasant "land shortage" by facilitating their resettlement to Siberia. This was a part of Stolypin's conscious attempt to bring the peasantry into the modern era in both a political and an economic sense. It also

figured as part of his broader endeavor to break up the communal system of land tenure and establish a property holding class of peasant proprietors, instituting a *volost'* level *zemstvo* unit. The latter, along with a massive *zemstvo* education campaign, would ultimately provide for the eventual acculturation of the peasantry. Stolypin thought it "essential to develop the unbounded resources of Siberia, and also to relieve the congestion of some provinces in [European] Russia."[104] To that end, the General *Zemstvo* Organization formed nineteen medical-alimentary detachments (one from each of the participating provinces) and reestablished their stations along the Trans-Siberian Railway from Irkutsk to the Far East.

By the end of March 1908 the union had dispatched 160 personnel, including five commissioners, nine assistant administrators, five clerks, six doctors and fourteen paramedics, forty-one nurses, thirty-six tradesman of various types (locksmiths, merchants, etc.), and thirty-nine cooks.[105] Their stated goal was "to dispense medicines, feed, and in general attempt to render every possible assistance to the settlers."[106] The 1908 resettlement campaign, which had been launched amid much fanfare after quite a bit of publicity, saw 758,812 migrants cross the Urals.[107] The *zemtsy* fed a total of 32,572 settlers during their four months of operations.[108] They also provided medical assistance and food to 7,802 peasants in the Maritime region at a cost of 87,312 rubles.[109] Thus, during the decade of its existence (1904–14) the General *Zemstvo* Organization spent over 2,000,000 rubles on assistance to the sick and wounded troops of the Russo-Japanese War, another 11,280,000 during its famine relief campaigns, and 200,000 for the alleviation of the settlers' plight in the Far East. A total of 13.5 million rubles was spent on the union's philanthropic endeavors, which assisted 652,164 soldiers. Over 250 million meals were served during the famine relief campaigns and another 32,000 peasants were aided by the organization during its Far Eastern operations. The *zemtsy* rightly noted that the significance of their efforts could not be found in these figures, but instead lay in the fact that society had demanded and won a role in the affairs of state as an independent force. From this point forward they would demand "that the center accept societal forces in all these affairs."

Peter Stolypin's assassination in 1911 left in charge the unimaginative Kokovtsev, who, like Tsar Nicholas had never been

reconciled to the new political order created by the October Manifesto. He declared that he would "not allow any kind of organization to act independently of the government...The role of society is to contribute funds...The General *Zemstvo* Organization will not be permitted to participate in the struggle against famine...because the union always overreaches the limits set by government.[110] However, Kokovtsev would be forced to back down when the magnitude of the famine became known. The organization continued to operate without government sanction down to the outbreak of the Great War as society was simply too powerful to be muzzled. Political modernization was, albeit slowly, following in the wake of Russia's social and economic transformation; "the decade's experience of the General *Zemstvo* Organization's work testifies as to the strength and truth of this idea."[111] But Nicholas could not shed his image of old Russia with its *narod* of amorphous, passive subjects arranged in a hierarchy of hereditary groups given legal privileges according to their birth status, as opposed to the reality of a modern state with a body of active citizens equal before the law. Stolypin had hoped that time might have eventually served to disabuse the tsar of these quaint notions. But for Russia, as for the rest of Europe, time had run out.

With the outbreak of war in 1914 the federated General *Zemstvo* Organization was merged into the dynamic, centralized All-Russian *Zemstvo* Union *(Vserossiiskii zemskii soiuz).* Again led by Prince L'vov, the union would play a vital role in the areas of medical relief, refugee assistance and the supply of the army.[112] In all other belligerent states these endeavors were within the purview of the central government, but in Russia the regime was dependent upon society to organize the war effort. In point of fact, the union's accomplishments were so impressive that it came to represent the legitimate demands and aspirations of Russian liberalism. Minister of Internal Affairs Maklakov warned that the unions "obviously were preparing themselves for work on the reconstruction of public life which must come, they feel, at the conclusion of the war."[113]

While Russia's incipient civil society had responded to the opportunities the war presented, the state was reluctant to encourage such strong, autonomous social organizations. While society appeared willing, the state resisted such a merging of interests. It was, after all, the government's incompetence which forced society to assume the burden for the conduct of the war.

As Prince L'vov wrote,

> The activity of the unions long ago acquired state significance. Public-spirited forces have been attracted to it in very large numbers, and the unions have proven that much of what is unfeasible for the government is feasible by the people's organized forces. It has proven that the people attracted to state work display the great latent forces hidden within them and that the government mechanism of state administration is far from conforming with the living force of the country.[114]

As the representative of liberal society, Prince L'vov was put forward as a potential prime minister by the "Progressive Bloc" of the State Duma in 1915. This body, which included three quarters of the members of the Duma and had ties to the union, its sister organization the All-Russian Union of Towns *(Vserossiisskii soiuz gorodov)* and *zemgor*, their joint committee charged with the mobilization of industry and the supply of the army (also headed by L'vov), demanded the establishment of a government that would be "capable of organizing real cooperation among all citizens."[115] And with the collapse of the tsarist regime in 1917 it was L'vov who was named head of the Provisional government and charged with the responsibility of charting Russia's course toward democracy.[116]

But L'vov, his government, and Russian liberalism failed utterly in 1917. While Russia had made a great deal of progress since 1861, the social revolution overwhelmed the nascent middle class and the emerging civil society fell apart before it had time to sink deeper roots. In the final analysis, this failure was not due to the Provisional government's temporizing or concern for legalistic proprieties; rather, it was the tsarist regime's refusal to integrate the peasantry into the social and economic life of the nation in accordance with the spirit of the Great Reforms, which accounted for this failure. Despite the best efforts of the *zemtsy*, the peasantry in 1917 remained largely unacculturated to the norms and values of a modern civil society. As L'vov later wrote, "the imperial government was never overthrown: it merely failed as a result of its own internal weakness."[117]

Thus, as the imperial era of modern Russia drew to a close, the legacy of local government was limited to societal initiative too heavily constrained by the limits of autocracy to extend to any official demarcation on power and authority. The conflict between the rival notions of statist local administration and societal local self-government undermined attempts to bridge the wide chasm between state and society. And yet even after the Tsar's abdication, Russia continued to confront similar dilemmas concerning local government: Is it right for local interests to supercede the general interests of the state? Would local self-government not only promote anarchy and radical policies which would only do damage to property ownership, but also do harm to Russia's economy, and to social and political order? Such questions not only surfaced in the latter half of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, but also animated Russian history throughout the twentieth century as well. It is in this light that Bolshevik efforts to build a new Russian state bear remarkable similarities with its past.

Local government and post Imperial Russia

With the collapse of the tsarist autocracy in February 1917 came a new window of opportunity for liberal reform and the further development of civil society in Russia. In the days after Nicholas' abdication, the vast majority of tsarist officials from provincial governors to village police were dismissed from office, some even arrested. A "provisional" government was created from the ranks of the state *duma* (legislature), and attempted to restore some semblance of government throughout Russia. L'vov became its Prime Minister in March. At the local level, the provisional government extended *zemstvo* institutions to the level of volost, appointed the chairs of *zemstva* to a new office (local commissar) to lead and direct local administration, and initiated plans for the creation of a new constitutional system. These plans resurrected the societal theory of local self-government so prominent in earlier attempts at *zemstvo* reform.[118]

Efforts to establish state authority through the provinces, however, were unsuccessful. The *zemstva*, which the leaders within the provisional government hoped might provide a foundation for local government, were themselves struggling for legitimacy and public support. Throughout the country, local

politics was increasingly influenced by various social groups and organizations which demanded a voice in local decision-making. Some such groups cast themselves as organs of self-government. In many locales, five or more such organs competed with each other, with rival bids for authority and overlapping functions.[119] The provisional government attempted to strengthen the legitimacy of municipal councils and *zemstva* by holding local elections in April and May, respectively, and went so far as to transfer authority over the civil militia to local organs from central control. But these efforts were largely in vain. Popular legitimacy in local affairs, especially in urban centers, shifted to newly formed soviets.

According to most Russian sources, local soviets sprouted after February throughout much of Russia, "like mushrooms after rain".[120] These soviets were most prominent in urban centers with strong proletarian and/or military populations. The soviets were patterned after earlier renditions of worker councils which had formed spontaneously during 1905. A nominal claim to the leadership of all soviets was made by the Petrograd soviet, although occasional congresses of soviets held in regional centers and a national congress held in the capital maintained more legitimate status as representatives of local soviets. Predominantly comprised of delegates elected by workers and soldiers, the majority of deputies initially had extremely weak, if not nonexistent, party affiliation.[121] The soviets generally were fractious, noisy, meetings held sporadically, with a minimum of institutionalization.[122] Initially, they functioned to monitor and control existing organs of local administration, and left municipal *dumas*, various self-governing committees, *zemstva*, and state officials to actually conduct administrative matters. There was, however, an important feature among some of these local soviets during these months of turmoil: the existence of power. The source of soviet power emerged from their *de facto* control over local militias, and from the popular support of workers and soldiers. And as soviet executive committees gained some measure of experience in administrative matters, local soviets came to play more active roles in local administration and government. In some cases, for example, soviets administered criminal and civil law, transferred ownership of factories to trade unions, and expropriated land for communal cultivation.[123] In rural areas, soviets *per se* were less common, particularly those with control over resources. But peasant

assemblies and land committees filled much of the void in terms of local government, particularly concerning such matters as the redistribution of land.[124] This emergence of power among local soviets and other organizations was an important concern for the provisional government. While the soviets and various committees often lacked the resources to build roads, strengthen local food supplies, or provide education and health services, they could declare strikes, ignore central decrees, and pursue alternative policies. Most important was their claim to represent local interests – much of their popular support was a function of this representation, often in direct proportion to the soviets' opposition to the center. For this reason, the ascendance of soviets as institutions of public authority deepened the crisis of state power in 1917. As Michael Hickey has noted, the provisional government envisioned a new state which would mediate various interests and social tensions; yet through 1917, these tensions became increasingly irreconcilable.[125] And where the *zemstva* and municipal councils failed to resolve certain grievances or public issues, other committees and the local soviets could bolster their legitimacy as fora devoted to the public good.

For their part, soviets were initially reluctant to claim authority for local government, initially pledging qualified support for the provisional government, which left the soviet the opportunity to criticize the decisions which were made. The Petrograd Soviet actually resisted many clear opportunities to assume control of the government because of the precarious nature of national politics. Anweiler suggested three reasons why soviet leaders were reluctant to assume sole power. First, few of these leaders were Bolsheviks, and they recognized that their support was of a fragile nature, and that soviet government might invite intense opposition from the bourgeoisie and peasantry. Second, soviet leaders were completely inexperienced in administrative matters. Third, and perhaps most important, a bid for full "soviet power" would demand the consolidation of authority among existing soviets, which would force soviets to instill centralization and corrupt the fragile unity among various soviets of different tiers.[126] Thus, the problem of *dvoevlastie* represented more than a struggle between two rival institutions. It also represented the crumbling of central authority and power throughout Russia. Neither the provisional government nor the soviets possessed a solid base for state authority which

could penetrate the country. That local soviets eventually provided a *better* foundation than the zemstva and municipal councils was clear, but those involved in the Petrograd soviet recognized that support from local soviets was incumbent upon the existence of a fraternal enemy.[127]

During the summer of 1917, many local governments made claims of independence and sovereignty. The soviet in Kronstadt, for example, passed a decision in May which effectively declared the sovereign republic of Kronstadt, with its soviet, the sole authority. "The central government," it declared, "has no right what[so]ever to meddle in a specific territorial unit, or to make decisions for the individual cell rather than for the state as a whole."[128] Representatives from the Petrograd Soviet were asked by the Provisional Government to intervene, which they did by asking members of the Kronstadt Soviet if they wanted Russia to drift further into anarchy, and if they would be so kind as to explain where local autonomy would end and central authority could begin. While the Kronstadt Soviet agreed to comply with the Provisional Government on a voluntary basis, it maintained its claim to sovereignty. And such claims were the rule rather than the exception. By the end of the summer of 1917, what remained of the Russian state "had fragmented into a collection of autonomous local 'republics' – informal 'governments', elected by *demokratiia*, which enacted their own revolutionary 'laws' without regard to the interests of the national state."[129]

Lenin's plan to resolve the problems of *dvoevlastie* was to put an end to soviet support for the Provisional Government. In this regard, the Bolshevik leader found two reasons to support soviet power: first, the soviets were ideologically compatible with his interpretation of Marxism, and would serve as arenas for participation and worker deliberation; second, supporting the soviets was a tactical move against the post-imperial, fledgling bourgeois Russian government of Prince L'vov. "All power to the soviets!" thus became the Bolshevik battle cry against all non-proletarian institutions of power. It was less a philosophical position in defense of popular self-government than recognition of the functional role which local councils could play in destroying the state. Soviets were but midwives for the birth of proletarian rule. After the dictatorship of the proletariat had been achieved, an apolitical assumption of coincidence between local and central interests was expected to make autonomous local organs redundant.[130] Lenin's approach was

thus in sharp contrast to the societal theory of local self-government which had gained currency in Russia among Mensheviks and SRs, where local soviets would serve as schools of democratic government and assist the development of what we now call civil society.[131]

When the Bolsheviks seized power in Petrograd, the three concerns which had curbed the ambitions of proponents of soviet power were quickly realized. The bid for power elicited opposition from various segments of society, and the administrative inexperience of soviet executives and Bolshevik leaders was quickly apparent.[132] Most critical to the fate of local government, however, was the realization of the third concern: the bid for soviet power required a centralization of power. This centralization introduced greater discord than had existed through 1917 between local and central soviets. The pre-1917 harmony between local and central soviets had been premised largely upon the existence of a common rival. Once in power, the Bolshevik government was forced to confront the challenges of state building head on. In this regard, the Bolsheviks responded to the challenge of organizing power, including the establishment of functional and authoritative relations among various tiers of government, in the same manner as their tsarist predecessors.

Bolshevik state building and local self-government

On 28 October, just three days after the Bolsheviks had seized power in the name of the soviets, the Second All Russian Congress of Soviets issued a telegram to all local soviets, declaring that all power now belonged to the soviets. Local commissars of the provisional government were released, and chairmen of the soviets were to communicate directly with the revolutionary government. A special commissariat for local self-government was organized in Petrograd, with the portfolio given to one of four SRs in the cabinet. In January 1918, the Third Congress resolved that all local affairs were to be decided only by local soviets.[133] Those organs of local administration which still remained, such as land committees and *zemstva*, could continue their work if they recognized soviet power and would be accountable to them. Those remaining organs of local self-government, refusing to acknowledge soviet power, were to be

dissolved.[134]

The new Bolshevik government expected that the transfer of nominal authority and power to the soviets would resolve the problems of state penetration and local administration. Yet as local soviets assumed the responsibilities of local government and administration, the local executive bodies, often of necessity, began to appropriate increasing measures of power and authority. This augmentation of executive power led to a drastic deterioration of the relationship between executive and legislative organs of local soviets.[135] The horizontal conflict, however, was overshadowed by a thorough breakdown in relations among soviets of different levels. With the provisional government vanquished, the Constituent Assembly dissolved, and an end to *dvoevlastie* at the center, the Bolshevik government was left as the sole representative of central power. But there were, quite simply, no viable linkages on the vertical axis, among provincial, city, district, and village soviets. The consequence was a descent into extreme *mnogovlastie*, with each soviet considering itself the exclusive authoritative institution for its territory. Tikhomirov described the predicament, noting that city, district, and village soviets recognized no authority except their own. And if they did recognize any other institution, such recognition was replete with conditions and qualifications. There was almost a complete absence of administrative structures in the soviets, hardly, indeed, any means to tie administration and government together. "Soviet Russia" thus appeared to be a Russia of unbound, exclusively local soviets, with only a common hatred against "exploiters" to bring them together.[136]

Russia had unraveled, which in some measure justified the fears of earlier statesmen opposed to the organization of power among different tiers of government. The Bolshevik claim to the mantel of Russia's central government was forced to confront this lack of penetration throughout the territory of the state. The problems of state authority along the vertical axis were manifest not only by the many strong expressions of *mestnichestvo* (localism), but also by early tendencies towards *oblastnichestvo* (regionalism). Walter Pietsch, for example, identified some six distinct regional centers for soviet power in 1917–18: Moscow, Petrograd, Ekaterinburg, Minsk-Smolensk, Omsk, and Irkutsk. Each of these centers viewed itself as the legitimate and authoritative organ of state power irrespective of any national government. These local soviets and regional blocs

caused much grief to central interests. Pietsch comments that this period of *oblastnichestvo* directly forced the decision whether the new state would be a completely decentralized republic of soviets or a centralized state.[137]

It should be little surprise that the choice was made for a centralized state. That a highly centralized organization of power was justified by Lenin's rendition of Marxism was a secondary matter. More important to its realization, centralization was a good fit with the pattern of power familiar through Russian history. Criticisms against Lenin and the Bolsheviks were made by Russian liberals and from European Social Democrats such as Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Kautsky. But such criticism was to no avail: centralization was demanded not only for the functioning of the Bolshevik version of the socialist state, it also was required for the preservation of revolution.[138] Lenin's Bolsheviks thus re-initiated a centralizing tendency which rolled back any gains in societal self-government which had begun to blossom in late imperial Russia. The still unripe fruit of self-government was too bitter for central authority, and the new Bolshevik government returned the country to its dominant legacy of central control.

One of the earliest Soviet attempts to consolidate soviet authority and centralize state power was the 1918 Constitution. One scholar suggested that the constitution itself was spurred by the need to consolidate the many disparate local organs into a coherent state system.[139] While all authority in Soviet Russia theoretically was vested in the workers and organized in soviets at regional, provincial and district levels, any real power was exercised by the executive committees. These committees functioned to implement soviet decisions and resolve matters between congresses of soviets. The constitution granted higher soviets the right of control over all lower soviets, allowing higher soviets to void decisions passed by lower soviets. Local revenues were also determined largely by the center. While local soviets could tax for local needs, they became heavily dependent upon transfer payments from above.[140] Later amendments to this first constitution lengthened the period of time between the meetings of local soviets, which effectively strengthened executive committees. And the authority to form education and public health committees at the local level soon shifted from local bodies to higher levels.[141] Moscow bolstered this constitutional control with numerous *postanovlenie* during the Sev-

enth and Eighth Congresses of Soviets, which nominally strengthened dual subordination, and effectively increased control from above.[142]

More importantly, the practice of government in Soviet Russia quickly began to ignore what little authority local soviets did possess. The center found it far easier to bypass existing state organs as a means to facilitate efficient administration. Rather than implement policy through the soviets, Lenin's government formed various state committees, agencies, and commissariats, all of which circumvented the authority of local soviets and strengthened control from the center. This is further evidence of Lenin's perception of the local soviets as instruments of rule rather than sovereign bodies. The latter would jeopardize the vanguard role of the Bolshevik party. As John Keep has noted,

> it was therefore inevitable that the soviets' real decision-making power should be rapidly eroded in the post-October period, at the center as well as in the various localities...Local leaders were soon obliged to take their cue from agents of the central power, the ubiquitous commissars. The soviets became administrative bodies whose operations were subjected to close regulations by functionaries within the mushrooming bureaucracy.[143]

And in those instances where local soviets expressed opposition to Bolshevik policy, they were either dissolved or neutered. When the Council of People's Commissars began to appropriate power to dissolve local soviets, an amendment proposed by non-Bolsheviks in the council to allow dissolution only on the initiative of the Central Executive Committee of the Soviets (where Bolshevik and central influence was less strong) was ruled out of order. Commenting days later on this Bolshevik tendency for centralization of Bolshevik power, the Menshevik Nikolai N. Sukhanov declared,

> the present (Bolshevik) government is incapable... It does not know how to build, only how to destroy. Remember what it has done with the law courts, the banks, and municipal self-government: everything has been destroyed. We need a

> government which would unite all the forces of democracy...[144]

His speech was loudly jeered by Bolsheviks and their supporters in the Executive Committee.

To facilitate this centralization, the Commissariat of Finance attempted to curb local revenues and the budgets of local soviets became increasingly dependent upon transfer payments from the center.[145] And the structures of local soviets were encouraged to conform to more uniform organizational schemes.[146] Yet such changes took a number of years to achieve their full effect. The most significant development concerning the centralization of state authority was the tendency towards the "partification" – the subordination of state institutions and their personnel to the equivalent party organs – of local government and administration. In early 1918, local party organizations were still insignificant factors in local politics, especially in comparison to local executive committees. The transition of the party from bit player to starring role in the local soviet was the critical element in subordinating local government to central control. As Iakov Sverdlov pointed out, local party organs were merely the agitation departments of local soviets.[147] To change this, elections to local soviets were manipulated by the Bolsheviks to ensure that the majority of executive posts were reserved for Communist party members.[148] The primary measure to resolve this problem was the encouragement of local party organs to "guide and influence" local executives. In the 1919 Party Program, for example, the party was challenged to "win decisive influence, complete leadership, and full mastery of the soviets."[149] When this call for party dominance was criticized by Kautsky, Trotsky responded by claiming the convergence of interests:

> We have more than once been accused of having substituted for the dictatorship of the soviets the dictatorship of our party. Yet it can be said with complete justice that the dictatorship of the soviets became possible only by means of the dictatorship of the party. It is thanks to the clarity of its theoretical vision and its strong revolutionary organization that the Party has afforded to the soviets the possibility of becoming trans-

> formed from shapeless parliaments of labor into the apparatus of the supremacy of labor. In this 'substitution of the power of the party for the power of the working class' there is nothing accidental, and in reality there is no substitution at all – the communists express the fundamental interests of the working class.[150]

With the Eighth Congress of the Party in March 1919, the struggle against localism increased in the ruling party, particularly as party control over local soviets increased: by December 1919, for example, 92.8 per cent and 82.2 per cent of provincial and district soviet executive committees respectively were members of the Communist Party.[151] Local soviets soon lost any effective control over local executives and became formal chambers of consent for policy determined elsewhere. Party organs and party secretaries became the functional local authorities. This extension of party responsibilities necessitated a sharp increase in personnel: the party ranks swelled from about 150,000 in autumn 1919 to more than 600,000 by March 1920.[152]

This rapid growth of the party was a consequence of the two dominant tendencies within the party from 1918 to1921: party substitution of soviet authority *(podmena)*, and the centralization of the party apparatus. These tendencies were not the products of popular interest, and were strongly opposed both by those outside the party and from within. Much of what passed as peasant uprisings and counterrevolution in the countryside during the civil war were ill-fated attempts to halt the incursions of central control and preserve local government in local hands. This would explain the currency of the new slogan, common among rural revolts, "Soviet Power without the Communists!"[153] Such movements also reflected the efforts of Russian *grazhdanskoe obshchestvo* to assert the right of self-government. In this light, the reaction, or counterrevolution directed against Bolshevik power was much more than an ideological struggle among monarchists, anarchists, foreign capital, and revolutionaries; it was also a reaction against the Bolshevik intrusions on local and regional soviets.[154] Opposition to the centralization of power in the party was voiced by a number of different interests during the eighth, ninth, and tenth party congresses. In spite of this opposition, the centralization of

power increased over time. By 1920, when Kamenev could perceptively claim that the Communist party was the government of Russia, there was little doubt that government power was concentrated in Moscow.[155]

This transfer of government and administration to the party was an attempt to resolve the enduring problems of both state-society and center-local relations. The solution was to marginalize societal institutions and bypass local institutions and reject the need to organizing power in such a manner as to forge working relationships between state and society and between center and periphery. Such an organization would necessitate a real division of power. The Bolsheviks, however, strengthened the unity of state power, relying on the Communist Party, through which power could be more strictly, and more easily, controlled from the center. To openly curb soviet power would be a public renunciation of their revolutionary platform. Transferring power to the party, on the other hand, allowed the facade of local control to continue under the guise of soviets, now controlled by local party organizations. In short, the contradictions of local self-government under autocracy were hardly distinguishable from the challenges of local self-government under the Bolsheviks.

The attempt to moderate center-local relations through the party, however, did not come without a price. Indeed, the reluctance to demarcate and allocate power to local organs under societal control was a primary reason for the emergence of local elites. In short, the attempt to *overgovern* from the center resulted in a form of *undergovernment* – the center's inability to effectively monitor the affairs of the locales. Local party organs now became the purveyors of local interests, and, in spite of the dominance of the center, the party itself became susceptible to manifestations of localism and the inevitable conflict between central and local interests. Local party organizations were staffed less by dedicated revolutionaries than by individuals from the local community. As such, these organizations were often led by local elites with whom personal and/or community interests were occasionally high priorities. When such interests came into conflict with central directives, the conflict was not always easily resolved in the center's favor. Gill has noted this predicament:

> the centralization which occurred at each level often served to cut across party boundaries and, rather than strengthening the party as an institution, served to weaken it. What became important here were the concepts of 'localism' and 'familyness'. Throughout the period a constant source of complaint on the part of the central authorities was the localist attitude adopted by lower level party leaders. In essence, this consisted of a tendency to put local interests and considerations ahead of national priorities. In practice this meant a refusal to implement central decisions because they conflicted with the perceived needs of the local area or, perhaps more commonly, the interests of the local elite. This is where 'localism' merged with 'familyness' or 'groupism'.[156]

T. H. Rigby has also pointed out how, in these early years of the Soviet regime, the Communist Party was beholden to strong local cliques. These cliques not only were guilty of various bureaucratic pathologies such as nepotism, horizontal ties, and collective backscratching, but also provided fertile ground for the clientelism which emerged within the party, providing much of the justification for Stalin to strengthen vertical control in the party apparatus.[157] Peter Solomon has also conveyed the image of local cliques as impediments to state administration in the realm of criminal justice, stating that through the 1920s and into the 1930s, these cliques "represented one of the primary obstacles to the development of an orderly and consistent administration of justice."[158] The autonomy of these cliques was not limited to the realm of justice, but extended to economic, social, and political realms as well. Thus, while the centralization of power was a dominant and consistent trend in the new Soviet state, there is no reason to believe that the trend was absolute, nor anywhere near complete. Indeed, while the centralization of state power was an ongoing process which stripped local soviets of any significant power, it also came to reflect the paradox of simultaneously excessive and insufficient government, manifested in the virtual autonomy (as opposed to the power) of local elites. Without local self-government and the accountability to local communities which would follow,

and given the restraints on Moscow's ability to effectively monitor local government, this autonomy proved to be fertile ground for corruption and administrative incompetence.[159]

The Soviet regime thus emerged from the civil war as a state structured around the dominant power of the center, with weak, subservient appendages in the form of soviets in the locales. The regime came to rely upon the party to integrate the various levels of government – which was not always an easy task. This is not to say, however, that local party organs were exceptionally powerful in their own right. The power of local cliques was less a consequence of actual local power than a result of the continuing problems of penetration from the center, especially in rural areas. Local autonomy was a reflection of the unintegratedness into the order sought by the central government.

Return to autocracy

At the seventeenth Party congress in 1934, the so-called congress of victors, Stalin admitted that, until then, the party had been consumed with its struggle against Trotskyists, anti-Leninists, right-wing deviationists, and the like. But, as he noted, there were no more ideological battles left, nothing left to prove, and "no one to fight."[160] He then pointed out that nine-tenths of the responsibility for failures and defects in party work now rested with the party itself, and he emphasized strongly that he now considered the success of the socialist revolution to be an organizational question.[161] He continued his speech with criticisms of "big shots" and "windbags" in positions of local power in the party, and with the benefit of hindsight it appears he was beginning the justification for the purges which followed.

Corruption and incompetence among local party and government officials was perhaps more endemic than in the 1920s, and reflected the paradox of excessive and insufficient government: the party had taken the task of both performing and monitoring government functions. As the center relied on cadres to 'decide everything', the center effectively lost its ability to govern much at all. And because local party organs had usurped most of the functions of local government, the center became wary of any conflict of interests. As Arch Getty has noted,

> the chain of command collapsed more than it functioned. The Communist Party, far from having penetrated every corner of Russian life, was more an undisciplined and disorganized force with little influence outside the cities. Soviet Russia in the thirties resembled a backward, traditional society far more than it did the sophisticated order of totalitarianism.[162]

Getty portrayed local party organs as offices staffed by young and uneducated party members, and a crying need for anyone with experience and skill in organizations. The result was a reliance on drunks, embezzlers, petty thieves, and womanizers, who "freely abused their positions."[163] In this sense, Stalin's terror was less an attempt to aggrandize power to himself than an endeavor to improve the caliber of party officials at the local level and thus strengthen the reach of the party apparatus, extending the central power of the Russian state. The purges which followed, and the role of terror throughout the remainder of Stalin's reign, reflected the degree to which he would go to extend the reach of the state and also the degree to which he had to go to compensate for the limits of central power. Rather than an organization of power among different tiers, the Soviet state thus was built (or rebuilt) upon a foundation of extreme centralization. The very idea that local power might be independent of the center was inconceivable in the Stalinist political system. While the horrors of Stalinism were dramatically different from those of the tsarist period, this particular characteristic of local power paralleled the Russian past.[164] Rather than recognize, and then tolerate the divergence of local interests, Stalin forcefully asserted their coincidence with the directives of the center. This was, in essence, a continuation of a pre-modern understanding of the arrangement of power, and Stalin came to rely on pre-modern relationships to enforce both the dictates of the center and the cowing of society.[165]

In spite of the limited opportunities for local self-government which emerged during the tumult of 1917, local government was thus brought back under the tutelage of central power. The Communist Party became the primary agent for this tutelage, particularly after it had been whipped into conformity. By the end of the Stalin era, local government resembled but a weak tentacle of the central state apparatus. It was defined as such in very clear terms:

> As state power functions in the center, so it also functions in the locales. The realization of state power over all state territory demands the formation of local organs as branches and carriers of state power in the locales in accordance with the territorial demarcations of the state. The history of the state shows wide diversity in the systems of organs of local state power, from an extreme degree of decentralized power to an extreme degree of centralization. However, in all exploitative states, independent of the form of constructed organs of local soviet power, the masses were always kept out of active and deliberative participation in all links of administration. Bourgeois local self-government, progressive when compared to absolutism, never responded to the interests of workers and nowhere ensured authentic self-government of the people. Local self-government in essence plays the role of consultative organs before effective fully authoritative agents of central government, appointed by the center, and subordinate only to the center.[166]

The statification of local soviets which was achieved under Stalin remained the standard for local government throughout Russia until the very last years of the Soviet Union, contributing to the stultification of society. Without an adequate forum for public deliberation, independent, and autonomous social forces were disengaged from the political process. According to both the 1936 and 1977 constitutions, the soviets were the political foundation of the USSR, and local soviets functioned as organs of state power in territories *(krai)*, provinces *(oblasty)*, autonomous oblasts and *okruga*, districts *(raiony)*, cities, towns, villages, and rural settlements. The Brezhnev constitution fleshed out the functions of local soviets in greater detail, suggesting that local soviets were accountable for the implementation of state policy and all local affairs.[167] In *theory*, soviets were charged with the direction and supervision of all other state organs within their jurisdiction. In *practice*, however, local soviets possessed little power at all, even over their own affairs. They were dominated by their executives, which, in turn, were dominated by local party officials. The executive, for ex-

ample, determined the agenda for the soviet, and in many cases various public proposals and appeals from the soviet became stuck in the offices of the executive committee *(ispolkom)*. During a session of one local soviet, some 30 per cent of proposals were neglected, and 50 per cent were given only cursory treatment, carried over to the next session when they were no longer applicable.[168] The political power which did exist at the local level generally could be found in either of the local branch organs of the Communist Party or of central ministries.[169]

Party control of the soviets and executive committees was a given in Soviet society. Each local party organ was granted the authority necessary for effective party leadership through party statutes. These rights included "the selection, placement, and training of the leading cadres of the (corresponding) soviet apparatus," and the authority "to direct and coordinate all soviet, trade union, komsomol, and economic organizations, and guarantee the realization of Communist Party and Soviet government policies."[170] Indeed, Soviet conventional wisdom stated that "the enhancement of the guiding role of the Party in the soviets is indissolubly associated with the elevation of the role of soviets themselves as agencies of state power."[171] Party control of state organs was even made explicit in article 6 of the 1977 Soviet Constitution, until it was amended in 1990. Throughout the post-Stalin era, the Communist Party was the primary agent through which central control was exercised over local soviets – the tendons and ligaments which connected the "tentacles" to the center. Party control was carried out in a variety of ways. The majority of people's deputies in any given soviet prior to the reforms of the late 1980's owed allegiance to the CPSU (either as members, candidate members or Komsomol). The higher the level of the soviet, the greater this preponderance would be (generally between 60 and 80 per cent). Party approval was the determining factor in the nomination and election of any deputy. Communists also dominated the executive committees of local government, most often about 90 per cent of the *ispolkom* were affiliated with the CPSU. In addition, personnel moved rather freely between executive committees and the corresponding Party committees. The result, as one *raion* soviet *ispolkom* chairman stated, Party and *ispolkom* workers knew both Party and soviet work, and they "very quickly found a common language."[172] A further method of Party control was established by the many organizational links between

Party and *ispolkom*. The departments of a local Party secretariat corresponded to the various departments in the *ispolkom*, allowing the Party to observe and supervise the day to day work of the soviets and "provide concrete assistance and flexible organizational work to eliminate existing shortcomings."[173]

One consequence of this Party tutelage was the problem of *podmena* (substitution). In an effort to offset the red tape and formalism of executive organs, Party committees often simply assumed the functions of soviet bodies. More than half of the questions and proposals examined by the Moscow city party committee in 1985, for example, were within the purview of the city soviet.[174] Carried to its natural conclusion, party guidance became, in effect, direct control, nullifying the ability of soviets to respond to their electorate and neutering their political significance. *Podmena*, it should be noted, was not only considered a hindrance to soviet authority, but also a problem for the Party organization as well.[175] While party leadership of the soviets was viewed as a requirement for effective local administration, finding the right mix of party supervision and soviet authority proved as elusive as finding the Holy Grail. Since Party secretaries were, for the most part held responsible for local affairs, it was not illogical for these secretaries to simply usurp the duties of soviet committees. And since real power ultimately lay with Party organizations, it was a natural consequence for citizens to direct their requests and demands not to their local deputies, but to Party officials. Degtiarev noted:

> We have become so greatly accustomed to such a gradually established understanding of the role of the Party authorities in society, that today we can but poorly imagine any other forms of interaction. Where does an economic manager who needs an industrial area go – to the sectorial department or the *obkom*? The experienced one goes immediately to the *obkom*, knowing that the *ispolkom* would at any rate have to obtain the *obkom's* approval. The functions of Party and soviet authorities have become so interwined...That is why no one wonders at cases of releasing a *raikom* secretary for the poor organization of trade in vegetables or for poor preparations for healing supplies in winter.[176]

The results of *podmena*, as the Soviet scholar G. Kh. Shakhnazarov described, were hardly beneficial:

> When the party begins to take upon itself tasks that require government attention, a double loss ensues: first, the great power embodied in the system of popular representation is not fully tapped; and second, the working people develop a rather skeptical attitude to the representative institutions and begin to doubt their effectiveness.[177]

Both of these effects were prevalent in Soviet Russia, particularly by the 1980s. An account in *Moscow News* told of a deputy from a village soviet who resigned her position because, in her own words, it was "a waste of time, energy and nerves."[178] The Kursk Oblast first secretary complained in *Pravda* that the people's deputies kept interrupting his work, coming to him for advice, permission, and to find out the "Party line."[179]

Local soviets were not only limited by local party organs in fulfilling their function as the foundation for local government. In many instances, even party committees themselves played second fiddle to large industrial enterprises which could dominate a local economy and which answered directly to republic, or even union ministries.[180] In many instances, large factories performed many of the functions supposedly under the purview of local soviets, from housing to day care and retail shops. As a result, there was an incredibly low level of urban planning and low quality of local infrastructure: roads, transit, housing, power, and waterworks were all underdeveloped. Without the resources required to construct such, soviets were forced to rely upon local enterprises, which sometimes looked after their own workers, but generally entertained no interest in community development. Relationships between enterprises under ministerial control and local soviets were either dysfunctional or heavily dominated by the enterprise in question.[181] Stuck between territorial divisions of government and administration, and the sectoral approach to economic production, the latter approach dominated the realms of investment and control over resources.[182] Problems of industrial enterprises under ministerial control remained throughout the entire Soviet experience.[183]

So in spite of the theoretical premise that soviets were the

foundation of the Soviet political system, local soviets performed largely symbolic roles in local government. They were weak, without the power to fulfill their responsibility of resolving all local issues, and quite far removed from the locus of decision-making. Power was exercised through organizations and institutions theoretically outside the bounds of the state apparatus and beholden to Moscow – a predicament which only enervated public initiative and exacerbated growing problems of social development, political legitimacy, and administrative control.

Some Western scholars of the late 1970s and 1980s questioned the prevailing stereotype of local soviets as rubber stamps, suggesting that local governments and soviets performed essential functions, and possessed enough autonomy and power to maneuver and alter central policy to conform better with local interests.[184] Inasmuch as these scholars were working against the stereotypes of Soviet local government enforced by the totalitarian approach to Soviet politics, they were not altogether incorrect. For while there remained little question of the center's ultimate dominance in terms of policy development and personnel selection, Moscow's capacity to penetrate Soviet territory remained limited. Moscow relied less on local soviets than on institutions more beholden to direct central control, which may have offered local soviets limited room to maneuver. But this limited room should be perceived rather as a consequence of Moscow's limited reach than the result of local soviet power. Local soviets were effectively powerless, and functioned more to endorse decisions made elsewhere than to exercise any meaningful measure of autonomous power. As *Izvestiia* somewhat facetiously, yet not inaccurately reported, the verbatim record of any session of any soviet could be summed up as "All those in favor? Please lower your hands. Opposed? None. Abstentions? None. Adopted unanimously."[185]

Such was the fate of Russian local government under Soviet rule. In spite of efforts among party functionaries and academics to reform local government in the post Stalin era, there was a tacit concession by the 1970s that substantive reform would be too difficult and too disruptive to the entire political system. The academic task, therefore, was not to offer proposals that would strengthen local government, but to improve local administration without undermining any capacity of the center to promote the all-Union interest. In this regard, the task of local self-government reform mirrored the overall chal-

lenge of Soviet reform: to change without change. Thus, Brezhnev's solution was to merely *wish* local soviets into a more meaningful existence: actually existing socialism found harmony with actually existing local self-government. "Local soviets," he stated,

> are the highest organs of state power on their territory, the *khoziain* (master) of the city or village. And the soviet should be a good, zealous *khoziain*. Its duty is to think and take care of all, to do everything so that the people might live, work and rest better. And if the soviet manifests the necessary initiative and industriousness, then it will be valued by its electors. We are talking, of course, of healthy, thoughtful initiatives, and not about those which manifest *mestnichestvo* (localism) to the detriment of all state interests.[186]

As the decades of post-Stalin Soviet Russia rolled forward, Moscow accomplished very little in terms of improving the weakness of its penetration to local territories. Public legitimacy of state organs waned, corruption in administration and economic production grew, and the fate of local government reflected the failure of the Soviet regime to effectively devolve any political power away from the center.

All power to the soviets, Part II

The Gorbachev era was dominated by ill-fated but well-intentioned economic, social, and political reform. By the time Gorbachev came to power, the Soviet Union faced a variety of impending crises, in terms of economic production, in terms of public apathy and anomie, and in terms of bureaucratic sclerosis.[187] The approach of the late Brezhnev era, to merely stick one's head in the sand and pretend that the Soviet Union was developing as planned, was no longer an option. Fundamental reform was necessary, and political reform, particularly of state administration, had become a prerequisite for radical economic and social reforms. As one soviet author suggested, the need for administrative reform was mandated by the fact that the

existing system could not satisfy the new demands for economic production.[188] In the early years of Gorbachev's leadership, local government was again identified as a potential source for improving state administration and public initiative. Initially the focus was on central agencies supporting local soviets in their various conflicts with Union and republic ministries. With central help, it was argued, local soviets could assume a more effective role in economic production, and in efficient management of resources. It was also expected to improve the coordination of supplies, resolve housing shortages, and foster the growth of technical schools and health care.[189] Yet the success of local soviets in conflicts with ministries proved to be more the exception than the rule.[190] And it was apparent that soviet power would have to become more than a mere ornament to foster economic production. More radical administrative reform was required.

The critical questions were: How could the administrative system be made more accountable? How could public legitimacy be strengthened? How could corruption and inertia be overcome? And how could the system give more consideration to the so called "human factor"? One solution for many of these problems was the idea of self-government, which by the mid-1980s began to make a conceptual comeback. Self-government was heralded not only by academics, but also by workers, community groups, and the mainstream press as a much needed solution to many of the ills plaguing Soviet society and economic production. Self-government, it was argued, could serve as a panacea for the ills of bureaucracy and increase the accountability of administration. It would increase democratic norms and behavior in society, foster public interest and participation, and serve as a vital link between state and society.[191] At first the term was considered part of the greater process of *demokratizatsiia* (democratization), which along with *uskorenie* (acceleration of economic production) and *glasnost* (openness) became the holy trinity of early *perestroika.*

Perhaps the first realm for the realization of democratization was found in the factories. The Law on State Enterprises, which came into effect in January 1988, mandated the election of councils by worker collectives (STK). These STKs would monitor the directorship of the enterprise and were a modest step towards infusing worker input in economic management. Originally recommended in the June 1987 plenum of the Central

Committee, many workers' councils were already in place even before the law took effect. This early democratization, however, was not without birthing pains and numerous such councils were stillborn. Party organs and enterprise directors routinely interfered in nominations and elections. In Tambov, for example, the only two candidates for the chair of one STK were the enterprise director and his assistant. The latter withdrew his candidacy to endorse the director, who was elected by acclamation and then chaired the very council intended to monitor his leadership of the enterprise.[192] In those instances where local party organs were unsuccessful in manipulating elections in labor councils and social organizations, the relationships between them were strained and marked by conflict.[193] STKs critical of enterprise leadership and resistant to party interference were criticized for lacking the requisite experience and professionalism, which foreshadowed the fate of local soviets elected two years later.[194] Nonetheless, pushed strongly from above, democratization continued and led to screened multi-candidate elections in party organs and various social organizations.

This push for democratization was not limited to economic and social organizations. Critical to the success of democratization was the extension of elections to all levels of administration and government. Soviets and self-government thus were at the core of Gorbachev's campaign for political restructuring. The Leninist slogans of 1917 were quickly dusted off and regained currency – "All power to the soviets!" became the battle cry for political reform.

How could soviet power be achieved? In 1987, a commission was formed by the Politburo to examine the question of local government, to detail the problems and recommend possible solutions. The commission reportedly included such leaders as Chairman of the Kazakhstan Council of Ministers Nursultan Nazarbaev and Central Committee member Anatolii Lukyanov, both later named to the Politburo, and specialists in local government such as Konstantin Sheremet.[195] In addition, various academic groups held smaller round table discussions on the subject. By the end of 1987, the topic was a well-known issue among those involved in political reforms. Ideas for soviet reform were predominantly based upon the many earlier proposals which had circulated through party and academic journals in the 1960s: promote the legislative function of the soviet over the executive, strengthen the role of standing com-

mittees, improve soviet relations with local social organizations, extend the constitutional and legal rights of soviets, boost the role of deputies, and increase the authority of soviets to monitor and control enterprises and executive authority.[196] Indeed, the various ideas which circulated in academic journals and the popular press were nothing new, in spite of increased attention and the hype of reform under Gorbachev.

These discussions in 1987–88 were more relevant than earlier reform discussions of the 1960s, however, because of full endorsement from prominent Soviet leaders. By mid-1988, the decision had been taken within the ruling circles of the Party to open all state organs to multicandidate elections, and democratize the whole of administration, from union to village. The "May Theses", published as a reform platform for the nineteenth party conference, included a call for democratic elections and for the restructuring of soviets to free them from party and ministerial branch tutelage.[197] This was a bold step, even more so in hindsight than it appeared at the time. Limited experiments in various constituencies had been held in 1987, and were deemed to be successful enough that local elections would become part of the local political landscape. Explaining the decision at the nineteenth party conference in the summer of 1988, Gorbachev noted that "competition enlivened the elections, stepped up the voters' interest in them, and increased the deputies' sense of responsibility."[198]

In addition to elections, the reform platform included provisions for revamping executive-legislative relations and for the creation of presidia at *oblast*, city, and *raion* level soviets. The proposals were met at the conference with some concern, which influenced Gorbachev to back pedal and announce that local party secretaries should be elected as chairmen of the presidia, ensuring the Party the opportunity of working through the soviets. In addition to the chairman's tasks as first party secretary, the chairman would

> head the soviet and its presidium, and properly organize the work of the soviet sessions and permanent deputy commissions and thus influence all matters, and keep under daily control the activities of the *ispolkom* and its services. The main thing which will be demanded of the chairman is to be the generator of ideas, to constantly

provide the necessary impetus for the entire work of the soviet and its deputies.[199]

This proposal was rife with contradictions. In short, Gorbachev proposed to strengthen local soviets by strengthening the party's leadership. Yet party secretaries would be exposed to direct public pressure and public ballots, although only when they wore their alternative hat as chairman of the presidium.

After the platform was endorsed by the conference, working groups were set up to draft amendments to the Soviet constitution and to write a new law on elections. Published in the fall of 1988, the amendments represented the first real fruits of local government reform under Gorbachev. They established the principles for the separation of executive and legislative bodies, asserted the prestige of standing committees, set the table for the formation of presidia, and called for open democratic elections.[200] But the amendments did not include the detailed provisions necessary for these principles to be realized. Such details were to follow in subsequent legislation.[201] A new election law also established procedures and rules for open, multi-candidate elections, with local electoral commissions to coordinate and monitor the electoral process.[202] But the details for the restructuring of local soviets took more effort. Elections to republic and local soviets, originally intended throughout the Union in the fall of 1989, were postponed in Russia and most other republics until the spring of 1990 because the necessary legislation was not ready. The background of this legislation is critical to any chronicle of local government reform.

In July 1988, the same time that committees were formed and entrusted with the responsibility to draft the constitutional amendments, the plenum of the Communist Party Central Committee proposed that specialists prepare a draft law on local self-government to provide the required legislation. The mandate of the legislation was to strengthen self-government, self-financing, the coordination of regional interests with all-state interests, and improve connections of local soviets with enterprises and collective farms, STKs, and social groups.[203] The draft project became a golden opportunity for reform minded academics to push for the realization of their various "pet" proposals. During the next year, this draft project became a veritable battleground for various notions of what local government

should be. The controversies and disputes reflected all the earlier concerns over the development of local government in Russia and the Soviet Union. There was agreement that soviets should play stronger roles in government and administration, and that soviets could become such if they received more autonomy from higher levels of government, if they possessed more control over their own budgets, and agenda, and if they could exercise greater control over local enterprises. But there was little consensus on how each of these points should be developed. Discussion concerning the creation of a new system for local budgets, for example, was strongly influenced by the Union Ministry of Finance, which rejected any development of local budget autonomy. Economic ministries were likewise averse to transferring any authority over economic enterprises to local soviets. Neither was there any agreement on the conceptual basis of local soviets, without which the draft could not be developed. Were local soviets to remain as organs of state power? Or would they become the foundation for local self-government? Could the two concepts be merged, or were they mutually incompatible? Even the term *mestnyi* was questioned – specifically whether it should refer to anything above the level of village and neighborhood communities. One participant in an academic roundtable suggested that two distinct laws should be developed; one law on socialist self-government, and another devoted to the authority of local soviets.[204] Another academic argued that any development of self-government required true decentralization, which could be measured only by the increase in horizontal and vertical relations of power and subordination.[205]

One point was established clearly: that the new law needed to be more than just a statement of general ideas. The failure of the many legislative acts of previous decades, noted one, was that they all teemed with general declarations but lacked concrete measures to guarantee any real strengthening of the role of local soviets in local communities.[206] Academics involved in the draft project were soon joined by a surge of interest emerging on the part of local soviets, and representatives from advocacy groups for municipal government, such as the newly formed Association of Siberian Cities. These representatives were hopeful that the new law would strengthen the material resources and revenues available to soviets, thus decreasing local reliance on republic and union organs. The draft, de-

clared one municipal official, would be "the kind of law for which local soviet workers have waited for years."[207] The debates among representatives from the center and those from below continued through the spring of 1989, when the project was transferred to the USSR Supreme Soviet Committee for Issues Concerning the Work of Soviets of People's Deputies, and the Development of Administration and Self-Government, newly formed in May of 1989, after Union elections to the Congress. The committee was led by N. D. Pivovarev.[208]

The transfer proved to be a positive development for advocates of local soviet power. In the new committee local advocates could push more strongly for local autonomy and nonstatist self-government, and the legislative committee infused a measure of dynamism into the legislative project. Many of the Union deputies who worked on the legislative committee for the development of the union law had been elected from local constituencies, and were involved in administrative positions in local institutions. And although there had been fairly effective screening processes through which candidates had to pass in order to be elected in the 1989 elections, the degree of local representation in Pivovarev's committee was much stronger than had been the case when the committee worked under the auspices of the Central Committee.

It would be erroneous, however, to think that the draft project was controlled by advocates of local government. In spite of the new initiative by local advocates, there remained significant opposition to any increase of local power, based on the danger it might pose to the center. Opposition came from a variety of sources, including deputies in the newly elected Congress, central ministries, and various local party organs. One Union deputy from Rostov, in an address to the Congress in May 1989 on the problems of local budgets and governments, echoed the centuries-old concern of state unity when he suggested that any rise in local power would inevitably fracture state power:

> As soon as we grant local soviets real power, we will see manifestations of *mestnichestvo* and attempts to drag our state down into pieces. Our role here as People's Deputies is not to allow this, but to rise above local interests, important though they may be.[209]

In the end, when the Union law finally emerged in April 1990, it reflected the disparate interests involved in its creation. And the hopes that local politicians had entertained for a radical new law which would finally empower local governments were not realized. Instead the law expressed a timidity towards the emergence of local government autonomy, and a proclivity towards maintaining much of the foundation of the Soviet legacy towards local government. The Union law thus represented a stalemate over principles instead of a finished piece of legislation. Each Union republic was to follow with more detailed pieces of legislation. In spite of attempts in the draft to distinguish authority among various levels of soviets, such as the inclusion of municipal property and self-government at levels below the *oblast*, the final version of the law still explicitly referred to the time-honored approach of soviet power as links connected in one great chain of unitary state power. While many of those involved in the project had labored diligently to strengthen the independence of local budgets, the Ministry of Finance successfully rallied at the last to protect its authority to establish norms and rates for local taxes and to maintain the existing process of budget formation. The Ministry rejected the proposal to allow local soviets to independently formulate local budgets and Valentin Pavlov defended his ministry's authority to raise revenue.[210] And in spite of some good intentions towards strengthening local soviet control over local enterprises, there were no appreciable gains in this regard.

Still, the success of the law was that it was a stalemate rather than a defeat for advocates of local self-government. Many of the unresolved battles concerning separation of executive and legislative power, local budgets, and the vertical demarcation of power would be fought again at the republic level, as each republic designed its own laws.[211] As one Soviet scholar had noted earlier, the overall spirit of the local government reform was "the conservation of a number of specific features of the soviets justified by historical experience and the simultaneous combination of several elements of the parliamentary representative system acceptable to us."[212] On the obstacles to the development of local government, a participant in the drafting of the legislation concluded that one needed to recognize the reality that this new law was mandated from above, and thus would reflect central interests above local demands.[213] Indeed, the Union law was not intended to develop local self-government,

but instead intended to improve local administration. Local power was endorsed by the center only inasmuch as it increased the power of the center.[214] Any attempts to weaken the principle of dual subordination were frustrated by those central interests which endorsed the principle as a requirement for effective central control. Measures to heighten the autonomy of local governments were encumbered with vague and fudgy terminology.[215] Indeed, the concept of the unitary system of soviets, from top to bottom, remained sacrosanct. And in spite of the renewed advocacy for societal self-government, the statist conceptual framework remained. As another Soviet scholar described, the Union law represented the dawn of a new age in local government, but carried the birthmarks of the totalitarian state.[216]

Local elections and the breakdown of Soviet government

The Union law provided a shaky foundation for the significant reform in local administration that followed. Even before the law was finished, Soviet leaders declared that multi-candidate elections for all republic and local soviets would be held. These elections were intended as a panacea for the many enduring problems of local administration and government. Instead, however, they sounded a veritable death knell for the Soviet regime. The ultimate consequence of Gorbachev's restructuring was thus the breakdown, then collapse, of the entire political-administrative system in the Soviet Union.

In Russia, local elections were held in the spring of 1990, and proved to be much bigger wildcards than the Union elections, held the previous year. The Union elections had galvanized nascent anti-establishment movements, introduced local constituencies to the possibility (and, in some cases, the reality) of alternative leadership, and altered the status of People's Deputies. Public perceptions shifted away from the deputy's previous role as plenipotentiary towards that of political representative and political leader, with identifiable ideas and goals.[217] While many local constituencies were heavily manipulated by the local *nomenklatura*, particularly in rural areas, urban centers returned large numbers of often radical, often unpredictable, certainly anti-establishment deputies. Gorbachev's reformers had hoped that such elections would revitalize the lo-

cal soviets, and inject not only public legitimacy, but also reformist values in the enervated organs of local administration. The consequences, however, were quite unexpected: local soviets, elected under slogans of "all power to the soviets!" now demanded the upper hand over their executives, ignored and attacked local party committees, and launched attacks against large enterprises. Just as the Party had been used in the early years of the Soviet regime to "glue" local organs to the center, so too the weakening of Party control which followed local elections in 1990 caused the administrative system to fall apart. And the strains placed on the administrative system from newly formed public organizations ensured that the disintegration occurred rapidly. In some cases, local party organs tried to carry on as if reforms had never happened. Their level of administrative experience granted them some measure of continuing control over the allocation of resources. Yet such influence was now subjected to increasing measures of public criticism, from newly elected deputies and from local independent newspapers. Likewise, executive committees were now the targets of criticism from local soviets, which desired control over the implementation and execution of soviet legislation. There was often little change if any in the personnel of local executive committees, and the lines of accountability and authority between newly formed presidia and executive committees was anybody's guess. In short, by promoting the role of local soviets, reforms disrupted the entire system of governance which had dominated Russia since the 1920s.

The final year of the Soviet Union witnessed an acute crisis of authority and a breakdown of state power. As legal columnist Yurii Feofanov noted in the fall of 1990, the most profound manifestation of this crisis could be found in local administration.[218] As disparate institutions and local organs began to compete with each other over who possessed authority over whom, the Soviet Union was beset with *mnogovlastie* (multiple powers), which corresponded to the complete breakdown of power and authority throughout the state. Russians referred to this predicament with the term *bezvlastie* (absence of power). One Russian author referred to the onset of a new time of troubles *(smuta)*, and suggested that Russia had again broken down into appanage principalities. The solution? A tightening of central power and authority. "If we cannot guarantee concentrated and consistent administration during reforms, then there is an

increased danger of authority disintegrating into various jurisdictions, sectors, republics, and other appanage principalities."[219]

Among the primary explanations for the collapse of the Soviet Union is the conflict which emerged from the debate as to how best to respond to centrifugal forces within the state. The attempt in August 1991 to turn back the clock to a time of central dominance and control failed precisely because the capacity of the SCSE (State Committee for the State of Emergency) to coordinate its efforts and enforce directives throughout the county was virtually nil. Once exposed as the proverbial giant with feet of clay, the once powerful Soviet state withered away by the end of the year. The implosion of the Soviet Union thus resembled the collapse of tsarist Russia in 1917, and Prince L'vov's explanation applies just as well seventy-four years later. The Soviet government was not overthrown, but failed as a result of its own internal weakness. Thus, the failure to allow and encourage societal initiatives and self-government within a framework of power and authority distributed throughout the country not only stultified society, but also effectively weakened the state.

There was no shortage of social movements during the last few years of the Soviet Union. But there was an acute shortage of institutional capacity to manage disparate interests and political conflict. Just as the unwillingness of the imperial government to either incorporate the dynamism of the *zemstvo* into the realm of state administration or allow it both the autonomy and the capacity to permanently fill a much needed void in Russian society were facts of life, so too the fate of local governments in Soviet Russia likewise reflected the inability of autocratic and monist forms of government to integrate state and society. History has shown that there was no absence of societal initiative prior to 1917. Although the *zemstvo* movement was sharply limited by the state, the *zemtsy* themselves reflected the capacity of at least part of society to play a constructive role in self-government. Yet the events of 1917 suggest that neither local nor national institutions had any real experience in the use of power as a three dimensional game. And this same scenario has played out in contemporary Russia: the collapse of the Soviet Union does not necessarily mean that institutional barriers and constraints on the development of local government have all been removed. In this sense, state building in the

Russian Federation, as successor state to both the Soviet Union and tsarist Russia, reflects the challenges and dynamics found in Russia of 1917. The burden of history in terms of state building in contemporary Russia is the lack of any experience in terms of reconciling the needs for societal self-government with the requirements of both administrative order and central power.

Notes

[1] Vasilii Storozhev, "Ioann Vasil'evich," Col. 693 in Vol. 26 of *Entsiklopedicheskii Slovar'* (St. Petersburg: Brockhaus-Efron, 1908). Likewise, Kliuchevsky noted that "the essence of the local self-administration of the sixteenth century did not so much lie in the right of the local communities to manage their own affairs as in their obligation to undertake general-department tasks of government - to elect responsible workers "for the labors of the state." V. O. Kliuchevsky, *History of Russia*, Vol. II, trans. C. J. Hogarth (New York: Russell and Russell, 1960), p. 243.

[2] In a letter of 18 December 1990 to one of the authors, Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn agreed, noting that "the *zemstvo* was so forward-looking in pre-revolutionary Russia, but, alas, did not reach its full effectiveness."

[3] F. A. Petrov, "Crowning the Edifice: The *Zemstvo*, local self-government, and the constitutional movement, 1864–1881," in B. Eklof, J. Bushnell, and L. Zakharova (eds.), *Russia's Great Reforms, 1855–1881* (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1994), pp. 204–205.

[4] Quoted in Vadim V. Garmiza, *Podgotovka zemskoi reformy, 1864 g.* (Moscow: Izdatelstvo Moskovskogo universiteta, 1957), p. 203.

[5] For a discussion of the theories concerning local self-government, see M. N. Korkunov, *Russkoe gosudarstvennoe pravo*, Vol. 2 (St. Petersburg: Tipografiia M. M. Stasiulevicha, 1909), pp. 488–501 and 533–537; S. Frederick Starr, *Decentralization and Local Self-Government in Russia, 1830–1870* (Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1972), pp. 69–70, 71, 75, 83–88; W. Bruce Lincoln, *In the Vanguard of Reform: Russia's Enlightened Bureaucrats 1825–1861* (DeKalb, Ill.: Northern Illinois University Press, 1989), pp. 172,177, 183–186; and Thomas Pearson, *Russian Officialdom in Crisis: Autocracy and Local Self-Government, 1861–1900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p. 10–13, 39–59 *passim*.

[6] *Polnoe Sobranie Zakonov Rossiiskoi Imperii* (hereafter *PSZ*),

Sobranie vtoroe, (St. Petersburg: Tip. II Otdeleniia Sobstvennoi Ego Imperatorskago Velichestva Kantseliarii, 1867), Vol. 39, No. 40457 (1 January 1864), p. 21.

[7] See the chapter by Kermit MacKenzie in T. Emmons and W. S. Vucinich (eds.), *The Zemstvo in Russia: An Experiment in Local Self-Government* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982).

[8] Vasilii Maklakov, *Vlast' i obshchestvennost' na zakate staroi Rossii*, 3 Vols. (Paris: Imp. de Navarre, 1936). Although this characterization is undoubtedly overdrawn (as evinced by recent scholarship such as that of Richard Robbins in his *The Tsar's Viceroys: Russian Provincial Governors in the Last Years of the Empire* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1987) which showed that provincial governors welcomed the assistance of the *zemstva*, especially in areas of health and public education) the ambiguous language of the *Zemstvo* Statute, which was the result of a compromise between liberal and conservative bureaucrats, led to a deepening schism between these two important elements of the Russian polity.

[9] B. B. Veselovskii, *Istoriia zemstva na sorok let*, Vol. 3 (St. Petersburg: O. N. Popovoi, 1911) pp., 110–115.

[10] Quoted in George Fischer, *Russian Liberalism from Gentry to Intelligentsia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1958), p. 18.

[11] Veselovskii, *Istoriia*, Vol. 3, pp. 126–127.

[12] Garmiza, *Podgotovka*, p. 251.

[13] *PSZ vtoroe*, XLII, #4378, 22 November 1866, p. 952.

[14] Veselovskii, *Istoriia*, Vol. 3, p. 120.

[15] *Ibid.*

[16] *Ibid.*, pp. 121–122.

[17] Starr, *Decentralization*, p. 331.

[18] *PSZ vtoroe*, XLII, #44690, 13 June 1867, p. 896.

[19] Veselovskii, *Istoriia*, Vol. 3, p. 138.

[20] *Ibid.*, pp. 138–139.

[21] Michael Florinsky, *Russia: A History and an Interpretation*, Vol. 2 (New York: Macmillan, 1960), p. 1092.

[22] I. P. Belokonskii, *Zemskoe dvizhenie* (Moscow: Zadruga, 1914), p. 13.

[23] S. Iu. Witte, *Samoderzhavie i zemstvo: Konfidentsial'naia zapiska Ministra finansov Stats-Sekretaria S. Iu. Vitte (1899)* (St. Petersburg: Tipografiia V. Bezobrazova, 1908), p. 102.

[24] Charles Timberlake, "The Birth of Zemstvo Liberalism in Russia: Ivan Il'ich Petrunkevich in Chernigov" (Ph.D diss., University of Washington, 1968), pp. 206–221.

[25] Veselovskii, *Istoriia*, Vol. 3, p. 248.

[26] The best explication of this debate within the tsarist government is contained in chapter 3 of Francis William Wcislo's magisterial *Reforming Rural Russia: State, Local Society, and National Politics 1855–1914* (Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1990).

[27] Charles Timberlake makes this point in his "The *Zemstvo* and the Development of a Russian Middle Class" 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, N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1991), pp. 164–179. The term "Third Element" was first hung on the *zemstvo* professionals by V. Kondoidi, the Vice Governor of Samara province. The "First Element" was the government itself, and the "Second Element" was composed of the elected *zemstvo* deputies.

[28] P. A. Zaionchkovskii, *Rossiiskoe samoderzhavie v kontse XIX stoletiia* (St. Petersburg, Fla.: Academic International Press, 1976), chap. 4; Thomas Pearson, "Ministerial Conflict and Lo-

cal Self-Government Reform, 1877–1890" (Ph.D diss., University of North Carolina, 1976); and Wcislo, *Reforming*, pp. 63-118.

[29] See A. A. Polovstev, *Dnevnik gosudarstvennogo sekretaria A. A. Polovsteva*, Vol. 2 (Moscow: Nauka, 1966), p. 190.

[30] Although generally depicted in the literature as being narrow-minded and obtuse creatures of the regime, many of the land captains were in fact high-minded idealists who hoped to bring culture and enlightenment to the countryside. See Thomas Pearson's *Russian Officialdom in Crisis: Autocracy and Local Self-Government, 1861–1900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989).

[31] *PSZ Tret'e, X, #6922*, 12 June 1890, p. 465.

[32] Veselovskii, *Istoriia*, Vol. 3, p. 348.

[33] *PSZ Tret'e, X, #6927*, 12 June 1890, p. 493.

[34] See Seymour Becker's *Nobility and Privilege in Late Imperial Russia* (DeKalb, Ill.: Northern Illinois University Press, 1985); for an opposing view see Roberta Manning's *The Crisis of the Old Order in Russia: Gentry and Government* (Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1982).

[35] B. Veselovskii, *Istoriia*, Vol. 3, p. 372; and A. S. Ermolov, *Nashi neurozhai i prodovol'stvennyi vopros* (St. Petersburg: Tipografiia V. Kirshbauma, 1909), p. 102.

[36] Richard Robbins, *Famine in Russia, 1891–1892* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1975), pp. 1–2.

[37] Quoted in Robbins, *Famine*, p. 39.

[38] Quoted in Veselovskii, *Istoriia*, Vol. 3, p. 375.

[39] *Ibid.*

[40] *Ibid.*, pp. 379–380.

[41] *Ibid.*, pp. 422–423.

[42] D. N. Shipov, *Vospominaniia i dumy o perezhitom* (Moscow: S. P. Iakovlev, 1918), pp. 63–65.

[43] *Ibid.*, pp. 76–80.

[44] *Ibid.*, p. 83.

[45] Witte, *Samoderzhavie i zemstvo*, p. 208.

[46] *Ibid.*, p. 209.

[47] *Ibid.*, pp. 211–212.

[48] P. D. Dolgorukov, *Velikaia razrukha* (Madrid: Imp. Rafael Taravilla Paul, 1964), p. 332.

[49] For more detailed exposition of *Beseda*, see Terence Emmons, "The *Beseda* Circle, 1899–1905," in *Slavic Review*, Vol. 32, No. 3 (September 1973), pp. 461–490.

[50] Belokonskii, *Zemskoe dvizhenie*, pp. 58–59.

[51] *Ibid.*, p. 72.

[52] Veselovskii, *Istoriia*, Vol. 3, p. 163.

[53] Fischer, *Russian Liberalism*, pp. 128–129.

[54] Shipov, *Vospominaniia*, pp. 157–158.

[55] *Ibid.*, pp. 165–168.

[56] *Ibid.*, p. 169.

[57] V. I. Gurko, *Features and Figures of the Past* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1939), p. 109.

[58] Quoted in Shipov, *Vospominaniia*, p. 184.

[59] *Ibid.*, p. 220.

[60] *Ibid.*, p. 227.

[61] Gurko, *Features*, p. 227.

[62] T. Polner, *Russian Local Government During the War* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1930), p. 52.

[63] *Ibid.*, p. 57.

[64] Belokonskii, *Zemskoe*, p. 198.

[65] T. Polner, *Obshchezemskaia organizatsiia na Dal'nem Vostoke*, Vol. 1 (Moscow: Tipografiia Russkogo Tovarichestva, 1908), p. 7.

[66] *Desiatiletie obshchezemskoi organizatsii blagotvoritel'noi pomoshchi naseleniiu 1904–1914 g.* (Moscow: Tipografiia Russkogo Tovarichestva, 1914), p. 4.

[67] T. I. Polner, *Zhiznennyi put' kniazia G. E. L'vova* (Paris: Imp. de Navarre, 1932), p. 66.

[68] *Ibid.*

[69] Quoted in Polner, *Zhiznennyi*, p. 66.

[70] Veselovskii, *Istoriia*, Vol. 3, p. 592.

[71] Shipov, *Vospominaniia*, 234.

[72] P. N. Miliukov, *Russia and its Crisis* (New York: Collier Books, 1906), p. 221.

[73] Polner, *Zhiznennyi*, p. 67.

[74] *Ibid.*

[75] *Ibid.*

[76] Polner, *Obshchezemskaia*, Vol. 1, p. 18.

[77] *Ibid.*, p. 46.

[78] N. N. L'vov, "S zemskimi otriadami na Dal'nem Vostoke," in *Russkaia mysl'*, Vol. 7 (1905), p. 29.

[79] *Ibid.*, p. 424.

[80] Veselovskii, *Istoriia*, Vol. 3, p. 592.

[81] Quoted in S. S. Oldenburg, *Last Tsar! Nicholas II, His reign and His Russia* (Gulf Breeze, Fla.: Academic University Press, 1977), p. 91.

[82] *Ibid.*, pp. 377–378.

[83] Polner, *Obshchezemskaia*, Vol. 2 (1910), p. 1.

[84] Fischer, *Russian Liberalism*, p. 178.

[85] Belokonskii, *Zemskoe*, pp. 139–140.

[86] Polner, *Obshchezemskaia*, Vol. 2, p. 65.

[87] Sergei Witte, *Vospominaniia* (Moscow: Izdatelstvo sotsnalno-econ. lit-ry, 1960), pp. 273–274.

[88] Oldenburg, *Last Tsar*, Vol. 2, p. 100.

[89] Florinsky, *Russia*, Vol. 2 , p. 1172.

[90] Quoted in Abraham Ascher, *The Revolution of 1905* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1988), p. 118.

[91] Polner, *Zhiznennyi*, pp. 89–90.

[92] *Obshchezemskaia*, Vol. 2, pp. 408–414.

[93] *Ibid.*, pp. 398–400.

[94] Polner, *Zhiznennyi*, p. 137.

[95] Veselovskii, *Istoriia*, Vol. 4, ch. 11–12 *passim*.

[96] *Otchet upravleniia delami obshchezemskoi organizatsii po*

okazaniiu prodovol'stvenno-blagotvoritel'noi pomoshchi naseleniia mestnostei, porazhennykh neurozhaem v 1906 g. (Moscow: Tipografiia Russkogo Tovarichestva, 1909), p. 137.

[97] *Ibid.*

[98] *Izvestiia Obshchezemskoi Organizatsii*, Vol. 7, 1 June–1 July 1906, XII.

[99] See Roberta Manning's *The Crisis of the Old Order in Russia: Gentry and Government* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982); and especially Leopold Haimson (ed.), *The Politics of Rural Russia, 1905–1914* (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1979).

[100] See Thomas Porter and Scott Seregny's forthcoming chapter in Alfred Evans (ed.), *Local Government in Russia: Authority, Power Allocation, and Civic Participation* (Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield, 2001).

[101] Sergei Pushkarev, *Self-Government and Freedom in Russia* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1988), pp. 55–58.

[102] See Thomas Porter and William Gleason, "The *Zemstvo* and Public Initiative in Late Imperial Russia" in *Russian History*, Vol. 21, No. 4 (1994), pp. 419–437; and, by the same authors, "The *Zemstvo* and the Transformation of Russian Society" and "The Democratization of the *Zemstvo*" in Mary Conroy (ed.), *Emerging Democracy in Late Imperial Russia: Case Studies on Local Self-Government (The Zemstvos), State Duma Elections, The Tsarist Government, And The State Council Before And During World War I* (Niwot, Colo.: University Press of Colorado, 1998).

[103] Quoted in Mary Schaeffer Conroy, *Peter Arkad'evich Stolypin* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview, 1976), p. 64.

[104] *Ibid.*, p. 47.

[105] Polner, *Zhiznennyi*, p. 141.

[106] *Ocherk deiatel'nosti zemskoi obshchestvenno-blagotvoritel'noi organizatsii pomoshchi pereselentsam v preselencheskuiu*

kampaniiu 1908 goda (Moscow: Gorodskaia Tipografiia, 1908), p. 2.

[107] Donald W. Treadgold, *The Great Siberian Migration* (Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1957), p. 34.

[108] *Desiatiletie*, p. 26.

[109] *Ibid.*, p. 25.

[110] Polner, *Zhizhennyi*, p. 164.

[111] *Desiatiletie*, p. 36.

[112] See T. I. Polner, *Russian Local Government During the War and the Union of Zemstvos* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1930); Mark George, "Liberal Opposition in Wartime Russia: A Case Study of the Town and *Zemstvo* Unions," in *Slavonic and East European Review*, Vol. 65, No. 3 (July 1987), pp. 371–390; and William Gleason, "The All-Russian Union of *Zemstvos* and World War I," in Terence Emmons and Wayne Vucinich (eds.), *The Zemstvo in Russia: An Experiment in Local Self-Government* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), pp. 365–382; for the only published Russian assessment, see A. P. Pogrebinskii, "K istorii soiuzov zemstv i gorodov," *Istoricheskie zapiski*, No. 12 (1941), pp. 39–60.

[113] *Gosudarstvennyi arkhiv Rossiiskoi Federatsii*, fond 102, opis' 17, ed. khr. 343 (18 November 1914), list 10.

[114] *Kratkii ocherk deiatel'nosti zemskogo soiuza* (Moscow: Gorodskaia Tipografiia, 1917), no. 26 (1915), p. 19.

[115] *Krasnyi arkhiv*, Vols. 50–51 (1932), pp. 133–136.

[116] For more on L'vov's remarkable career see Thomas Porter, "Prince Georgii Evgenevich Lvov: A Russian Public Servant" in *Canadian-American Slavic Studies*, Vol. 31, No. 4 (Winter 1997).

[117] Introduction, in Polner, *Russian Local Government*, pp. 8, 10.

[118] In a treatise written between February and October, I.V. Lebedinskii strongly advocated the transfer of state authority to local and regional legislatures, granting them the authority to create their own laws and govern local communities and provinces (*oblast* level) based on the clear demarcation of authority that possessed some resemblance to federalism. Such measures, concluded Lebedinskii, would necessitate a difficult struggle with vested interests in the center, but offered the best prospects for the political, economic and social development of Russia. See his *Mestnoe samoupravlenie i oblastnaia avtonomiia* (Petrograd: Zadruga, 1917).

[119] See Oskar Anweiler, *The Soviets: The Russian Workers, Peasants, and Soldiers Councils, 1905-1921*, translated by Ruth Hein (New York: Pantheon, 1974), pp. 134–141; and, for an excellent case study, see Michael C. Hickey, "Local Government and State Authority in the Provinces: Smolensk, February–June 1917," in *Slavic Review*, Vol. 55, No. 4 (Winter 1996), pp. 863–881.

[120] L.M. Kaganovich, *Mestnoe sovetskoe samoupravlenie* (Moscow: Krasnaia Nov', GlavPolitProsvet, 1923), p. 4. Trotsky estimated that by May, 1917, some 400 soviets had been formed, and by October, 900. See Trotsky, *History of the Russian Revolution*, Vol. 2 (New York: Pathfinder, 1987), pp. 290–297. See also Anweiler, *The Soviets*, p. 113. Richard Pipes has disputed this claim, pointing out that soviets were formed almost exclusively in urban centers, seldom in rural areas. See his *Russian Revolution*, pp. 738–742. While the extent and pace of formation of soviets throughout Russia may be disputed, there is little argument that in those locales where they were formed they quickly constituted a rival source of authority to existing *zemstva* and municipal *dumy*.

[121] Anweiler, *The Soviets*, pp.115–116.

[122] Sukhanov's description of a chaotic meeting of the soviet in Petrograd compared it to a riding school. N. N. Sukhanov, *The Russian Revolution, 1917*, translated by Joel Carmichael (Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1983), pp. 86–87.

[123] Anweiler, *The Soviets*, p. 137.

[124] See, for example, Orlando Figes, *Peasant Russia, Civil War: The Volga Countryside in Revolution, 1917–1921* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), pp. 36–45.

[125] Hickey, "Smolensk", pp. 863–881.

[126] Anweiler, *The Soviets*, pp. 139–140.

[127] Michael Melancon, "The Syntax of Soviet Power: The Resolutions of Local Soviets and Other Institutions, March–October 1917," in *Russian Review*, Vol. 52, No. 4 (October 1993), pp. 486–505. Melancon argues that through the summer of 1917, local support for the Provisional Government, conditional at best, waned significantly. Melancon posits time, rather than ideology as the nexus of support, with increasing local support for soviet power through the summer months. What he fails to accentuate (but is supported) in his article, however, is the territorial dimension to the problems of *dvoevlastie*: one reason soviet power became the most legitimate authority in Russia is that it had stronger support from the provinces.

[128] *Ibid.*, p. 138. Kronstadt, of course, became a center of opposition to Bolshevik rule in 1921, when it demanded free, secret elections to local soviets, and was brutally repressed by Lenin's government. For a rather strident, anti-Bolshevik account of this, see E. Petrov-Kitaletz, *The Kronstadt Thesis: For a Free Russian Government*, translated by John F. O'Conor (New York: Robert Speller and Sons, 1964). Schapiro refers to other bids for local sovereignty, particularly in Kazan and Kaluga in 1917. See his *The Communist Party of the Soviet Union*, 2nd ed. (New York: Vintage Books, 1971), p. 246.

[129] Orlando Figes, *Peasant Russia*, p. 66.

[130] This point is made forcefully by Lenin in his State and Revolution. Criticizing Bernstein's interpretation of Marx's *Civil War in France*, Lenin claimed that the foundation for the centralized state would be based upon the voluntary coincidence of local and central interests. "Bernstein cannot conceive of the possibility of voluntary centralism, of the voluntary amalgamation of the communes into a nation, of the voluntary fusion of the proletarian communes, for the purpose of destroying bourgeois

rule and the bourgeois state machine. Like all philistines, Bernstein pictures centralism as something which can be imposed and maintained solely from above, and solely by the bureaucracy and the military clique." Lenin's assumption of coincidence displayed a woeful ignorance of local interests and the territorial dimension of politics, and is a consequence of economic determinism. See his *State and Revolution* in *Selected Works*, Vol. 2 (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1977), pp. 270–276.

[131] See "The Dual Power" and "The Tasks of the Proletariat in Our Revolution," in V.I. Lenin, *Selected Works*, Vol. 2, pp. 34–36, 37–65. See also Carmen Sirianni, "Councils and Parliaments: The Problems of Dual Power and Democracy in Comparative Perspective," in *Politics and Society*, Vol. 12, No. 2 (June 1983), pp. 53–82.

[132] For a full discussion of the Bolshevik dilemma concerning administrative experience, see Rigby, *Lenin's Government*, pp. 11–51.

[133] Kaganovich, *Mestnoe sovetskoe*, p. 14. Higher soviets, however, were given the right to regulate relations among lower soviets and resolve contradictions between them.

[134] *Vestnik Narkomvnudela*, No. 4 (1918), as cited in Kaganovich, *Mestnoe sovetskoe*, p. 14.

[135] As Medvedev pointed out, "the combination of legislative and executive powers within one institution leads over a period of time to the disproportionate growth of the executive, thus turning representative bodies into empty appendages, providing an opening for a regime of personal dictatorship, and creating a favorable atmosphere for the development of bureaucracy and abuse of power." —Roy Medvedev, *On Socialist Democracy* (London: Spokesman Books, 1975), pp. 140–141. See also Richard Sakwa, *Soviet Communists in Power: A Study of Moscow During the Civil War, 1918–1921* (London: Macmillan, 1988), pp. 165–216.

[136] V. Tikhomirov, *Vlast' sovetov*, No. 27 (1918), p. 12, as quoted in Walter Pietsch, *Revolution und Staat* (Koln: Verlag Wissenschaft

und Politik, 1969) p. 76. This is, of course, in as much as local soviets actually possessed any real power. In rural areas, with only a few exceptions, there was an acute lack of coherence both within and among local governments. Olga Narkiewicz cited one early official in the Bolshevik government: "Strictly speaking, there is no soviet government in the majority of the *uezdy*. At present the soviets exist in most places only on paper; in reality, representatives of kulaks and speculators, or self-interested people, or cowards, who carry out the work without any definite direction, work under the name of soviets." *The Making of the Soviet Apparatus* (Manchester: Manchester University Press), pp. 59–77. Pipes also discusses the poor penetration of soviets to the rural countryside, *The Russian Revolution* (New York: Vintage Books, 1991), pp. 738–741.

[137] Oil from Baku, for example, could not reach Moscow until it had been taxed by each regional soviet through which it passed. See Pietsch, *Revolution und Staat*, pp. 76–87.

[138] Moshe Lewin suggested that centralization was a solution to a particular set of administrative circumstances which arose during the Civil War in Russia. In order to maintain power and defeat the counterrevolution, the Bolsheviks were forced to rely on centralized power, on state intervention, coercion, and *ogosudarstvlenie*. —Moshe Lewin, "The Social Background of Stalinism," in Robert C. Tucker (ed.), *Stalinism: Essays in Historical Interpretation* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1977), pp. 111–136. Certainly these tendencies towards central control became glaringly evident during the civil war. But the breakdown of any democratic practice and the centralization of authority and power were already well underway by the end of 1917, well before the beginning of the civil war.

[139] G. S. Gurvich, *Istoriia sovetskoi konstitutsii* (Moscow: 1923), p.4. Gurvich probably overstates his case, but there is little doubt that the chaos of local government was a significant factor in the emergence of the 1918 constitution.

[140] See R. W. Davies, *The Development of the Soviet Budgetary System* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1958), pp. 18–19, 33. Davies points out that Lenin, while mouthing slogans for the "broadest autonomy of local organizations," pushed for

a "unified, strictly determined financial policy" as a necessary component of strengthening central power.

[141] For the 1918 Constitution, with commentary, see Andrew Rothstein (ed.), *The Soviet Constitution* (London: 1923).

[142] See M. Vladimirskii, "Vzaimootnosheniia tsentral'nykh i mestnykh organov po postanovleniiam VII-go i VIII-go s"ezdov sovetov," in *Vlast' sovetov*, No.1 (January 1921), pp. 1–4.

[143] John L.H. Keep (ed.), *The Debate on Soviet Power: Minutes of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee of Soviets* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979), p. 23.

[144] Quoted in Keep, *Soviet Power*, pp. 141–142. The decline of the Central Executive Committee in 1918 and 1919, particularly with the death of Sverdlov, is viewed as a significant turning point in the fate of local soviets. See Rigby, *Lenin's Government*, pp. 170–184.

[145] R. W. Davies, pp. 19, 33. Note the struggles between local soviets, supported by NKVD, and the NKFin.

[146] In the first three years after the Bolsheviks seized power, local soviets displayed a wide variety of administrative structure and relationships. Local organs used the journal of the People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs, *Vlast' sovetov* as a nationwide bulletin board to share their problems and successes in local administration. As the party strengthened its control, this became less common. Various organizational schemes and advice can be found in any issue of 1919. See, in particular, "Sovetskaia vlast' na mestakh," No. 11, pp. 7–30.

[147] Schapiro, *Communist Party*, p. 247.

[148] See Pipes, *The Russian Revolution*, pp. 741–42.

[149] "The Program of the All-Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks)," in James H. Meisel and Edward S. Kozera (eds.), Materials for the Study of the Soviet System (Ann Arbor, Mich.: Wahr, 1950), p. 109.

[150] Leon Trotsky, *Terrorism and Communism* (Ann Arbor, Mich.: University of Michigan Press, 1961), p. 109.

[151] Schapiro, *Communist Party*, p. 246.

[152] *Ibid.*, p. 235.

[153] Orlando Figes, *A People's Tragedy; The Russian Revolution, 1892–1924* (London: J. Cape, 1996), p. 756.

[154] Certainly, the economic collapse and the acute grain shortages provided important context for resistance. See, for example, Figes, *Peasant Russia*, pp. 330–331; Alexander Rabinowitch, "The Petrograd First City District Soviet during the Civil War," in Diane P. Koenker, William G. Rosenberg, and Ronald Grigor Suny (eds.), *Party, State, and Society in the Russian Civil War: Explorations in Social History* (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1989), pp. 133–157. See also the related articles in the same book by Mary McAuley and Thomas Remington. In spite of his spirited defense of party control over the soviets, for example, Trotsky appears to have recognized the dangers involved in the hypercentralization of power. See Richard B. Day, "Leon Trotsky on the Dialectics of Democratic Control," in Peter Wiles (ed.), *The Soviet Economy on the Brink of Reform: Essays in Honour of Alec Nove* (Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1988), pp. 1–36.

[155] Ninth Congress, 1920, cited in Pietsch, *Revolution und Staat*, p. 147. The tendency towards the "partification" of government continued unabated. By the eleventh Congress in 1922, Lenin expressed doubts as to extent of party substitution of state organs. At this last party congress he attended, Lenin belatedly noted that the party machinery must be separated from the machinery of soviet government. See, in particular, "Political Report of the Central Committee," in *Collected Works*, Vol 33 (Moscow: 1966), pp. 263–309.

[156] Graeme Gill, *The Origins of the Stalinist Political System* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 37

[157] T.H. Rigby, "Early Provincial Cliques and the Rise of Stalin," in *Soviet Studies*, Vol. 33, No. 1 (January 1981), pp 3–28.

[158] Peter H. Solomon, Jr., "Local Political Power and Soviet Criminal Justice, 1922–41," in *Soviet Studies*, Vol. 37, No. 3 (July 1985), pp. 305–329.

[159] See Daniel R. Brower, "The Smolensk Scandal and the End of NEP," in *Slavic Review*, Vol. 45, No. 4 (Winter 1986); and Gill, pp. 113–134, 201–218.

[160] J. V. Stalin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 13 (Moscow: Foreign Language Publishing House, 1955), p. 354.

[161] *Ibid.*, pp. 374-382.

[162] J. Arch Getty, *Origins of the Great Purges: The Soviet Communist Party Reconsidered, 1933–1938* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), p. 27. Getty's work is a thorough, though controversial study. For another example of local corruption in the 1930s, see Roberta T. Manning, "Government in the Soviet Countryside in the Stalinist Thirties: The Case of Belyi Raion in 1937," *The Carl Beck Papers in Russian and East European Studies*, Paper No. 301, University of Pittsburgh (1984), p. 27.

[163] Getty, *Origins*, p. 31.

[164] In this sense, Robert Tucker's comparison of Stalin to Ivan the Terrible is illuminating. See his *Stalin in Power: The Revolution from Above, 1928–1941* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1990), pp. 13–65.

[165] In his later years, Stalin had a tendency to parcel out regional fiefdoms to his lieutenants. Charles Fairbanks has pointed out that within a particular fiefdom a member of the leadership was "responsible for almost everything in a given locality, administering it through a network of clients personally linked to him." —Charles H, Fairbanks, Jr., "National Cadres as a Force in the Soviet System: The Evidence of Beria's Career, 1949–53," in Jeremy Azrael (ed.), *Soviet Nationality Policies and Practices* (New York: Praeger, 1978), p. 177.

[166] I.P. Trainin and I.D. Levin (eds.), *Sovetskoe gosudarstvennoe pravo* (Moscow: Ministerstva Iustitsii SSSR, 1948), p. 415.

[167] Articles 146 and 147 of the 1977 Constitution, for example, enumerate in far greater detail than the earlier constitution the role of local soviets. They were to "resolve all questions of local importance, keeping in mind general state interests and the interests of the citizens living in the territory of the Soviet, implement the decisions of higher state organs, direct the activity of lower-level Soviets of People's Deputies, and also participate in the discussion of questions of republic and all-union importance, and submit proposals concerning these questions... Within their territory, local Soviets of People's Deputies direct state, economic, and socio-cultural organization; confirm plans of economic and social development and the local budget; exercise leadership over the (activities of) state organs, enterprises, institutions, and organizations, subordinate to them; ...Within the limits of their authority, local Soviets of People's Deputies ensure integrated economic and social development within their territory..." See the comparison of the two constitutions, side by side, in F. J. M. Feldbrugge (ed.), *The Constitutions of the USSR and the Union Republics: Analysis, Texts, Reports* (Alphen aan den Rijn, The Netherlands: Sijthoff and Noordhoff, 1979), pp. 159–161.

[168] *Izvestiia* (16 February 1988), p. 2.

[169] In perhaps the best book on local politics of post Stalin Soviet Union, for example, Jerry Hough used the model of the French prefect to suggest that *oblast* party secretaries were the functional political commissars for their respective regions, and provincial coordinators "of the growing services of central ministries." See Jerry F. Hough, *The Soviet Prefects: The Local Party Organs in Industrial Decision-Making* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1969), p. 5. While we agree with Hough's characterization, our point here is quite different, viz., that party organs and industrial enterprises had assumed many of the functions of local government because the soviets did not have enough power to do so, and because Moscow was better connected to its local party organs and branch enterprises than it was to local soviets. Hough suggested that the party did not necessarily have to assume the role of prefect, and that such a role might have been played by various local executive committees, but such would have "entailed a governmental restructuring that would have complicated the organi-

zational chart" (p. 5). More to the point, in spite of dual subordination, executive committees could not ensure central control over local governments as well as local party organs.

[170] Barabashev and Sheremet, *Sovetskoe Stroitel'stvo*, p. 72.

[171] G. V. Barabashev and K. F. Sheremet, "KPSS i Sovety," *Sovetskoe gosudarstvo i pravo*, No. 11 (1967), p. 42. For glowing accounts of party leadership of local soviets through the Stalin and post-Stalin periods, see A. I. Lepeshkin, *Mestnye organy vlasti sovetskogo gosudarstvo* (Moscow: Gosudarstevennoe izdatel'stvo iuridicheskoi literatury, 1959), pp. 75–137; and idem., *Sovety: vlast' naroda, 1936–1976* (Moscow: Gosudarstevennoe izdatel'stvo iuridicheskoi literatury, 1967).

[172] M. Levitskii and Ia. Kucheriavyi, "Partiinii Komitet i Sovet Narodnikh Deputatov," in *Partiinia Zhizn'*, No. 2 (1989), pp. 18–23.

[173] Barabashev and Sheremet, "KPSS i Sovety," p. 38. See also the description of the *raikom* first secretary's responsibilities over construction, provided by Levitskii in Levitskii and Kucheriavyi, p. 19. Slightly more revealing of the relationship between the CPSU and local soviets are the Communist Party rules, which describe how Party organs and Party members within the soviets attempt to "guide" the work: "Party organs...in local soviets...exercise supervision over the work of the apparatus in the implementation of directives of party and government...They must actively promote the perfection of the work of the apparatus, the selection, placement and education of their employees, increase their responsibility for the work entrusted to them...take measures for improving state discipline, lead a decisive struggle vs. bureaucratism and red tape, [and] promptly inform Party organs about shortcomings in the work of institutions." See Graeme Gill, *The Rules of the CPSU* (London: Macmillan, 1988), pp. 247–248.

[174] L. P. Muromtseva, "XXVII S'ezd KPSS i Voprosy Partiinogo Rukovodstva Sovetami," in *Vestnik Moskovskogo Universiteta: Seriia VII - Istoriia*, No. 2 (1988), pp. 3–17.

[175] Among other things, *podmena* undermined public confidence,

forced the Party to deal with many mundane matters, and distracted Party cadres from ideological training and mobilization tasks. See G. Kh. Shakhnazarov, *Socialist Democracy: Aspects of Theory* (Moscow: Progress Books, 1974) pp. 67–69.

[176] Degtiarev, "Pervoosnova Partiinoi Zhizni," p. 11.

[177] Shakhnazarov, *Socialist Democracy*, p. 67. The author later worked with Andropov, Chernenko, and Gorbachev as political advisor. See also Ronald J. Hill, "Party-State Relations and Soviet Political Development," in *British Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 10, No. 2 (April 1980), pp. 149–165; and Bohdan Harasymiw, "Party Leadership of the Local Soviets," in Everett M. Jacobs (ed.), *Soviet Local Politics and Government* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1983), pp. 97–112.

[178] *Moscow News* (10 July 1988), p. 12.

[179] *Pravda* (5 October 1988), p. 2.

[180] In the post-Stalin period, local soviets ostensibly had the right to monitor enterprises over such issues as sanitation, housing construction, and the provision of cultural and domestic services, but no authority to penalize enterprises for non compliance in such matters. They could only appeal to superior organs for assistance. See A. V. Luzhin, "Vzaimootnosheniia mestnykh sovetov s sovnarkhozami i predpriiatiiami soiuznoreспublikanskogo podchineniia," in *Sovetskoe gosudarstvo i pravo*, No.4 (1959), pp. 43–54. Ukrainian Second Secretary, N. Podgorny, noted that local soviets viewed enterprises under all-union control as "extra-territorial principalities." *Kommunist*, No. 16 (1955), p. 50. Our thanks to Bill Tompson for bringing this article to our attention.

[181] On ministries and local soviets, see M. N. Tarasenko, "Vzaimodeistvie mestnykh Sovetov i ministerstv," *Sovetskoe gosudarstvo i pravo*, No. 8 (1980), pp. 74–82; Cameron Ross, *Local Government in the Soviet Union: Problems of Implementation and Control* (London: Croom Helm, 1987); and Stephen Whitefield, *Industrial Power and the Soviet State* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), especially pp. 162–167.

[182] Donna Bahry has pointed out that from 203 steps in compiling a ministry's plan, the regional dimension was introduced only at step 179, after key decisions had been made, and even then were non-obligatory for the ministry. See *Outside Moscow: Power, Politics, and Budgetary Policy in the Soviet Republics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987), p. 35.

[183] Tarasenko, "Sovetov i ministerstv;" and M.T. Baimakhanov, M. A. Bindir and N. I. Akuev, *Oblastnye sovety i promyshlennye predpriiatiia vyshestoiashchego podchineniia* (Alma Ata: Nauka, 1982).

[184] Taubmann; Hahn, *Soviet Grassroots;* Carol W. Lewis, "Economic Functions of Local Soviets," in Jacobs, *Local Politics*, pp. 48–66; Theodore H. Friedgut, *Political Participation in the USSR* (Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1979); Friedgut, "The Soviet Citizen's Perception of Local Government," in Jacobs, *Local Politics*, pp. 113–130; all posit varying degrees of local control over the implementation of central policy. Cameron Ross, *Local Government in the Soviet Union*, critiques this position, pointing out that the problems of implementation and control had less to do with local power and interests, and more to do with bureaucratic problems of processing information. Ross' position is more consistent with the general theme concerning the paradox of over and under government.

[185] *Izvestiia* (29 April 1988), p. 3.

[186] *Izvestiia* (12 June 1970), p. 24. For a Brezhnevian approach to actually existing local self-government in the socialist state, see M. V. Tsvik, "Sotsialisticheskaia demokratiia i samoupravlenie," in *Sovetskoe gosudarstvo i pravo*, No. 4 (1985), pp. 3–11.

[187] Jowitt suggested that bureaucratic sclerosis was the consequence of the Soviet regime's loss of its "combat ethos" and its organizational integrity. See Ken Jowitt, "Soviet Neotraditionalism: The Political Corruption of a Leninist Regime," *in Soviet Studies*, Vol. 35, No. 3 (July 1983), pp. 275-297. See also Jan Pakulski, "Legitimacy and Mass Compliance: Reflections on Max Weber in Soviet-Type Systems," in *British Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 16, No. 1 (January 1986).

[188] D. D. Tsabriia, *Sistema upravlenitia* (Moscow: Iuridicheskaia Literatura, 1990). In contrast to Tsabriia's economic determinism, Ron Hill pointed out that society outgrew the administrative system and thus demanded increased opportunities for participation. See his "Party-State Relations and Soviet Political Development," in *British Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 10, No. 2 (April 1980).

[189] S. V. Solov'eva, *Sovety narodnykh deputatov i uskorenie sotsial'no-ekonomicheskogo razvitiia* (Moscow: Nauka, 1989).

[190] *Izvestiia* (16 February 1988). See also V.I. Karpov, et al, *Organizatsionnaia rabota mestnykh sovetov: reservy pvysheniia effektivnosti* (Moscow: Nauka, 1988) p. 3.

[191] See, for example, discussions of self-government in the Soviet press. *Moskovskaia pravda* (6, 9 October 1987, and 20 November 1987); *Sovetskoe Zaural'e* (25 October 1987); *Sovetkaia Sibir'* (11 June 1987).

[192] *Tambovskaia pravda* (25 December 1987).

[193] *Sovetskaia Rossiia* (27 December 1987); *Moskovskii komsomolets* (12 January 1988).

[194] *Sovetskaia torgovlia* (10 March 1988); *Sovetskaia Sibir'* (29 December 1988).

[195] From personal interview by John Young with K. F. Sheremet, in Moscow, 27 November 1992.

[196] See V. I. Karpov, et al (eds.), *Organizatsionnaia rabota mestnykh sovetov* (Moscow: Sovetskaia Rossiia, 1988); G. V. Barabashev, N. G. Starovoitov, and K. F. Sheremet, *Sovety narodnykh deputatov na etape sovershenstvovaniia sotsializma* (Moscow: Iuridicheskaia Literatura, 1987); A. V. Moskalev, *Problemy sovershenstvovaniia mestnykh sovetov narodnykh deputatov* (Sverdlovsk: Sverlovskii Gos, Universitet, 1988); E. V. Alferova, et al, *Sovety narodnykh deputatov i perestroika* (Moscow: Akademiia Nauk, 1990); G. V. Barabashev and K. F. Sheremet, "Vremia peremen," *Sovetskoe gosudarstvo i pravo*, No. 5 (1988), and G. V. Barabashev and K. F. Sheremet, *Soviets*

of People's Deputies: Democracy and Administration, translated by Natalia Belskaya (Moscow: Progress, 1989).

[197] *Izvestiia* (23 May 1988), pp. 1–3. In a personal interview, Georgii Barabashev claimed that among the leadership, Aleksandr Yakovlev and Anatolii Lukyanov were the two strongest advocates of reforming local government, including democratization of the soviets and strengthening soviet power. Interview by John Young, in Moscow, 22 September 1992.

[198] Quoted in Hahn, "Power to the Soviets?," in *Problems of Communism* (January-February 1989), p. 36. For more on the introduction of elections to local governments, see also Hahn, "An Experiment in Competition: The 1987 Elections to the Local Soviets," in *Slavic Review*, Vol. 47, No. 3 (Fall 1988), pp. 434–447.

[199] *Pravda* (27 September 1988), p. 3.

[200] At the national level, the amendments called for a new Congress of People's Deputies, with direct elections for 1,500 of the 2,250 seats. Amendments can be found in *Izvestiia* (3 December 1988), p. 3.

[201] Some Union deputies expressed concern in the Supreme Soviet over the nature of these as yet unknown details. See *Pravda* (1 and 2 December 1988), pp. 2, 2.

[202] *Izvestiia* (2 December 1988), p. 3.

[203] "K razrabotke proekta zakona o mestnom samoupravlenii i mestnom khoziaistve," in *Sovetskoe gosudarstvo i pravo* No.2 (1989), pp. 74–90.

[204] *Ibid.*

[205] A. V. Butakov, "Samoupravlenie: Poniatie, sushchnost' osnovnye cherty," (unpublished manuscript, 1990).

[206] "K razrabotke proekta," p. 41.

[207] *Vostochno-Sibirskaia pravda* (29 December 1988).

[208] The Committee was called the Komitet po Voprosam Raboty Sovetov Narodnykh Deputatov, Razvitiia Upravleniia i Samoupravleniia (Committee for Issues of Soviets of People's Deputies and Development of Administration and Self-Government). In March 1991, it changed its name to the Komitet po gosudarstvennomu stroitel'stvu (Committee for State Building).

[209] Speech by V. I. Kolesnikov, *Pervyi s'ezd narodnykh deputatov SSSR: stenograficheskii otchet*, Vol. 2 (Moscow: Verkhovnogo Soveta R.S.F.S.R., 1989), pp. 14–18.

[210] From interview with Georgi Barabashev. See also "Chto 'Ne Tak' v Zakone o Sovetakh?" (interview with Pivovarev), in *Narodnyi deputat*, No. 6 (1991), p. 31.

[211] In later interviews, advocates of local self-government suggested that they viewed this as a positive development, since the opposition to local power was strongest at the center. The hopes were such that by moving the issue to a different arena there would be a more favorable environment.

[212] *Izvestiia* (16 February 1988), p. 3. See also Barabashev and Sheremet "Vremia peremen," p. 18.

[213] "K razrabotke," in *Sovetskoe gosudarstvo i pravo*, No. 2 (1989), p. 42.

[214] K. F. Sheremet, "Mestnoe samoupravlenie v Rossii: teoriia i praktika," public lecture at the Institute of State and Law, Moscow, 6 October 1992.

[215] Later, the Union government clarified this fudginess in October of 1990 with a new law obliging the obedience of lower soviets to higher ones.

[216] A. N. Kostiukov, "Mestnoe upravlenie i munitsipal'noe pravo RSFSR: podkhody i perspektivy," in *Materialy respublikanskoi nauchno-prakticheskoi konferentsii "problemy mestnogo samoupravleniia v RSFSR"* (Omsk: 1991), pp. 43–54, citation on p. 45.

[217] See, for example, the discussion in *Vechernii Omsk* (4 December 1989), p. 2.

[218] *Izvestiia* (15 October 1990), p. 3.

[219] *Izvestiia* (7 February 1991), p. 3.

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