

Historians and Historical Societies in the Public Life of Imperial Russia. By Vera Kaplan. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2017. xiii, 316. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Photographs. \$65.00, hard bound.
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Vera Kaplan in this well researched and well written work lays out the evolution of Russian historical societies in the imperial era. She traces them from their tenuous eighteenth-century origins through the vibrant, ambitious efforts of the empire's last years. Furthermore, on the basis of her work with an exceptional archival discovery, she challenges us to rethink the meaning of *obshchestvo* and *obshchestvennost'* as the exclusive preserve of a liberally inclined intellectual elite and to restore a conservative effort at addressing the challenges that faced late imperial Russia. As a history of historical societies, this book is imminently successful, and the attempt at adjusting the paradigm of the specifically historical intellectual life of the age is worth undertaking. It seems, however, that her discovered historical society does not fully fit the framework she herself has elaborated.

Dr. Kaplan's work consists of four main chapters. In the first of these, she traces the evolution of historical associations in the eighteenth century from embryonic beginnings through the state- and masonic-based public societies during the era of Catherine the Great. Developments in the first half of the nineteenth-century presented in the second chapter saw learned societies essentially focused on scholarship from which wider educational aspects derived. With the Reform Era, however, learned societies became actively involved in public educational outreach. This chapter discusses formal organizations, such as the *Russkoe istoricheskoe obshchestvo*, as well as the informal grouping of historians in scholarly *kruzhki*. The third chapter details the organizations and activities that embodied the emergence of "Historians as Public Activists" (154). This section deals with the remarkable effervescence of the 1880s and 1890s, during which organizations for publishing people's literature and for disseminating technical knowledge emerged, along with university extension programs. Chapter 4 explores and interprets the organization, membership, and efforts of the Society of Zealots of Russian Historical Education in Memory of Alexander III (*Obshchestvo Revnitatei russkogo istoricheskogo prosveshcheniia v pamiat' imperatora Aleksandra III*), a previously unknown organization, whose archival materials she discovered.

Encompassing a wealth of materials, this exploration of historical societies tells a compelling story of the gradual updating and broadening of the societies' functions first from pre-professional to professional and then from social science to social service, resulting in "new modes of cooperation between members of the academic community and the broader educated public and . . . historians' participation in public educational activity beyond the . . . universities" (138). The overwhelmingly liberal orientation of historical societies called into existence in the mid-1890s nationalist, monarchist historical societies. Her fascinating Chapter 4 reveals an expansive effort to organize a conservative historical society faithful to the hallmarks of Russian historical societies: equality, familial feeling, and socio-political engagement. In Dr. Kaplan's words: "Drawing heavily on the ideas of contemporary conservative thinkers . . . and combining the concepts of science and politics with the notions of Russian tsarism and Orthodoxy, the Zealots introduced a new—reactionary, conservative, but also essentially modern—perspective into contemporary historical discourse" (189).

Nu, da i nyet. While committed to modern historical practices, the Zealots had difficulty attracting top-drawer historians, Sergei Platonov for a bit, but mostly second-raters, like Nikolai Chechulin. She herself notes the "constant tension between

formalized equality and the *soslovie*-bound code of behavior, between the formal structure and personal ties, and, essentially, between old hereditary and new voluntary, ideology-driven frames of social grouping” (214). With Count Sergei Sheremetev heading it up for its entire history and prominent members partying once in the garb of seventeenth-century *boiare*, there was little chance that the Zealots would succeed in the conservative “Quest for Useful History” (182), sufficient to an era of rapid, structural change. An effective, conservative, state-oriented history *a la* the Zealots was well-nigh impossible given the conservative utopia mindset of Nicholas II and the Russian elite and the significance of wealth, status, and connections in this milieu.

None of these reservations detract from the scholarly service provided by Dr. Kaplan in excavating and exploring in so erudite a fashion this pre-revolutionary effort to forge a historical society capable of that task. She made an astonishing archival discovery and used it as the basis for a book I enjoyed reading so much that I wish I had written it.

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The Russian Liberals and the 1905 Revolution. By Peter Enticott. Routledge Studies in the History of Russia. London: Routledge, 2016. xiv, 208 pp. Appendix. Notes. Glossary. Bibliography. Index. £160.00, hard bound.
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This volume contributes to our understanding of the demise of tsarism in Russia on two levels. On the one hand, it offers the first book-length study in English of the early years of the Russian liberal movement since the now somewhat dated Shmuel Galai, *The Liberation Movement in Russia, 1900–1905* (1973), surpassing that work through the utilization of archival and other resources made available to scholars since 1991, although Peter Enticott’s major source base is contemporary publications, particularly those of the book’s prime focus, the Kadets (Constitutional Democrats), and through extending its coverage across and beyond 1905. On the other hand, the work deliberately sets out to contribute to the longstanding debate among historians that is sometimes referred to as “Wither Russia?”: in short, the issue of whether or not the post-1905 constitutional system was doomed from birth or might have flourished but for the catastrophes of the First World War. Here Enticott comes out strongly against the “unduly pessimistic” (ix) view offered by Leopold Haimson in the 1950s and offers a more optimistic prognosis that is closer to that more recently assayed by Michael Melancon (“Unexpected Consensus: Russian Society and the Lena Massacre, April 1912,” *Revolutionary Russia* 15, no. 2, 2002), and Wayne Dowler (*Russia in 1913*, DeKalb, 2010). Ultimately, however, he is forced to concede that, whatever might have been, “in reality the Kadets did not come to power in 1906, and the First World War did, in fact, take place. And given the grave international and internal disasters which beset the country, liberalism and political democracy had little chance of flowering in Russia” (191).

After a brief overview of the development of liberalism in Russia, the book follows a chronological path through the major events of 1905–06, from Bloody Sunday to the dispersal of the Kadet-dominated First State Duma and the issuing of the Vyborg Manifesto. Along the way the author offers discrete sections on aspects of the history and character of the Kadets. There is a particularly detailed and interesting section on party organization (78–83), another on the negotiations for the formation of a Kadet-dominated ministry in 1906 (119–31), and a final chapter on