Peasant Land Reform, Representation and Civil Rights: The Development of Constitutional Thought in the Zemstvos in Russia, 1905-1907

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines constitutional political opinions among the members of provincial and district zemstvos in Russia, in order to explain this group's rejection of liberal political parties in the first two Dumas. It finds that the rejection of these parties was not entirely synonymous with a rejection of liberal constitutional ideas among the zemstvo rank and file, who exhibited support for constitutionalism in three main areas. Firstly, arguments advanced against land expropriation among the zemstvo rank and file were based upon the desire to reinforce economic individualism amongst the peasantry, which was considered to be an essential basis for a constitutional regime. Secondly, the zemstvo rank and file supported a Duma elected upon a restricted franchise that would play a role in the political modernization of the peasantry in order to encourage norms of constructive political participation and reduce the popularity of extremist parties. Finally, government repression was criticized on the basis that it contravened notions of law and due process. Evidence from the southern provinces suggests that repression was valued for its role in restoring law and order, although the legality of the repression was still criticized. These findings suggest that the landed nobility who made up the majority of the members of the provincial and district zemstvos were more supportive of constitutional reform in Russia than has previously been suggested, which is significant to historical debates surrounding the stability of the tsarist regime before the First World War.

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AUTHOR'S DECLARATION

I declare that, except where explicit reference is made to the contribution of others, this dissertation is the result of my own work and has not been submitted for any other degree at The University of York or any other institution.

INTRODUCTION

In March 1906 the British vice-consul to Odessa, V. H. Bosanquet, reported that there had been widespread peasant unrest in Saratov province as a result of the chronic shortage of land available to the peasants. The following account of an example of the resulting governmental repression was established by Bosanquet on the basis of accounts from landowners who had fled to the local towns.

> Cossacks were sent to suppress the disorders, and they have seemed to have flogged the peasants mercilessly. I was told of a case where Cossacks (by order of the zemstvo nachalnik, if I remember right) beat the peasants of the soles of their feet so severely that some died and others were taken to hospital. I was further informed that many peasants had been killed by Cossacks.[1]

This report of brutal government action in the provinces is indicative of a new trend in political thought among the aristocratic landed proprietors of Russia's provinces. Accounts of brutal punishment resulting in the death of peasants is presented as illegitimate, especially as it was carried out arbitrarily on the orders of the zemstvo nachalnik, or land captain, a representative of the tsarist bureaucracy in the countryside. This represents an interesting concern for the due operation of law and order in the countryside, even where repression was acting in the landowners' interests. In asserting the right of the peasantry to enjoy the due process of the law, this passage also raises the possibility that the peasantry were also thought of to deserve rights and freedoms that citizens of a constitutional regime would be entitled to.

This dissertation will examine the rejection of the Kadet and Octobrist parties among the provincial and district zemstvos in 1906 during the revolution of 1905-1907. In almost a single stroke, in that year's zemstvo elections most Kadet deputies lost the seats in the zemstvos. By the end of the decade, the Kadets had been completely eliminated from the zemstvos, after their leaders had dominated the gentry's opposition within the zemstvos up to the formation of political parties. The political opinions of the zemstvo rank and file during the revolution of 1905 to 1907 will be studied in order to determine whether this rejection of liberal political parties represented a rejection of liberal and constitutional politics by the zemstvo rank and file, or if a more complex

[1] The National Archives, Kew, FO 881/8755, no. 22, Vice-Consul V. H. Bosanquet to Consul-General C. Smith, March 12 1906, 64.

picture emerges where the zemstvo rank and file merely rejected the particular Kadet brand of liberalism, retaining aspects of support for constitutional reform for Russia.

The revolutionary period of 1905-1907, in which this investigation will be situated, arguably set the precedent for the interaction and cooperation between the emerging civil society and the state in order to implement constitutional reform. Faced with revolutionary uprisings in major urban centers, rampant peasant unrest in the countryside, and organized campaigns for constitutional reform from educated sections of society, the government granted the concession of the Duma along with new laws for greater accountability of government to Russian society. The extent to which constitutional reform resulted in an increase in cooperation between civil society and the Russian government can be investigated by studying the development of constitutional thought in the zemstvos, with a view to establishing if there existed a movement for moderate political change that would have been compatible with the Russian government.

The Zemstvos in 1905

The zemstvo rank and file represented a minority of the Russian population. However, it should not be assumed that this group was homogeneous in its social and political outlook. There existed a variety of different opinions on the welfare of the peasantry, civil liberties, and the role of a representative institution within this group, alongside significant socio-economic variation. The opinions expressed by this group in response to a government survey on rural problems in 1894 demonstrates such variety of opinion,[2] as does the intellectual output of the members of the Beseda group at the beginning of the twentieth century, which was based upon the exposition of broad principles as opposed to specific methods that may have led to divisions within the early zemstvo movement.[3] There were also a range of interest groups formed by the members of the landed gentry that sat on the zemstvos. Foremost among these was the United Nobility, which was formed in 1906 to oppose land expropriation but later lobbied the

[2] Thomas Fallows, 'The Russian Fronde and the Zemstvo Movement: Economic Agitation and Gentry Politics in the Mid-1890s', *Russian Review*, vol. 44, no. 2 (1985), 135.
[3] Terrence Emmons, *The Formation of Political Parties and the First National Elections in Russia* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1983), 28.

government on other conservative issues, and represented the richest segment of the landed nobility.[4]

The nobility that sat on the zemstvos in different provinces in Russia would have had different economic priorities, and therefore different political views. For example, the nobility in the southern black earth region would have been more engaged in farming than the nobility which sat on the zemstvos in the northern forested regions due to the relative fertility of farming in the former area.[5] There was also a significant diversification in wealth among the Russian nobility still attached to the land. Of the 39 percent of the noble estate that still possessed land in 1905, 23 percent owned one to 100 desiatinas of land, 13 percent owned 101 to 1,000 desiatinas, and three percent owning over 1,000 desiatinas.[6] Therefore, in light of significant political and economic diversification of the landed gentry who sat on zemstvo boards, references to the zemstvo rank and file as a whole are problematical. However, this shorthand represents the best approximation that can be achieved in the absence of detailed sources on the political opinions of this group, such as a detailed corpus of memoir material.

The zemstvos represent a unique institution for studying the role of Russian civil society and its interaction with the government during the revolutionary period of 1905-1907. Established in 1864, and comprised of a system of district zemstvos and a provincial zemstvo per province, the zemstvos played key public roles in the administration of the 34 Russian provinces in which they were established. They were tasked with the maintenance of roads, bridges, hospitals and schools, and employed agronomists.[7] The zemstvos gradually accumulated more powers over the countryside up to the period in question. The provisions of 1890 gave the zemstvos control over a much broader range of local issues; the original 1864 statute had defined the powers of the zemstvos as the management of 'local economic and welfare needs', whereas the

[4] Seymore Becker, 'A Conservative Lobby: the United Nobility 1905-1910', *Kritika* vol. 5, no. 1 (2004), 114; Roberta Maning, *The Crisis of the Old order in Russia: Gentry and Government* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982), 233.
[5] David Moon, 'Peasants and Agriculture', in D. Lieven, (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Russia*. *Vol. 2, Imperial Russia, 1689-1917* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 369.
[6] Seymore Becker, *Nobility and Privilege in Late Imperial Russia*, (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1985), 39.
[7] 'The Zemstvo Statutes of 1 January, 1864', in G. Vernadsky (ed.), *A Source Book for Russian History from Early Times to 1917*, vol. 3 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1972), 613-14.

1890 statute omitted the word 'economic', which McKenzie suggested reflected a recognition of a broader scope of zemstvo activities.[8]

The zemstvos consisted of elected officials who set overall zemstvo policy, and employed various professionals such as teachers, doctors, and agronomists. The elected officials consisted mainly of the local landed gentry. Although property requirements for candidacy and voting had been initially set relatively low, in an attempt to prop up the landed gentry the government modified the zemstvo statutes to effectively exclude all but the richest peasants from the zemstvos. Research by Atkinson has also suggested that peasants who did sit on the zemstvos often owed their positions in some way to the local authorities, were unused to asserting their rights, and often did not understand technical terms, and as a result did not tend to take autonomous positions in zemstvo meetings.[9] In contrast, from the beginning of the 1890s there was an increase in gentry engagement with the zemstvos, in comparison to the habitual absenteeism and apathy of previous years.[10]

The landed gentry sitting on zemstvo boards in the provinces differed from the members of the zemstvo constitutionalist movement in several socio-economic areas. Over the course of the late nineteenth century, the emancipation of 1861 had fractured the Russian nobility, and noble landholding had fallen significantly by 1905.[11] This process has often been attributed to the nobility not being able to effectively run their estates in the post emancipation period and falling heavily into debt, although while the proportion of noble land fell, the relative value of land held by the nobility in the period rose.[12] An important survey of the Russian nobility after emancipation has also shown that this group often recycled their capital into other projects such as industry, bringing into contention the notion that the Russian nobility as a social group was in a period of crisis.[13] Members of the nobility who retained their land took on a new agricultural-centric outlook; there is evidence that they devoted more time to their estates, changed

[8] Kermit McKenzie, 'Zemstvo Organisation and Role within the Administrative Structure', in T. Emmons and W. Vucinich (eds.), *The Zemstvo in Russia: An Experiment in Local Self-Government* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 45.
[9] Dorothy Atkinson, 'The Zemstvo and the Peasantry', in Terrence Emmons and Wayne Vucinich (eds.), *The Zemstvo in Russia: an Experiment in Self-Government* ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 117-8.
[10] Roberta Manning, *The Crisis of the Old Order in Russia: Gentry and Government* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982), 46.
[11] Becker, *Nobility and Privilege*, 29.
[12] Terrence Emmons, 'The Russian Landed Gentry and Politics', *Russian Review* vol. 33, no. 3 (1974), 273.
[13] Becker, *Nobility and Privilege*, 31.

child-rearing practices, and expressed desires for more autonomy from St Petersburg in memoirs.[14] They also frequently contrasted their work in the zemstvos to that of the state.[15] In contrast, members of the Zemstvo Constitutionalists tended to practice professions such as law, and were less connected with agriculture.

Zemstvo Activity up to 1905

The revolution of 1905-7 represented the nadir of the development of oppositional and constitutionalist activity within the zemstvos since the 1860s. Before the reforms of Alexander II the local nobility had adequate forms of local organization, but rarely concerned themselves with national issues.[16] Part of this opposition to the central authorities was a result of frictions caused by the zemstvos' ill-defined relationship with the autocracy and administrative structure. The zemstvos existed outside of the state administration, as they had no central representation and inter-zemstvo cooperation was prohibited.[17] Petrov has argued that while decreasing the reach of the zemstvo, such truncated autonomous democratic self-government was incompatible with the autocracy, so by their very nature the zemstvos became a hotbed for constitutional political thought.[18] Tensions arising from this conceptual incompatibility between autocracy and local self-government were exacerbated by expectations created when the zemstvos were instituted that they represented part of a process towards a representative parliament.[19] Therefore, from their inception in 1864, the zemstvos' relationship with the autocracy was ill-defined, leading to frictions between the two. That the autocracy was aware of this contradiction is further supported by the zemstvo system not being extended to Poland and the western provinces; the tsarist government was of the opinion that granting any local autonomy in these regions would intensify already prevalent unrest in these regions.[20]

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[14] Manning, *The Crisis of the Old Order*, 39.
[15] Charles Timberlake, 'The Zemstvo and the Development of a Russian Middle Class', in Edith Clowes, Samuel Kassow, and James West (eds.), *Between Tsar and People: Educated Society and the Quest for Public Identity in Late Imperial Russia* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), 178.
[16] Geoffrey Hosking, *The Russian Constitutional Experiment: Government and Duma, 1907-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973), 2.
[17] McKenzie, 'The Zemstvo and the Administration', 48.
[18] Feodor Petrov, 'Crowning the Edifice: The Zemstvo, Local Self-Government, and the Constitutional Movement, 1864-1881', trans. R. Bisha, in B. Eklof, J. Bushnell and L. Zakharova (eds.), *Russia's Great Reforms, 1855-1881* (Bloomington: Indiana University press, 1994), 202.
[19] George Fischer, *Russian Liberalism: From gentry to Intelligentsia*, (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1958), 11.
[20] Theodore Weeks, *Nation and State in Late Imperial Russia: Nationalism and Russification on the Western Frontier, 1863-1914*, (Dekalb, IL: Northern Illinois University Press, 1996), 137.

Due to their unique relationship with the autocracy the zemstvos became centers of opposition to the regime. During the latter half of the nineteenth century, constitutional political ideas in gentry associations became less abstract and more applicable to the political environment of Russia.[21] In the aftermath of emancipation, several noble assemblies expressed discontent with the terms of the emancipation, the more liberal ones such as Tver proposing an abolition of class distinctions.[22] These demands were gradually translated into political demands for an elected assembly to complete peasant reform, and promulgate other necessary reforms.[23] However, due to prohibitions on the discussion of political subjects in the zemstvos, serious opposition to the regime among the zemstvos did not occur until the conclusion of the Russo-Turkish war and the resulting creation of a constitutionalist regime in Bulgaria.[24] An illegal conference of zemstvo officials was held in Moscow in 1879, and prominent members of the movement attempted to make links with the radical left before the assassination of Alexander II alienated the monarchist rank and file.

Subsequent agricultural downturns and peasant unrest in the 1890s had the effect of pushing the majority of the zemstvos back into opposition to the regime. The government's failure to provide adequate relief for the famine of 1891 had the effect of prompting private famine relief which strengthened rural involvement in voluntary associations such as the zemstvos.[25] Nicholas II's speech upon his ascension, which described the demands of the zemstvos as senseless dreams, has been linked to prominent members of the zemstvos seeking inter zemstvo contacts on a national level.[26]

This oppositional activity was sustained and crystalized into a definitive movement at the turn of the century. A small minority of the zemstvo leadership became politically active in the underground Beseda group, which published the liberal journal *Liberation.* This publication represented the first movement outside of the zemstvo system to seek

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[21] Gary Hamburg, *The Politics of the Russian Nobility 1881-1905* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1984), 55.
[22] Terrence Emmons, *The Russian Landed Gentry and the Emancipation of 1861*, (London: Cambridge University Press, 1968), 360-61.
[23] Emmons, *The Russian Landed Gentry and the Emancipation of 1861*, 347-48.
[24] Manning, *The Crisis of the Old Order*, 46; Petrov, 'Crowning the Edifice', 203.
[25] Joseph Bradley, 'Voluntary Associations, Civic Culture, and Obshchestvenost in Moscow', in Edith Clowes, Samuel Kassow, and James West (eds.), *Between Tsar and People: Educated Society and the Quest for Public Identity in Late Imperial Russia* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), 141.
[26] Terrence Emmons, 'The Beseda Circle, 1899-1905', *Slavic Review* vol. 32, no. 3 (1974), 464.

realization of general constitutionalist goals, but contained very little detail in order to appeal to both the radical left and the more moderate zemstvo gentry.[27] More general political activity within the zemstvos came as a result of the reverses of the Russo-Japanese war and the death of the Minister of the Interior, V. K. Plehve, and subsequent appointment of Prince Mirsky to the Ministry of the Interior, who was seen as favoring liberal reforms.[28] This manifested itself in the November 1904 zemstvo congress, organized by the leaders of the liberation movement, which passed resolutions critical of the bureaucratic order.[29] This was followed by an extensive banquet campaign in the provinces, which had the effect of mobilizing large sections of the provincial gentry in opposition to the tsarist regime. These banquets passed significantly oppositional resolutions, and historians have argued that the left in this period were so well organized that they effectively stole the leadership of zemstvo opposition from the right.[30] According to Freeze, this was especially significant as it occurred at a time when liberalism amongst the intelligentsia shifted significantly to the left.[31]

At the beginning of the period that will be the subject of this study, Bloody Sunday and the February Ukase served to sufficiently mobilize the zemstvo rank and file so as to initiate a series of large congresses. The congresses of 1905 were attended by delegates from the provincial zemstvos. The first congress, held in May, passed resolutions calling for a constitutional system of government, the abolition of temporary emergency regulations, and widespread civil rights to all Russian subjects. Subsequent congresses were held in July, September, and November, and were primarily concerned with tactics and drafting responses to government concessions such as the proposals for the Bulygin Duma and the October Manifesto. During this period splits between the liberal Zemstvo Constitutionalist group, later the Kadet party, and the more moderate group led by Shipov became apparent due to the divergence of their political programs.[32]

The subsequent formation of political parties and era of parliamentary politics effectively brought liberal opposition to the regime outside of the institution of the zemstvos. From the winter of 1905-1906, the zemstvos became a locus of moderate and

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[27] Emmons, 'The Beseda Circle', 462.
[28] Manning, *The Crisis of the Old Order*, 68.
[29] Manning, *The Crisis of the Old Order*, 70.
[30] Becker, *Nobility and Privilege*, 157.
[31] Gregory Freeze, 'A National Liberation Movement and the Shift in Russian Liberalism, 1901-1903', *Slavic Review* vol. 28, no. 1 (1969), 82.
[32] Gerald Surh, *1905 in St Petersburg: Labor, Society, and Revolution*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1989), 254.

conservative activity, as new parties of law and order arose in many localities to oppose the Kadets in the Duma and zemstvo elections.[33] Upon the dissolution of the second Duma a subsequent zemstvo congress was held, which supported the government's restriction of the electoral franchise. Therefore, it becomes apparent that the zemstvos did not become apathetic to politics. Their repudiation of their former representatives in early 1906, then in the Kadet and Octobrist parties, suggests a level of political discourse still existed in the zemstvos, and that instead of being apathetic the zemstvo rank and file were politically opposed to the Kadet and Octobrist parties. This is supported by evidence that reactionary gentry organizations, such as the United Nobility, actively participated in politics, which played a key role in lobbying the tsarist government to the detriment of the second Duma.[34]

Current Historiography

The historiographical debate surrounding the reasons for increased tensions between the zemstvos and the autocracy centers on the question as to whether the landed gentry that sat on the zemstvos were motivated by class or estate interest. The lack of a common identity among the members of the landed nobility has been cited as evidence that zemstvo demands must represent the operation of interest politics, and that the zemstvo movement represented an upper class movement against the economic policies of the Russian Finance Minister from 1892-1903, Sergei Witte, and the Finance Ministry.[35] Becker's analysis of the landed gentry in the period suggests that tensions would have already been high between the landed gentry and the bureaucracy due to socio-economic differences between the two groups and the process by which landed gentry were slowly forced out of central bureaucratic offices and turned to the zemstvos as a replacement for their lost service careers.[36] However, the argument that the landed gentry opposed the central government due to class interest is complicated by the fact that the landed nobility owed their special status in Russian society to the state.

[33] Manning, *The Crisis of the Old Order*, 196.
[34] Manning, *The Crisis of the Old Order,* 229.
[35] Thomas Fallows, 'The Zemstvo and the Bureaucracy, 1890-1904' in T. Emmons and W. Vucinich (eds.), *The Zemstvo in Russia: An Experiment in Local Self-Government* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 215; for a summary of the 'fronde' argument advanced especially by Soviet historians, Hamburg, *The Politics of the Russian Nobility*, 68.
[36] Becker, *Nobility and Privilege*, 156.

Other historians have suggested that the split between the central government in St Petersburg and the provincial zemstvos had more to do with an increasing amount of central bureaucratic interference with the working of the zemstvos. Fallows has highlighted an increase in competition between the zemstvos and the Finance Ministry for tax revenue and the police effort to root out radical influences in the zemstvos as significant factors that pushed many members of the zemstvos into the ranks of the opposition prior to 1905.[37] As early as the 1860s the zemstvos, in the demands that they put forward to the state for representation, had shown a concern for liberal principles linked to the extension of self-government. The scope and social value of the programs carried out by the early zemstvos more than fulfilled the early advocates of self-rule,[38] and gentry memoir materiel became permeated with desires for a more independent and autonomous social role throughout the latter half of the nineteenth century.[39] Therefore, zemstvo opposition could also have been based on the desire to have a more autonomous role from St Petersburg, and freedom to implement their philanthropic projects in education and agronomy, rather than the narrow class interests of what remained of the landed gentry by 1905.

While it is clear that there had emerged a split between the nobility of the central bureaucracy and the nobility that was still attached to the land and resented bureaucratic interference into the zemstvos, the extent to which this affected the political expression of the zemstvos during the revolution of 1905 and the first two Dumas has been widely debated. Manning's shift to the right thesis suggested that the landed gentry repudiated the Kadet and Octobrist leadership during the winter of 1905-1906 due to fears that the new electoral system would result in the loss of their dominant position in the countryside and the threat of the policy of land expropriation that was adopted by the Kadet party.[40] This point of reasoning has also been advanced by Haimson, who argued that due to the land policy that was adopted by the Kadet party the identities of the liberals and the landed gentry became completely incompatible, given the importance of land to the identity of the latter group.[41] Hosking's view of the shift to the right, however, suggested a more moderate shift, with zemstvo assemblies generally

[37] Fallows, 'The Zemstvo and the Bureaucracy', 217.
[38] Frederick Starr, *Decentralization and Self-Government in Russia, 1830-70* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973), 301.
[39] Manning, *The Crisis of the Old Order*, 39.
[40] Manning, *The Crisis of The Old Order*, 180.
[41] Hamburg, *The Politics of the Russian Nobility,* 223.

supporting the October Manifesto as a sound basis for a constitutional system but rejecting further reform.[42]

The shift to the right thesis has been supported by studies of various provincial zemstvos that found a greater level of organization of right wing factions from 1906.[43] Recent research has also illustrated how the liberal ideals of the Russian intelligentsia were seen as alien to the concept of Russian nationhood by conservatives in Russia,[44] further supporting the contention that the zemstvo rank and file and liberalism were incompatible, and that zemstvo politics was an expression of class interest.

Liberal demands originating from the zemstvos before 1905 made no mention of land expropriation or of universal suffrage; it therefore may not follow that liberal or constitutional thought among the zemstvos was dependent upon these concepts. While it is clear that the members of the Union of Liberation supported such concepts, they were forced in early zemstvos meetings and the publication of *Liberation* to construct proposals that did not contain concrete details in order to garner wide political support, such as the simple assertion of the removal of the autocracy.[45] The early zemstvos that campaigned for constitutionalism also did not demand the institution of a wide basis for democracy. Therefore, it could be argued that the shift to the right did not represent a complete rejection of liberalism, rather a rejection of the Kadet brand of liberalism that included principles such as land expropriation and the immediate implementation of universal suffrage. That the Kadets and Octobrists espoused such principles in the Duma may in part have been due to the system of politics in the Duma. Often Kadet members of the Duma had relied upon large peasant votes in the second stage of the election,[46] which had a part to play in Kadet support for land expropriation and the immediate implementation of universal suffrage.

Political demands which could be referred to as liberal, but which did not go as far as the Kadets, had been made by the zemstvos since their creation in 1864. These were mainly focused upon their role as public bodies, and proposed greater control or

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[42] Hosking, *The Russian Constitutional Experiment*, 29
[43] Don Rawson, 'Rightist Politics in the Revolution of 1905: The Case of Tula Province', *Slavic Review*, vol. 51, no. 1 (1992).
[44] Nathaniel Knight, 'Was the Intelligentsia Part of the Nation? Visions of Society in Post-Emancipation Russia', *Kritika* vol. 7, no. 4 (2006) 752.
[45] Richard Pipes, *Struve: Liberal on the left 1870*-1905 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1980), 316; Emmons, *The Formation of Political Parties,* 28.
[46] Emmons, *The Formation of Political Parties*, 371.

influence over the lives of Russians in order to promote notions of individualism, self-reliance, and awareness of one's rights and obligations as a citizen. The Tver nobility in 1862, whilst calling for the implementation of representation for all sections of society in order to solve the crisis in provincial administration, recognized that participation in political life could transform provincial life into a modern civil society whereby all citizens took a share of responsibility.[47] When wider participation in public affairs was effectively curtailed by the government by Alexander III's counter reforms, many zemstvo activists were happy to occupy themselves with small social projects such as agronomy and improvements to education to fulfill similar goals.[48] This can be equated with the activity of professional associations that presented typical nineteenth century themes such as self-reliance, individual initiative, and such activity that aimed to produce better citizens.[49]

The concepts of self-reliance and the formation of civil society are very similar to liberal theories about the role that civil society played in tsarist Russia. Both Peter Struve and Paul Miliukov, leaders of the liberal movement in Russia just before the outbreak of the 1905 revolution, believed that the development of morality in society, necessary for the formation of civil society, was the safeguarding of the human individual being able to act in freedom. Struve, in his essay 'What is True Nationalism?' argued that for the attainment of the morally proper among the citizenry, the interests of the individual should not be sacrificed to the needs of the state.[50] Similarly, Miliukov held that the lack of self-assertion in Russia lay behind the lack of the social spirit which lay at the heart of the notion of property, law, and ethical sanction. Paramount to this was the safeguarding of civil and political rights of the individual, and the fulfillment of economic independence, which would result in understanding and respect for the rights of themselves and others. Therefore, for Miliukov, the role of the Duma was, 'to sow constitutional seeds among the Russian people to alter their behaviors and attitudes towards public life', which he argued had

[47] Bruce Lincoln, *The Great Reforms: Autocracy, Bureaucracy and the Politics of Change in Imperial Russia, 1900-1914*, (De Kalb, IL, Northern Illinois University Press, 1990), 101; 'Address of the Tver Noble Assembly February 1862', in Gregory Freeze (ed,), *From Supplication to Revolution: a Documentary History of Imperial Russia* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 104-105.
[48] Starr, *Decentralization and Self-Government*, 301; Pipes, *Struve: Liberal on the Left*, 28, 286-88.
[49] Bradley, 'Subjects into Citizens: Societies, Civil Society, and Autocracy in Tsarist Russia', *American Historical Review* vol. 107, no. 4 (2002), 1120.
[50] Pipes, *Struve: Liberal on the left*, 301.

been hindered by the state through restrictions that it had placed upon political expression.[51]

The similarity between zemstvo activity and liberal theory before 1905 supports the case that liberal and constitutional thought among the zemstvos should not be entirely equated with their support for the Kadet party and their policies of land expropriation and the immediate implementation of universal suffrage. Russian constitutional thought among the zemstvos can be studied by investigating the extent to which the political demands made, and opinions expressed, by the zemstvos during the revolution of 1905-1907 can be linked to liberal principles of the importance of individual freedom and the recognition of mutual rights and responsibilities in a constitutional society. This analysis will be able to enhance our understanding of the rejection of the main liberal parities by the zemstvos during the first two Dumas.

The importance that the zemstvos attached to the concept of individual freedom and expression can be investigated through analysis of discreet, but somewhat overlapping areas of the political expression of the zemstvos. Firstly, the issue of land expropriation will be discussed. Generally opposed by the zemstvo rank and file, this was probably the most emotive topic for them, and can be linked to wider political discourses about the nature of peasant farming. In particular, this will improve our understanding of the importance that was attached by this group to economic freedom and the importance of the individual producer in Russian agriculture, and the lack of individualism the was thought to be present among the peasantry.[52]

Secondly, the attitude of the provincial members of the zemstvos towards the wider participation of the population in politics will be analyzed. This will be a question of to what extent a more restrictive assembly was envisaged to safeguard gentry interests, or to act as a process of political modernization on the rest of the population. This will address questions such as the perceived role of the Duma, as well as the political maturity of the rest of the population, and can be linked to similar ideas about the individual citizen in Russia and the development of civil society as will be discussed in the analysis of land expropriation.

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[51] Breuillard, 'Russian Liberalism - Utopia or Realism?' 100-105.
[52] Manning, *The Crisis of the Old Order,* 198.

Thirdly, the attitudes expressed by the zemstvo rank and file towards the implementation of civil rights, and the importance of these in a constitutional regime, will be considered. The reactions of the zemstvo rank and file to the widespread violation of civil rights as a result of government repression in the wake of peasant disturbances will be studied in order to address this research area. This will be related to how the zemstvo rank and file perceived the role of the rule of law, and the importance of the government adhering to such legally defined standards, in the formation of a civil society.

In a wider historiographical framework, this research seeks to improve our historical understanding of the relationship between the zemstvos and the implementation of constitutional reform in Russia, which will have ramifications for our understanding of the stability of Russian society on the eve of World War I. According to pessimistic interpretations of the political and social history of pre-revolutionary Russia, social and political instability in Russia meant that the fall of the tsarist regime was inevitable. This was particularly exacerbated by the polarisation between the upper and lower strata of Russia's urban circles, and the inability of the government to cooperate with political groups due to the ambiguities about the extent of power that the constitution accorded the government and the legislative chamber.[53]

More recent developments to this thesis have argued that the gulf between the regime and society was clear in day-to-day repressive policy, and was compounded by economic and social change to which the regime had no adequate response.[54] Further research has suggested that the regime's social base was in the process of becoming eroded, and that the middle classes were small and had fractured aims at best.[55] The precedent for this was set by the coup d'état of 3 June 1907, whereby the government effectively narrowed the base of political participation to the moderate and right parties, propertied classes and the officialdom. This has been credited with creating an extremely fragile base upon which the regime attempted to support itself.[56]

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[53] Leopold Haimson, 'The problem of Political and Social Stability in Urban Russia (Part One)', *Slavic Review* vol. 23, no. 4 (December 1964), 639; Hosking, *The Russian Constitutional Experiment*, 243.
[54] Ian Thatcher, introduction to *Late Imperial Russia: Problems and Prospects: Essays in Honour of R. B. McKean*, (ed.), Ian Thatcher (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005), 1.
[55] Edward Acton, *Rethinking the Russian Revolution* (London: Arnold, 1990), 82; J. A. Ruckman, *The Moscow Business Elite: A Social and Cultural Portrait of Two Generations, 1840-1905* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1984), 15.
[56] Francis Wcislo, *Reforming Rural Russia: State, Local Society and National Politics, 1855-1914* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), 207.

Alternatively, a recent study of Russian society on the eve of the First World War highlighted the various ways in which Russian society was able to cooperate with the government in order to promote social stability, suggesting a more positive view of Russian development had the First World War not happened.[57]

The members of the zemstvos in the provinces who tended to be engaged in agricultural pursuits have been identified as one of these reactionary groupings who opposed constitutional reform, due to the shift to the right that occurred in the winter of 1905-1906.[58] Therefore, this research will be able to offer significant conclusions about the attitudes of this group, closely connected to the government in the period between 1906-1914, towards liberal reform and the cooperation of government and society.

A Note on the Sources

A collection of sources that can be used to study political opinion in the zemstvos, although less systematic than official zemstvo records, is the political intelligence gathering undertaken by British diplomatic staff in Russia. Britain would have held a special interest in gathering information regarding political developments in Russia. The British Foreign Secretaries in the period, Lord Lansdowne and Sir Edward Grey, favored an Anglo-Russian understanding to achieve a favorable balance of power in Europe,[59] which was complicated by the fact that the British and Russian colonial governments in Asia still viewed each other as threats.[60] Therefore, political developments in Russia had added implications for the British Empire in areas such as China, India, and Persia. These factors would have made British diplomatic staff particularly keen observers of political developments.

Britain also possessed a large amount of investment in Russia during the period. Although in comparison to French capital it made up a smaller proportion of foreign capital in Russia, due to complex French tax laws that favored investment in joint-stock

[57] Wayne Dowler, *Russia in 1913* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2010), 13; A. Ascher, *The Revolution of 1905*, vol. 2 (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1989), 1.
[58] Manning, *The Crisis of the Old Order*, 184-97; 'Zemstvo and Revolution: the Onset of Gentry Reaction, 1905-1907', in L. Haimson, (ed.), *The Politics of Rural Russia* (Ann Arbor: Books in Demand, 1998), 46.
[59] Keith Nielson, *Britain and the Last Tsar: British Policy and Russia, 1894-1917* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 10-11
[60] Hugh Seton-Watson, *The Russian Empire, 1801-1917* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967), 679.

companies, British investment tended to be more direct resulting in more British operated firms in Russia as a proportion to capital invested.[61] British capital was also proportionally less invested in government bonds and railroad stocks.[62] Although the Russian economy had begun to diversify, agriculture in 1905-7 still accounted for the income of the vast majority of the population. As a result, the yearly fluctuations of agricultural yields affected the vitality of other sectors, through its effect on the purchasing power of the Russian consumer and the frequency and volume of government orders based on the income from the export of grain.[63] Analysis of this sector, in terms of its stability and economic vitality, would have been of importance to British interests in Russia, and it will be demonstrated below that one of the main sources of information about the Russian countryside for British officials were elected officials on zemstvo boards.

Historians critical of the diplomatic corps before First World War have asserted that reports produced by this group were jaundiced by their typically elite socio-economic status of members of the Edwardian establishment.[64] However, at the beginning of the twentieth century diplomats became more specialized, and moved between the diplomatic and parliamentary services less often.[65] Monitoring the political opposition and collecting sensitive political materiel became an increasingly important role for diplomatic staff in the period,[66] with the result that diplomatic reports are arguably more reflective of Russian political opinions than has previously been suggested. Further, it can be demonstrated that the provincial membership of the zemstvos played an important role in the formulation of political intelligence.

Although the Foreign Office was becoming more professional, in the diplomatic corps there were still significant numbers of wealthy aristocrats and landowners.[67] Although this would have created a certain political coloration of their reports, it did mean that the authors of British political intelligence gathering were likely to share the world view of

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[61] Olga Crisp, *Studies in the Russian Economy Before 1914* (London: Macmillan, 1976), 161.
[62] Peter Gatrell, *The Tsarist Economy, 1850-1917* (London: Batsford, 1986), 222.
[63] Stephen Wheatcroft, 'Crisis and the Condition of the Peasantry in Late Imperial Russia', in E. Kingston-Mann and T. Mixter (eds.), *Peasant Economy, Culture, and Politics of European Russia* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), 128.
[64] Nielson, *Britain and the Last Tsar,* 4; Hughes, *Inside the Enigma,* 31.
[65] Muriel Chamberlain, *Pax Britannica? : British Foreign Policy, 1789-1914* (London: Longman, 1988), 167.
[66] Micheal Hughes, *Inside the Enigma: British Officials in Russia, 1900-39* (London: Hambledon Press, 1997), 2.
[67] Michael Hughes, ''Revolution was in the Air': British Officials in Russia During the First World War', *Journal of Contemporary History* vol. 31, no. 1 (1996), 75; Nielson, *Britain and the Last Tsar,* 3.

the landed gentry involved with the zemstvos. That these sources are likely to reflect political opinion among the landed gentry can be demonstrated by the political beliefs of some of the diplomats. The majority of British diplomatic staff felt that Russia should embrace moderate political change, a reflection of the prevailing attitude in Britain at the time that regarded the liberal opposition to the regime in Russia as legitimate due to the repressive caprices of the regime.[68] This increases their usefulness for investigating the political opinions that embraced moderate political change. That the diplomats would have been able to get access to these social circles is supported by the experience of the American ambassador, George Meyer, whose background allowed him to mingle with the aristocracy in St Petersburg.[69]

Consular records also indicate that a good local standing was a significant prerequisite to appointment as a consular officer in the provinces of Russia. That this was the case can be borne out in some examples of consular activity where consular officials seem to have gone above and beyond the call of duty in pandering to the interests of the local nobility. For example, the consular officials in Odessa seem to have spent an inordinate amount of time in 1906 attempting to get the marriage of a British man to the daughter of a local noble family recognized in Russia.[70] Consul Charles Smith's assessments of the various candidates in the laborious process of appointing a replacement vice-consul in Theodosia in mid-1907, while he was acting as British consul to Odessa, are particularly illuminative of this. In the case of M. Carassarini, Smith wrote to the British ambassador, Arthur Nicolson, that 'Nothing definite has been alleged to his discredit, but on the whole my conclusion was that his standing was hardly as well established as is desirable for a vice-consul.'[71] Another candidate, the current vice-consul at Warsaw was turned down on the basis that 'If appointed, he proposes to set up business at Theodosia, but he has no private means and is not well established there... I fear he may be unsuitable.'[72] Both sections of the British diplomatic service in Russia, the diplomatic corps and the consular staff, had similar social standing to the zemstvo rank and file and as a result could be reasonably expected to have reflected the world view of the zemstvo rank and file.

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[68] Hughes, *Inside the Enigma,* 3; *Diplomacy before the Russian Revolution*, 93.
[69] Eugene Trani, 'Russia in 1905: the View from the American Embassy', *The Review of Politics*, Vol. 31, no. 1 (1969), 48.
[70] TNA, FO 369/36, no. 13864, Vice-Consul Urguhart to P. Stevens, 24 April 1906, 364.
[71] TNA, FO 369/96, no. 18624, Smith to Nicolson, 7 June 1907, 42.
[72] TNA, FO 369/96, no. 13784, Smith to Nicolson, 18 April 1907, 30.

The activities of Bosanquet, a major contributor to British political intelligence gathering in the period while he was the vice-consul at Odessa, indicates that in the provinces it is likely that British officials would have naturally sought out members of the landed gentry for information on various developments as opposed to other social groups. Bosanquet explicitly stated that in his extensive agrarian reports in 1905 and 1906, members of the zemstvos and provincial landed gentry made up the vast majority of his sources, especially in 1906 when he found the countryside largely inaccessible and so was forced to confine his research to provincial towns.[73] This supports the likelihood that consular reports usually reflect the opinions of the local landed gentry.

British political intelligence gathering cannot be expected to have been as geographically systematic as an analysis of zemstvo records could be, but the geographical coverage of British political intelligence gathering in Russia was still considerable. There was a significant consular network covering Russia servicing British interests in the provinces, therefore British political intelligence gathering possessed a reasonable coverage of political opinion in the provinces. The British ambassador to Russia at the beginning of the period, Charles Hardinge, took an active interest in local affairs and encouraged consular staff to submit reports of political activity in the provinces.[74] It is reasonable to assume that this trend would have been continued until at least 1907 under Hardinge's successor, Nicolson. That these consular reports would have been an accurate reflection of political attitudes in the provinces is supported by the career patterns of the consular staff that spent most of their time dealing with their own business interests in Russia.[75] Combined with the tendency of diplomatic staff to reflect the opinions of the landed gentry, political intelligence gathering among the landed gentry in Russia is likely to have been particularly effective.

Wider diplomatic pressures and the precarious relationship between Britain and Russia would have created a tendency for British political intelligence gathering to have been concerned with the moderate opposition as opposed to the radicals. It is unlikely that British diplomatic staff would have had much contact with the members of the Zemstvo Constitutionalist movement because of Russian suspicions of British motives, due to

[73] TNA, FO 881/8560, no. 48, Vice-Consul Bosanquet to Consul-General Smith, 26 September 1905, 49; TNA, FO 881/8755, no. 22, Bosanquet to Smith, 12 March 1906, 45
[74] Hughes, *Diplomacy before the Russian Revolution,* 109.
[75] Hughes, Diplomacy before the Russian Revolution, 100-3.

Britain's alliance with Japan during the Russo-Japanese war, which meant that the tsarist government would have viewed British connections with radical groups as suspicious.[76] Connection between the leaders of the Zemstvo Constitutionalists and the extreme left meant that it is likely that the former would have featured less in British political reports. Organizations such as the Union of Liberation would have been clandestine until the promulgation of the October Manifesto, which promised the freedom of association.[77] The refusal of the Kadet party to repudiate revolutionary violence in the Duma period would have caused further problems for British officials to accurately document their political opinions. As a result, British information from the zemstvo would have been more likely to originate from the provincial landed sections of the zemstvo movement, rather than the professional urban sections.

There are some limitations to the use of British political intelligence gathering. Due to intense time and financial pressures placed upon British diplomatic staff in the period it is unlikely that their reports can be a complete survey of zemstvo opinion. The lower ranks of officials at the British embassy were also notoriously underpaid, and had a large amount of other tasks to complete as well as political intelligence gathering. Consuls found themselves in a similar position; they were usually part time which would have affected the completeness of their political intelligence gathering, and had to complete many different tasks that often left them little time to deal with state duties.[78] The records of the consular offices in Russia during this time period are littered with requests for more money from the Foreign Office to pay for clerical support. For example, in April 1907, W. Thesiger, the British consul in St Petersburg, applied to the Foreign Office to have his subordinate, a Mr. Mackie, promoted the status of vice-consul in order to increase Mackie's pay in light of the latter's escalating clerical costs.[79] Consul Montgomery Grove at Moscow made a similar request for more funds to pay for clerical assistance in his consular area in March of the same year.[80] Consular staff had many demands of their time and money; therefore their reports cannot be taken as a complete picture of zemstvo opinion in their districts.

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[76] Hughes, Inside the Enigma, 32.
[77] 'The October Manifesto, 30 October 1905', in Basil Dmytryshyn (ed.), *Imperial Russia: a Source Book, 1700-1917* (Gulf Breeze, FL: Academic International Press, 1999), 415.
[78] Desmond Platt, 'The Role of the British Consular Service in Overseas Trade, 1825-1914', *The Economic History Review* vol. 15, no. 3 (1963), 495.
[79] TNA, FO 369/96, no. 11283, W. Thesiger to Grey, 9 April 1907, 60.
[80] TNA, FO 396/95, no. 8628, Grove to Grey, 18 March 1907, 381.

The last point underscores the fact that the records would have received certain coloration from the individuals who produced them. While some officials may have had a strong background in Russian affairs, others may not have had much knowledge of the Russian political scene, or allowed their reports to reflect their political opinions. For example, Hardinge possessed previous experience of working in Russia.[81] He was also an advocate of an Anglo-Russian alliance in order to maintain the balance of power in Europe, but recognized that this would be politically impossible if the government of Russia remained reactionary.[82] Absences by Hardinge meant that for the latter half of 1905 the British charge d'affaires, Cecil Spring Rice, produced the majority of diplomatic reports. In contrast to Hardinge, Spring Rice had little experience of Russian language and culture,[83] and possessed a pessimistic view of the conditions in Russia and the likelihood of the success of liberal reform.[84] Therefore, in comparison to Hardinge, his pessimism may have resulted in him devaluing the importance of the liberal movement in Russia. Nicolson replaced Hardinge in May 1906. Like Hardinge, he was in favor of an Anglo-Russian understanding.[85] Forming his opinions of Russia during the upheavals of the revolution, he believed that Russia needed to be governed firmly, and put his faith in gradual reform put forward by Peter Stolypin, the Russian Prime Minister from 1906.[86]

It is also significant that diplomatic reports often contain prejudices and beliefs that those producing the dispatches sometimes accepted without qualification. For example, both Hardinge and Spring Rice repeated the official viewpoint of Jewish involvement in the unrest of 1905 with little or no reservations,[87] so presumably they shared this anti-Semitism. Diplomatic reports are therefore limited in terms of the political knowledge of their authors, and this varied from individual to individual.

Sources that are similar to the British diplomatic reports in terms of presenting a broad view of liberal opinion are retrospective migrant literature and literature produced about Russia by British travelers, newspaper correspondents, and academics, such as Bernard Pares and Maurice Baring. They are representative of the movement of British and

[81] Hughes, *Diplomacy before the Russian Revolution*, 65.
[82] Nielson, *Britain and the Last Tsar*, 25-6.
[83] Hughes, *Inside the Enigma*, 21.
[84] Hughes, *Inside the Enigma*, 43.
[85] Nielson, *Britain and the Last Tsar*, 11.
[86] Nielson, *Britain and the Last Tsar*, 27.
[87] Eliyahu Feldman, 'British Diplomats and British Diplomacy and the 1905 Pogroms in Russia', *The Slavonic and Eastern European Review*, vol. 65, no. 4 (1987), 587.

emigrant Russians writing about Russia from around 1900 in order to inform British opinion on Russian matters.[88] One such example is Donald Mackenzie Wallace, who was given a royal commission to report to Nicolson and the king on the nature of Russian political developments through his contacts within the Russian government.[89]

However, unlike the diplomatic reports, this type of literature was written to mold public opinion in Britain. For example, Pares aimed to create an understanding of Russia in order to make another Anglo-Russian war impossible and to use British influence to create a more liberal Russia.[90] On the other hand, Wallace was particularly dismissive of the Kadet party's ability to come to a political compromise in the first Duma, and attempted to influence British views of Russia which he believed were too complimentary to the Russian left.[91] However, the strength of these documents is that they were generally written by experts on Russian political conditions at the turn of the century, so it can be assumed that their experience of Russian politics can fill the gaps left by British officials such as Spring Rice who lacked experience. These individuals also served as correspondents for British newspapers, so often these sources are based on the reporting of individuals with a good knowledge of Russian affairs.

Russian refugees writing at the beginning of the century and in the 1920s would also have been writing for a similar purpose. Research into Russian emigrant communities has shown that even in exile they strongly identified with Russia,[92] so it is feasible that such writers would have been attempting to influence events in Russia, or Western opinion of Russia. However, they are useful because many writers were heavily involved in the zemstvo movement, and can offer perspectives on liberal opinion amongst the zemstvos that would not necessarily have featured in zemstvo records or British political intelligence gathering. In a similar manner to British travelers and commentators on Russian affairs, these individuals would have had inside knowledge of various Russian movements such as the Zemstvo Constitutionalists, which can give a fresh perspective on the activities of the zemstvo rank and file.

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[88] Francis Randall, Introduction to Bernard Pares, *Russia Between Reform and Revolution*, ed. Francis Randall, (New York: Schocken Books, 1962), v.
[89] W. Harrison, 'Mackenzie Wallace's View of the Russian Revolution of 1905-1907', *Oxford Slavonic Papers*, vol. 4 (1971), 73.
[90] Randall, Introduction to Pares, *Russia Between Reform and Revolution*, vi.
[91] Harrison, 'Mackenzie Wallace's View of the Russian Revolution', 74.
[92] James Hassell, 'Russian Refugees in France and the United States Between the World Wars', *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society*, vol. 81, no. 7 (1991), 84.

To sum up, Diplomatic reports represent a useful alternative record of the political opinions of the zemstvo rank and file. They were produced with the aim of creating an accurate survey of Russian political opinions. Their information gathering would have been restricted to the more moderate sections of Russian political opinion, as opposed to the far left or reactionary parties. This would have to an extent excluded the Zemstvo Constitutionalists, until they achieved a more legitimate status in the form of the Kadet and Octobrist parties, due to the political beliefs of the diplomats and practical constraints placed upon engaging with the opposition in Russia. As a result, these records are more likely to reflect the opinions of the more moderate zemstvo rank and file. Their intelligence gathering activities were not restricted to the urban centers, but made use of the extensive consular network in Russia. While they cannot match official zemstvo records in terms of how geographically representative they were, they were not so completely urban-centric to be unrepresentative of zemstvo opinion. However, it should be remembered that their content was only as informative as the author's knowledge of Russian affairs. The writings of British travelers and Russian political refugees, while being treated with more care due to their underlying aims, can be used to supplement the overall picture provided by British diplomatic intelligence gathering, as they often possessed a more detailed knowledge of the Russian political environment.

CHAPTER ONE

THE CRISIS OF PEASANT AGRICULTURE AND THE ZEMSTVO ALTERNATIVE TO LAND EXPROPRIATION

This chapter will address political opinions among the zemstvo rank and file on the subject of the agricultural crisis and land expropriation, with a view to exploring the value that was attached to the power of the individual economic effort amongst the peasantry. The resolution of the agricultural crisis was one of the main political battlegrounds in the first two Dumas. Although Russia's agricultural output increased in line with population, output had been negatively affected by severe harvest failures in 1891, 1897, 1901 and 1906.[1] In the revolutionary period, the decision taken by the government in 1905 to cancel the peasants' redemption payments was ill-timed, as it coincided with a significant collapse in the visibility of government power in the countryside and a time of extreme peasant hardship.[2] The revolutionary period was punctuated with extreme periods of peasant unrest, beginning in the summer of 1905 and peaking in the winter of 1905-6, which resulted in substantial losses to lands held by the noble landowners represented on the zemstvo boards. For the zemstvo rank and file at the beginning of 1905, memories of the 1902 peasant uprisings in the provinces of Poltava and Kharkov would still have been fresh. As a result, the condition of the peasantry and the solution of the agricultural crisis would have been incredibly important issues for this group.

This chapter will investigate whether the opinions of the zemstvo rank and file can be conveniently pigeonholed into the camp of the reactionary opponents of land expropriation, or whether they developed a more complex attitude towards agrarian reform based upon their experiences of peasant agriculture. This will be observable through an analysis of the prevalence of explanations involving the economic concept of the power of the individual producer in reasons put forward by the zemstvo rank and file for the perceived crisis in peasant agriculture. It will then be considered to what

[1] Beryl Williams, '1905: The View from the Provinces', in J. Smele and A. Heywood, *The Russian Revolution of 1905: Centenary Perspectives* (London: Routledge, 2005), 35; Gatrell, *The Tsarist Economy*, 139-40.
[2] Wheatcroft, 'Crisis and the Condition of the Peasantry in Late Imperial Russia', 170-71.

extent the peasants were seen to be motivated by the prospect of obtaining more land from the landowners in their dealings with the Duma, and how this can reinforce the view that the zemstvo rank and file regarded the development of the concept of the individual amongst the peasantry as defective. Finally, zemstvo proposals for reform will be considered, not only on the basis of how they represented a separate vision for rural Russia from the Kadet strategy of expropriation and the reactionary program of minimal intervention, but on the basis of how they aimed to foster a sense of individualism within the peasantry through measures related to the perceived problems in the countryside.

Individual Economic Effort and the 'Crisis' in Peasant Agriculture

For the zemstvo rank and file the crisis in peasant agriculture was in part a crisis of innovation, and agricultural innovation was intimately linked to the importance of individual effort in the countryside. To explore this further, it will be necessary firstly to further define the principle of economic individual effort in the context of contemporary debates about Russian agriculture. This chapter will then assess zemstvo opinions about how the structures of the Russian countryside impeded the realisation of individual economic effort by analysing zemstvo opinions on the state of peasant capital and their access to capital through credit. It will then consider how this was deemed to impact upon peasant methods of farming in order to assess the similarities between zemstvo opinion and liberal discourses on the power of the individual producer in the period.

By the turn of the twentieth century, Russian educated society's attitude to Russian agricultural life had fundamentally changed. The popularity of the Slavophile belief in the inherent superiority of the traditional communal Russian way of rural life was decreasing, and educated observers of Russian provincial life began to look to Western Europe for models of economic modernisation, and became fundamentally hostile to the systems of Russian village life.[3] On-going evolution in educated opinion on agrarian

[3] Elvira Wilbur, 'Peasant Poverty in Theory and Practice', in E. Kingston-Mann and T. Mixter (eds.), *Peasant Economy, Culture, and Politics of European Russia* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), 101.

matters, which began long before dedicated empirical studies on the subject were conducted, resulted in the majority of educated Russians believing that private economic effort was superior to communal economic effort.[4] This was reflected in Peter Stolypin's policy as Prime Minister in 1906. According to Ascher, 'Stolypin's signal achievement was to translate the abstract ideas on agrarian reform into reality.'[5] Therefore, Russian contemporary thought held that the longevity of communal economic organisation in the countryside hindered the development of individualistic farming among the majority of the Russian peasantry. That this expectation was present in zemstvo circles is supported by research by Darrow, who found that the manner in which zemstvo agricultural studies measured agricultural productivity did not presume that the peasant would be farming primarily for profit, on the basis of the maximum potential of the land, and affected heavily by market forces.[6]

Russian liberal thought before 1905 agreed with the contemporary trend about the viability of the independent economic producer, and connected the absence of individual effort with the immaturity of civil society in Russia. The peasants lacked the economic independence required to engage in independent productive activity, which led to them having a poor understanding of the reciprocal rights and obligations that belong to the citizens of a constitutional regime.[7] A more detailed exposition of this concept can be found in the works of Paul Miliukov, an important liberal leader during the period who was heavily involved in the Kadet party. In an American lecture Miliukov stated that the difference between the United States and Russia was that Russia's abundance of natural resources had been used as a substitute for energy and individual effort, leading to their exhaustion.[8] He connected such mode of positive action with a lack of a, 'body of social tradition, which determines social conduct and works out formulas which act as stimulus of coercion'.[9] Individual economic effort was therefore a cornerstone of the formation of a constitutional society based upon defined norms of interaction between its citizens.

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[4] Kingston-Mann, 'Peasant Communes and Economic Innovation', 23.
[5] Abraham Ascher *P. A. Stolypin: the Search for Stability in Late Imperial Russia* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001), 155.
[6] David Darrow, 'The Politics of Numbers: The Zemstvo Land Assessment and the Conceptualization of Russia's Rural Economy', *Russian Review*, vol. 59, no. 1 (2000), 54.
[7] Breuiliard, 'Russian Liberalism: Utopia or Realism?', 101.
[8] Paul Miliukov, *Russia and Its Crisis*, (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1905), 12.
[9] Miliukov, *Russia and its Crisis*, 17-19.

This concern is detectable in the aims of Stolypin's agrarian reform of November 1906. This reform enabled peasants to leave the commune with their share of communal lands in a consolidated plot.[10] Ascher has argued that by allowing the peasants to abandon the commune and farm individually, the reform was crafted to produce a fundamental change in the peasant's mentality. It aimed to inculcate within the peasantry the concepts of citizenship and civil obligation, and addressed the lack of respect of law and order that represented the bedrock of a state based upon law.[11] This was predominantly to be achieved through the agency of the concept of private property, which the government saw as necessary for the development of the establishment of order in the countryside.[12] This contention is supported by criticisms of the commune from among educated sections of Russian society that accuse it of engendering moral defectiveness, apathy, and a lack of incentive among the peasantry.[13] For this reason, the economic independence of individual peasant producers was important in the conceptualisation of a constitutional regime. The role of this concept in how the zemstvo rank and file conceptualised the problems of Russian peasant agriculture will therefore be able to inform our understanding of to what extent the zemstvo rank and file identified with liberal narratives about the importance of individual economic freedom in a constitutional regime.

In such an analysis, it is important to consider that Russian peasant agriculture was very rarely orientated around commercial farming, whether it was in a communal setting or on private land. A. V. Chayanov, a Soviet agrarian economist, in a study of the peasant economy, stressed that peasant families' volume of production was dictated by the worker to consumer ration of the family. Therefore, peasant families had a cycle of prosperity that was dependent upon the number of children above or below working age, the number of older dependents, the number of daughters-in-law present in the

[10] 'The Decree on Peasant Allotments, 9 November 1906', in G. Vernadsky (ed.), *A Source Book for Russian Social History from Early Times to 1917* vol. 3 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1972), 803-804.
[11] Ascher, *Stolypin*, 156.
[12] David Macey, *Government and Peasant in Russia 1861-1906: the Pre-History of the Stolypin Reforms* (DeKalb, IL: Northern Illinois University Press, 1987), 147.
[13] Esther Kingston-Mann, 'Peasant Communes and Economic Innovation: A Preliminary Enquiry', in E. Kingston-Mann and T. Mixter (eds.), *Peasant Economy, Culture, and Politics of European Russia* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), 44-46.

household, and sons leaving the family to start their own families.[14] This importance of working family members meant that it was incorrect to apply capitalistic models to the peasant economy because the peasantry did not use hired labour, which means they had no valid way to judge the value of their work. As a result, peasant families could not make objective judgements on how much product to save for the family, and how much to reinvest in improving their land or agricultural machinery, in the same way in which a capitalistic enterprise was able to do so.[15]

Chayanov also claimed that peasant families struck a rough balance between satisfying their basic needs and the drudgery of the work, which he called their self-exploitation.[16] Chayanov argued that as a result, peasant family run farms behaved very differently to capitalistic ones to changes in the economic environment. For example, they did not take interest rates into account when investing in agricultural machinery.[17] This highlights how educated opinion utilised foreign economic models that were not necessarily accurate to the Russian experience in order to make political points, which underlines the significance of the concept of the primacy of individual economic effort in linking agriculture to political debates about the formation of a constitutional society. That the zemstvo rank and file shared the view that individual economic effort was connected to the emergence of civil society can be examined through an analysis of zemstvo opinion on the causes of peasant poverty and lack of access to credit.

National concern over peasant poverty was triggered by the agrarian disaster of 1891, and was further compounded by the later agricultural downturns and Poltava and Kharkov uprisings.[18] Contemporary educated Russian opinion held that peasant poverty was due to a combination of accelerated population growth and the action of powerful levelling forces within the Russian countryside, and the division of peasant society into

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[14] Alexander. V. Chayanov, 'The Theory of Peasant Economy', in D. Thorner B. Kerblay and R. Smith (eds.), *A. V. Chayanov on the Theory of Peasant Economy* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1966), 53-60.
[15] Teodore Shanin, 'Chayanov's Message: Illuminations, Miscomprehensions and the Contemporary 'Development Theory'', in D. Thorner B. Kerblay and R. Smith (eds.), *A. V. Chayanov on the Theory of Peasant Economy* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1966), xiv-xvi.
[16] Shanin, 'Chayanov's Message', xvi.
[17] Basile Kerblay, 'A. V. Chayanov: Life, Career, Works', in D. Thorner B. Kerblay and R. Smith (eds.), *A. V. Chayanov on the Theory of Peasant Economy* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1966), liv.
[18] Avrahm Yarmolinsky, *Road to Revolution: a Century of Russian Radicalism* (London: Cassell, 1957), 339.

two classes, based upon the 1896 census data and the penetration of the market and wage-labour into the provinces.[19] The government was held responsible by sections of educated society for the resulting increase in economic stratification and the general downturn in the provinces.[20] The picture emerges of a peasantry that were helpless to the tide of outside influences on their lives, such as the price of cereals, atmospheric conditions, and population growth, but were unable to innovate in the face of such change due to the restrictions placed upon their ability to operate on an individual basis.

Recent historiography has begun to revise the traditional view that there was a crisis in peasant agriculture.[21] On an economy wide basis, Russian agriculture was growing per capita, with the exceptions of downturns in the late 1880s and early 1890s and 1905-8, although this pattern was not uniform geographically.[22] Local studies have also shown that the practice of applying national averages to the locality ignores the mixed peasant economy. For Example, E. M. Wilbur's study of Voronezh province, regarded as one of the most backward areas of the Russian Empire, found austere but viable peasant institutions, with 80 per cent of peasant households living in what was considered average or better standards.[23] There is, therefore, a gap between the fashionable contemporary view of the state of Russian peasant agriculture, and its state as far as recent historiography has been able to portray it.

The scope for obtaining individual credit from official sources in Russia for the peasantry was limited. The Peasant Land Bank in Russia tended to lend to communities, rather than individuals, a situation which was to change only after 1905 when the value of the peasant community as a force for social stability was questioned.[24] Where it did lend to individuals, the recipients tended to only be the very prosperous members of the

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[19] Judith Pallot, *Land Reform and Peasant Class Formation in Russia, 1906-1915* University of Leeds, School of Geography, Working Papers; 222, (Leeds: University of Leeds, School of Geography, 1978), 3-4.
[20] Franziska Schedewie, 'Peasant Protest and Peasant Violence in 1905: Voronezh Province, Ostrogozhskii Uezd', in J. Smele and A. Heywood (eds.), *The Russian Revolution of 1905: Centenary Perspectives* (London: Routledge, 2005), 137.
[21] For example, Alexander Gerschenkron, 'Agrarian Policies and Industrialization, Russia 1861-1917', in H. Habakkuk and M. Postan (eds.), *Cambridge Economic History of Europe,* vol. 6 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1965), 706-800.
[22] Paul Gregory, *Before Command: an Economic History of Russia from the Emmancipation to the First Five-Year Plan* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 36; Wheatcroft, 'Crises and the Condition of the Peasantry in late Imperial Russia', 133-41.
[23] Wilbur, 'Peasant Poverty in Theory and Practice', 105.
[24] Gatrell, *The Tsarist Economy*, 107.

peasantry due to government attitudes towards delinquent peasants.[25] As a result, most individual peasants had very little recourse to official sources of credit. V. H. Bosanquet, the British vice-consul to Odessa, in his study of the southern provinces found that the provision of peasant credit was very defective. This was due to the fact that the peasant land bank would only lend to peasant communities, 'and are generally of little use to peasants of the very poorest class'.[26] Stepniak, a Russian radical living in exile in London, in 1896 also identified this issue, writing that, 'Regular credit- *i.e.,* advance of money to be returned in money, with the addition of interest, is very rare in our villages unless it refers to the trifling sums advanced by rural pawnbrokers'.[27]

When studying the question of peasant credit further, the belief that the peasants were forced to turn to such unofficial and exploitative sources of credit as opposed to official sources becomes clear. Bosanquet stated that in order to obtain credit the peasants were often forced to have recourse to money lenders, 'who exact exorbitant rates of interest, payable in labour if money is not forthcoming, and woe to the peasant who falls in to the clutches of one of these usurers'.[28] Stepniak's *The Russian Peasantry* can further illuminate the exploitative nature of unofficial credit agreements. He describes credit agreements in several southern provinces that are illustrative of the situation in the rest of Russia, where the peasants were forced to pay back their loans not in money but in labour. The effect of these loans was that the creditor effectively received exorbitant returns on their loans. 'Thus in Samara province the money-lenders exact an interest equal to three hundred per cent., in Saratoff two hundred per cent., in Tamboff one hundred and eight... lent for a period generally not exceeding nine months.'[29] The picture emerges of a system of rural credit that was exploitative of the peasantry and was not designed to improve the ability of the peasantry to set up individual farming practices.

Reservations expressed over Stolypin's agrarian legislation in 1907 illustrate similar views about the exploitative nature of private sources of credit in the countryside. Bernard Pares, a British historian and academic, in a report on the proceedings of the

[25] Macey, *Government and Peasant in Russia*, 22.
[26] TNA, FO 881/8560, no. 48, Bosanquet to Smith, 25 September 1905, 52.
[27] Stepniak, *The Russian Peasantry* (London: Swan Sonnenschein, 1894), 57.
[28] TNA, FO 881/8560 no. 48, Bosanquet to Smith, 25 September 1905, 52.
[29] Stepniak, *The Russian Peasantry*, 64-65.

second Duma to the British ambassador, Arthur Nicolson, recorded an objection to the Stolypin land reform on behalf of the delegates representing the landed proprietors.

> The details of the law were open to grave objection, because, while not abolishing the communal system, they quite failed to define the relations between those who acquired personal property and those who did not. It was even possible that the latter might find themselves in and undesirable state of dependence on the former.[30]

This passage indicates a concern among the zemstvo rank and file about the implications of creating large inequalities of wealth in the countryside, through Stolypin's agrarian legislation which aimed to create a class of wealthy, conservative-minded peasants, upon which the regime could draw a large amount of support.[31]

Bosanquet further developed the idea that the peasants, as a result of the poor provision of credit in the countryside, were unable to better their economic situation through the purchase of more land due to the levels of rents charged in Russia. Therefore, even if credit could be acquired to rent extra land, high rents would often make such an endeavour futile. This was due to the high level of rents generally charged in Russia, and the practice of hiring middlemen.

> Moreover, the rent for small plots (usually taken for a single year) is higher than that for greater areas rented by large farmers. In this connection I wish to lay stress upon the burden entailed by the peasants by the system under which proprietors lease large areas of land to persons who, in their turn, sublet to the peasants at a greatly increased rent. This is usually the case on very large estates, and the removal of such middlemen would be of great benefit to the peasants.[32]

This further supports the picture of an exploitative countryside that was a significant impediment to the development of individual initiative in the opinion of the zemstvo rank and file.

In a similar fashion, the communal system of land ownership was seen to hold back the modernisation of the countryside through periodical redistributions of the land that took away the incentive for the peasantry to modernise their plots. This perception is also present in modern historiography. Pipes in particular repeated the assertion that the

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[30] TNA, FO 881/9340, no 11, Pares to Nicolson, 9 July 1907, 19.
[31] Ascher, *Stolypin*, 158.
[32] TNA, FO 881/8560, no. 48, Bosanquet to Smith, 25 September 1905, 52.

retention of the commune was a mistake due to the lack of incentive it entailed.[33] That the zemstvo rank and file considered that the commune was an outdated barrier to this progress is supportable by criticism of the commune emanating from the provinces. Criticism of the commune on both sides of the political spectrum focused on the way that the commune promoted agricultural backwardness and denied the peasant his individual freedom.

To the members of the zemstvos that Bosanquet came into contact with while compiling his agrarian report in the summer of 1905, the commune was detrimental because of the system of periodically redistributing the land meant that the holder of land was unlikely to improve it. Therefore, the commune was,

> designed to hinder any improvement in the methods for cultivation among the peasantry, though it is a vexed question whether or not the system is beneficial in other ways...
>
> As the holder of such land knows that it will eventually pass to someone else, he will rarely attempt to improve, but, on the contrary, he will take out as much of it as he can while it remains in his possession.[34]

This is comparable to a report by Nicolson, reporting the views of a landed proprietor in April 1907, who supported the alienation of individual peasants from the commune legislated for by Stolypin's agrarian reform.

> In his district the communal system effectively barred any real agricultural development, as no peasant had any motive to improve his small plot, knowing that he possessed it for only a short time and that on the next redistribution it would pass into the hands of others.[35]

Nicolson's sources, combined with the calls for the breakup of the commune, thus illustrated the prevalence of the sentiment that stressed the importance of individual freedom of the peasant through the abandonment of the communal system of land tenure. Communal land tenure was also blamed for the slow uptake of western, commercialised, farming practices. However, they also ignored some of the realities of the commune. Repartitions did not occur as frequently as this particular passage implies; full scale redistributions were limited by the law of 1893 to once every 12 years with partial redistributions occurring when necessary to deal with situations such as

[33] Richard Pipes, *Russia Under the Old Regime* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1977), 166.
[34] TNA, FO 881/8560, no. 40, Bosanquet to Smith, 25 September 1905, 53.
[35] TNA, FO 881/9034, no. 78, Nicolson to Grey, 16 April 1907, 115.

families dying out or leaving the commune.[36] Recent research has also shown that the liberal narrative of the commune stifling economic progress does not entirely hold up. Kingston-Mann's study of the commune found that agricultural innovation occurred at the same rate on peasant private lands as well as lands held under communal tenure, and that the commune could also act as a powerful social impetus to induce individual peasants to modernise their plots in line with the rest of the commune.[37]

The zemstvo rank and file therefore believed that the structures of the Russian countryside were fundamentally hostile to the development of individual farming practices, and this affected their opinions on the causes of a lack of agricultural innovation among the Russian peasantry. The zemstvo rank and file identified the poor agricultural techniques, and machinery, used by the peasantry as symptomatic of the environment in the Russian countryside that was seen to stifle independent economic activity. This trend is identifiable in zemstvo discourses on the subject of the agricultural crisis. O'Beirne, the British commercial attaché, reported to Nicolson in January 1907 on the agricultural distress of Russia that informed opinion blamed the scarcity of peasants' allotments and poor agricultural techniques.

> Most authorities are agreed that the impoverished condition, divided by so narrow a margin from famine, to which these areas fallen, must be ascribed to two principle causes, the insufficient area of peasants' allotments and bad methods of cultivation; though there is a sharp divergence of opinion as to the relative importance of the two factors indicated. Some observers lay especial stress on the Russian peasants' inferior methods of cultivation, his shiftlessness, and improvidence.[38]

O'Beirne laid the blame for the utilisation of poor agricultural techniques on the chronic lack of capital amongst the peasantry, stating that the lack of credit lay at the basis for the persistence of traditional farming practices seen as defunct by the rest of educated society.

> Lack of capital, the use of inferior implements (partly consequent of the lack of capital), and an inveterate dislike of new methods, have contributed to the same result. The last-named factor has operated with particular effect in the black soil regions, where the tradition is firmly rooted among the cultivators that the fertility of the soil renders the use of manure superfluous, if not harmful.[39]

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[36] Teodore Shanin, *The Awkward Class, Political Sociology of Peasantry in a Developing Society: Russia 1910-1925* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), 36-7.
[37] Kingston-Mann, 'Peasant Communes and Economic Innovation', 43.
[38] TNA FO 881/9034, no. 24, O'Beirne to Nicolson, 31 January 1907, 51.
[39] TNA FO 881/9034, no. 24, O'Beirne to Nicolson, 31 January 1907, 52.

Donald Mackenzie Wallace, in Russia on a royal commission to report on Russian political developments, came to a similar conclusion about the effect that the lack of peasant equity had on the implementation of new agricultural methods. 'The peasants do not yet think of any such radical innovation; and if they did, they have neither the knowledge nor the capital to affect them.'[40] For Wallace, the main reason behind this lack of capital was the inordinate levels of taxation imposed upon the peasantry.[41]

Zemstvo criticisms of how the original emancipation act proved insufficient can further develop the view that land was not the sole answer to the agrarian question. During summer 1906, Wallace wrote a report to Nicolson on the state of Russian agriculture. The origin of the agricultural distress, in his opinion, was a result of the emancipation law, in particular the size of the peasant land holdings.

> That law gave about half the arable land of European Russia to the emancipated serfs on reasonable terms, but the allotment made to each family was hardly sufficient to provide the means of support and to enable the head of household to pay his rates and taxes.[42]

For Wallace, the effect of the population increase of the latter half of the nineteenth century was that, 'the family allotments became smaller, and as the primitive system of agriculture was little, if at all, improved, the peasant found it more and more difficult to balance his budget without a deficit'.[43] O'Beirne, in his report on the state of agriculture to Nicolson in January 1907, observed a similar process. Due to population growth, 'the result has been a marked diminution of the average area of communal allotments'.[44] The impression from these sources is that there was a general perception that the process of population growth had rendered the peasants' allotments insufficient and had stunted the process of agricultural innovation and improvement among the peasantry.

Wallace's second edition of *Russia*, published in 1905, supports Bosanquet's contention that the zemstvo rank and file were keenly aware of the economic problems faced by individual peasants in Russia. On his return to Smolensk, he identified a significant lack

[40] Donald MacKenzie Wallace, *Russia*, vol. 2 (London: Cassell & Co., 1905), 215.
[41] Wallace, *Russia*, 217.
[42] TNA, FO 881/8934, no. 7, Wallace to Nicolson, 1 November 1906, 8.
[43] TNA, FO 881/8934, no. 7, Wallace to Nicolson, 1 November 1906, 8.
[44] TNA, FO 881/9034, no. 34, O'Beirne to Nicolson, 31 January 1907, 52.

of cattle among the peasantry, and the resulting lack of manure for commercial farming. Wallace was able to attach himself to a zemstvo agricultural investigation in Moscow province, which identified a lack of horses and the development of group of peasants who had lost all their land.[45] This points towards a similarity in the opinions of the zemstvo rank and file and the Zemstvo Constitutionalists on the problem of the lack of resources within peasant communities. It becomes clear that the zemstvo rank and file were aware that the peasants did not possess necessary resources for the modernisation of their farmsteads, and that the structures of the Russian countryside that suppressed individual initiative exacerbated the existing problems of shortages of land arising from population growth and the emancipation settlement detailed above.

It becomes apparent from this analysis that the zemstvo rank and file identified a significant lack of individuality amongst the peasantry. This was in part due to the structures in the Russian countryside that impeded the development of individuality among the peasantry, namely the lack of peasant access to credit and the peasant commune. This was seen to exacerbate the already existing problem of the lack of peasant access to capital that resulted in a low rate of innovation among the peasantry. In doing so, they advocated Western European economic models that emphasised the importance of the economic freedom of the individual producer. This underlines the importance of the concept of individual economic freedom among the zemstvo rank and file. These factors were key in the zemstvo rank and file's analysis of the lack of capital in the countryside and poor agricultural techniques, and in doing so they ignored other factors which affected the adoption of new technologies by the peasants, such as low cereal prices, intense competition from large commercially run estates, and the structure of the family run peasant farm. This poorly developed sense of the individual had further implications in the zemstvo rank and file's perceptions of the peasants' political aspirations, and study of this area can further develop the importance that was attached to this concept by the zemstvo rank and file.

The Land Hunger and the Political Priorities of the Peasantry

[45] Wallace, *Russia*, 206-207.

A major reason cited for the zemstvo rejection of the Duma is the threat that it posed to the estates of the landed gentry, as a result of peasant domination of the electorate in the first two Dumas. According to this argument, the landed gentry regarded peasant voters to be politically ignorant and motivated only by the promise of land expropriation.[46] This patronising attitude towards the basis of the peasantries' political aspirations can further develop our understanding of how the zemstvo rank and file perceived the lack of individual economic initiative among the peasantry. This can be achieved by examining to what extent the zemstvo rank and file regarded peasant calls for land expropriation as symptomatic of their lack of individual initiative in economic enterprises. In doing so, it is important to consider to what extent the zemstvo rank and file believed that the peasantry wanted to obtain more land from the Duma as a salve for their economic situations instead of independently bettering their economic situations themselves through agricultural innovation. This can be further developed through investigation into the widespread belief of the power that left-wing agitators were seen to have over the peasantry, and what the basis of their persuasive power was perceived to be.

In studying peasant political engagement, it is important to recognise that the zemstvo conception of a politically ignorant peasantry could be a misleading picture of the reality of peasant political engagement. Separate studies have shown that the peasants at the onset of 1905 had made progress in terms of their interest in and knowledge of national issues. Numerous peasant associations that sprang up in 1905 have been found to have interacted with broad national issues. An important development in Markovo, for example, was that the peasants, in their conflict with the landlords, looked towards national political issues such as the opening of the first Duma.[47] Peasants on the right bank of the Volga maintained traditional forms of political expression, such as the convocation of the assembly of heads of households in times of crisis, but increasingly external forces and structures determined peasants' political choices.[48] The results of these studies indicates that the peasantry on the eve of the convocation of the first two Dumas were becoming more politically aware, even though political parties other than

[46] Roberta Manning, 'Zemstvo and Revolution: The Onset of Gentry Reaction, 1905-1907', in L. Haimson (ed.), *The Politics of Rural Russia, 1905-1914* (AnnArbor: Books in Demand, 1998), 48-9.
[47] Mathew Schneer, 'The Markovo Republic: A Peasant Community During Russia's First Revolution, 1905-1906', *Slavic Review* vol. 53, no. 1 (1994), 116.
[48] Robert Edelman, *Proletarian Peasants: The Revolution of 1905 in Russia's Southwest* (Ithica: Cornell University Press, 1987), 170.

the Trudovniks found it difficult to properly organise the peasantry, who generally believed that they could obtain their particular goals within the existing framework of Tsarism.[49]

Among the zemstvo rank and file there was a widespread belief that the peasants regarded the Duma as merely a vehicle for obtaining more land, rather than advocating the realisation of reforms to improve their economic situation and address issues such as the commune, poverty, and the paucity of credit in the countryside. A Mr Norman, the second secretary at the British embassy, in a report on the proceedings of the first Duma and the peasants' relationship with the Kadet party stated that, 'Their land-hunger once temporarily satisfied (for it is hard to see how any solution can be permanent), the peasants are likely as not to relapse into apathy and conservation as regards all other items on the party programme.'[50] Viscount Cranley, a British military attaché, reported similar opinions of the peasantry's attitude towards the Duma in July.

> The peasantry say that the Duma 'keep on talking', and that ere long the harvest will be gathered in, and that then they will have no redress; but that, unless the Duma come to a definite conclusion soon, they will take the law into their own hands, and that 'they know what to do'.[51]

Nicolson came to a similar conclusion, that the peasantry regarded the Duma as a means to obtain more land, when informing the Foreign Secretary about the reasons for the dissolution of the first Duma. On the subject of the political aspirations of the left wing revolutionary parties,

> To the realisation of their aims they found two great obstacles- the peasantry and the army. The former, so far as a generalisation can be ventured upon, have but one aim: the acquisition of land. Social and political theories have but little attraction for them.[52]

Nicolson then went on to predict that the peasants would regard the dissolution of the Duma with comparative indifference, due to 'what seemed to him purposeless discussions in the Duma', and secure land through other means.[53] This perception flies

[49] Maureen Perrie, 'The Russian Peasant Movement of 1905-1907: Its Social Composition and Revolutionary Significance', *Past and Present* no. 57 (1972), 154.
[50] TNA FO 881/8756, no. 34, Norman to Nicolson, 6 June 1906, 49.
[51] TNA FO 881/8795, no. 49, Cranley to Nicolson, 18 July 1906, 47.
[52] TNA, FO 881/8795, no. 68, Nicolson to Grey, 21 July 1906, 72.
[53] TNA, FO 881/8795, no. 68, Nicolson to Grey, 21 July 1906, 73.

in the face of evidence which suggests that the peasants took a great interest in the Duma. It becomes clear that the zemstvo rank and file largely ignored this behaviour in favour of their preconceptions of the peasants' political behaviour.

It is plausible that this view persisted throughout the second Duma. In the run up to the elections to the second Duma, Nicolson's sources on peasant political voting behaviour portrayed a pessimistic picture of the development of political ideas amongst the peasantry.

> From some quarters I hear that they are apathetic in regard to the elections, an apathy, I am told, which is not entirely confined to them; but most of my information is to the fact that their views and intentions are not known, though many consider that they will return deputies with a simple mandate to obtain land for them, and that the recent reform measures of the government are either not even known by many or are not understood, or, what is worse, are not credited.[54]

Close to its dissolution, Nicolson predicted that the dissolution of the Duma would not have much impact on the peasantry.

> Still, if by purchase and by migration the peasant is gradually enabled to provide himself with sufficient land to maintain a livelihood, he will care less as to whether the Duma is or is not in being, and will certainly be less inclined to listen to the promptings of revolutionary agitators.[55]

This is similar to the perceived behaviour of peasant deputies elected to the Duma. Before the opening of the first Duma, Norman reported that of the 126 non-party deputies, 'most of these 126 are peasants who are likely to attach themselves to the party which is best organised, which includes the most persuasive orators, and which will give the most satisfactory promises regarding the increase of their land holdings.[56]

The sources that Nicolson and the British diplomatic staff utilised to gain political intelligence about the political aspirations of the peasants tended to view the peasants' political demands as an unsophisticated desire for land. While this does show evidence of a patronising attitude towards the peasantry by the landed proprietors, it also

[54] TNA, FO 881/9034, No. 4, Nicolson to Grey, 1 January 1907, 9.
[55] TNA, FO 881/9034, No. 105, Nicolson to Grey, 20 May 1907, 150.
[56] TNA, FO 881/8756, No. 17, Norman to Spring Rice, 10 May 1906, 29.

illustrates the perceived lack of individual initiative among the peasantry. In portraying the peasantry as engaging with the Duma primarily to obtain more land, the zemstvo rank and file portrayed the peasantry as unwilling to better their economic situations themselves, instead relying on the Duma to gift them with more land. For the zemstvo rank and file, this was symptomatic of the conditions of the Russian countryside, a view which can be developed by examining their belief that the peasantry were especially susceptible to the machinations of agitators of the far left.

Throughout the revolution of 1905-1907, landed proprietors and zemstvo activists interpreted the acts of violence and strikes perpetrated by the peasantry as stimulated by the action of far-left agitators. This belief partly grew out of political mud-slinging at the rising number of zemstvo employees, such as teachers and agronomists, who the zemstvo rank and file often equated with the far left.[57] However, further study into the reasons proposed for the power that agitators possessed over the peasantry can further inform our understanding of how the zemstvo rank and file identified a lack of individual initiative amongst the peasantry, and equated this with a lack of respect for the rights and property of others.

The belief that peasants were motivated by the promises of land by agitators is prevalent in British political intelligence gathering. For the zemstvo rank and file the peasantry engaged in illegal activities because they believed they could disposes the gentry land owners. For example, a Kherson estate manager after an incident stated that he believed the peasants would not have caused trouble on their own initiative, and as a result Bosanquet concluded that political agitation had been underway among the peasantry.[58] Similarly, Major Macbean, a military attaché, described peasant disturbances in February and March as indicative of 'previous engineering by agitators'.[59] The Podolia agricultural society also attributed the movement to outside agitators who played upon the peasantry's desire for more land to incite uprisings.[60]

[57] Manning, *The Crisis of the Old Order*, 49.
[58] TNA, FO 881/8560, no. 48, Bosanquet to Smith, 26 September 1905, 56-8.
[59] TNA, FO 881/8560, no. 59, Major Macbean, 'Memorandum Respecting the Peasant Disturbances in Russia', 12 October 1905, 84.
[60] TNA, FO 881/8560, no. 48, Bosanquet to Smith, 26 September 1905, 57.

Wallace's report to Nicolson in 1906 reflected the attitude that the cause of agrarian disturbances was due to revolutionary agitators promising land to the peasants. Due to the peasant poverty, in the provinces, 'There was here an excellent field for revolutionary agitation, and it naturally attracted the attention of the two avowedly revolutionary parties, the Social Democrats and the Social Revolutionaries.'[61] Wallace interpreted the reduction of agrarian disturbances during spring 1906, and their rise in the following summer as due to a change of tactics by the revolutionary parties. 'Having learned by experience that the government could not be overturned by the town proletariat alone, they determined to seek the assistance of the peasantry. Hundreds of agitators were accordingly sent to the villages.'[62] Wallace then linked the peasant unrest to the strikes in the towns, hinting at some kind of perceived organisational link between them. 'In these circumstances, the best method seemed to be that the peasants take possession of the proprietors' estates, and the dispatch of punitive expeditions be prevented by town insurrections.'[63] He therefore pointed towards the belief of an organized attempt by the far left parties to take advantage of the peasants' land hunger and induce them to undertake illegal activities.

Nicolson's interactions and interviews with individual landed proprietors confirmed the image presented by consular staff and individuals such as Wallace. In July, Nicolson spoke to a large landed proprietor from the province of Poltava, who asserted that, 'socialist propaganda had bourn some fruits in areas where landlords had not been able to keep on good terms with their peasants'.[64] A similar individual from Pskov was 'convinced that there was some central organisation who was arranging to render it impossible for proprietors to live on their estates, and by destruction of property to facilitate the entry into possession by the peasantry'.[65]

An issue with these perceptions is that there is conflicting contemporary evidence about the cause of agrarian unrest. In answers to the 1907 Imperial Free Economic Society report on the peasant uprisings, agitation from outsiders was cited as a precipitating

[61] TNA, FO 881/8934, no. 7, Wallace to Nicolson, 1 November 1906, 8.
[62] TNA, FO 881/8934, no. 7, Wallace to Nicolson, 1 November 1906, 11.
[63] TNA, FO 881/8934, no. 7, Wallace to Nicolson, 1 November 1906, 11
[64] TNA, FO 881/8795, no. 64, Nicolson to Grey, 28 July 1906, 62.
[65] TNA, FO 881/8795, no. 85, Nicolson to Grey, 12 August 1906, 102.

factor but was not universal.[66] At the time that the report was compiled opinions had had time to change. A large amount of agitators were claimed to be zemstvo employees.[67] This could reflect the purges of liberally inclined zemstvo members and zemstvo employees which occurred after the instances of agrarian unrest in the winter of 1905-1906.[68] It has also been suggested that the peasantry would not have needed to have been told that they would be better off if they acquired the neighbouring landlord's land, and that the peasants were still to an extent isolated from outside political developments.[69]

In summary, on a deeper level the belief in the persuasive power of left-wing agitators among the peasantry grew out of the zemstvo rank and file's belief that the peasantry lacked the notion of economic individuality and self-reliance to improve their economic conditions through commercial farming, and instead resorted to illegal means to obtain more land. It also illustrates the connection between economic individualism and a state based upon law in the thinking of the zemstvo rank and file, because the peasantry engaged in illegal activities because of a lack of a notion of individual economic effort and the respect for personal rights and property that went with it.

In conclusion, the prevalence of the belief among landed proprietors that the peasants saw the Duma purely as a vehicle for acquiring more land, and the power that left-wing agitators were seen to have because of their promises of land, underlines the argument that the zemstvo rank and file considered the peasantry to have a limited respect for private property, and lacked the individualism that they believed to be key in successful farming. This argument underpinned the zemstvo opposition to wholesale land expropriation. There was a powerful belief that the peasantry regarded the first two Dumas as merely an opportunity to expropriate the larger landowners and effectively obtain more land for free, which suggested a lack of any kind of individual initiative to obtain more land through commercial farming or innovation of their existing plots. Zemstvo opinion as to the effectiveness of agitators on peasant unrest also illustrates the

[66] Perrie, 'The Russian Peasant Movement of 1905-1907',134.
[67] Perrie, 'The Russian Peasant Movement of 1905-1907', 133.
[68] Manning, 'Zemstvo and Revolution', 46.
[69] Geroid Robinson, *Rural Russia Under the Old Regime: a History of the Landlord-Peasant World and a Prologue to the Peasant Revolution of 1917* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969), 144-45.

prevalence of the belief that the peasants lacked individual initiative, as well as the link between individual initiative and the respect for private property rights.

Alternatives to Land Expropriation

The concepts discussed in the preceding two sections have underlined that the zemstvo rank and file considered peasant agriculture to be in a state of crisis, due to the socio-economic structures of the countryside that stifled the individual enterprise of the peasantry, and that this perception was reinforced by the very basic political demands of the peasantry, which revolved primarily around land. Landed proprietors were aware of the acute social problems of the countryside, and advocated reform to the peasant system of agriculture. The proposals for reform that were made by the zemstvo rank and file can be analysed in order to further develop our understanding of the importance that was attached to individual economic enterprise for a constitutional society among the zemstvo rank and file. To investigate this, the advantages of proposed reform can be analysed, to show how the zemstvo rank and file advocated certain types of reform such as improving credit systems in the countryside, education of the peasants, and abandoning the commune. This can then be contrasted with how the zemstvo rank and file viewed the potential expropriation of the gentry's lands to the unreformed peasantry.

Proposals for peasant reform can be linked to theoretical opinions of the peasantry of the left during the 1890s that viewed the peasants as possessing the potential to develop individual liberty and economic dignity. The development of this potential was seen as the self-proclaimed mission of liberals in St Petersburg society.[70] As early as 1881, Fedor Rodichev, a liberal landowner who would play a prominent role in the Kadet party during the 1905-7 revolution, wrote that reform should be directed at developing the individuality of the peasantry by reforming the remaining bonds of serfdom.

> All that has been said leads up to the emancipation of the peasant from his attachment to the soil, and the abolition of those restrictions on his rights which place him in the

[70] Herbert Thompson, *Russian Politics* (London: Fischer Unwin, 1896) 181.

> peculiar position of a man who lives not for himself and not as he likes, but for the Treasury and in a way advantageous to the latter.[71]

Rodichev refers to the issues created for the peasantry by the legacy of the emancipation. In his analysis, redemption payments which the peasants were forced to pay in return for their land resulted in the peasantry not working for themselves, but instead working to pay back the state collectively. According to Rodichev, 'This special status of the peasants is nowadays no longer justified either by reasons of state necessity, or still less from the point of view of justice and humanity.'[72] Although this example does not necessarily apply to the time period in question, because redemption payments were cancelled in 1904, it does illustrate the broad direction that educated thought was taking in Russia towards the restrictions placed upon the peasantry's ability to act independently.

Such issues of peasant capital and access to credit played an important role in the political demands of the zemstvo rank and file's demands for agricultural reform in 1905. Spring Rice, the British charge d'affaires, in November 1905 expressed the belief prevalent in agricultural circles that reform of the peasant land bank would encourage the formation of a more individualized peasantry. This would improve the existing trend of sales of land to individual peasants from private estates.

> This will still further encourage a process which has already been in progress since the year of emancipation, the annual sales of private lands to peasants amounting in the last few years to 1 per cent, of the whole of the land held by private owners.[73]

This is further supported by the willingness of the landlords to allow individual peasants to purchase land from them. Spring Rice reported to Lord Lansdowne, the British Foreign Secretary, that at the November zemstvo congress the majority of the landowners represented there supported concessions in the direction of enabling successful peasants to buy land from them.

> It is generally taken for granted that the one desire of the peasant is for more land, the landlords represented at the various zemstvo conferences have stated that they are ready

[71] Peter Struve, 'My contacts with Rodichev', *The Slavonic and East European Review* vol. 12, no. 35 (1934), 362.
[72] Struve, 'My contacts with Rodichev', 362.
[73] TNA, FO 881/8669 no. 97, Spring Rice to Lansdowne, 21 November 1905, 60.

> to offer the peasants every facility to buy land from them, and the organs of the liberal party are engaged in pointing out that the first duty of that party is to gain the peasant vote by promising large concessions in this direction.[74]

It can be assumed that this would result in the more successful peasants possessing more land, and thus sustaining higher rates of agricultural product, in a similar manner to which the Stolypin reform aimed to create a class of strong peasant landowners. Improvements in peasant agriculture were, for the zemstvo rank and file, intimately linked to the supply of individual credit in the countryside, which underlines the importance of the individual peasant producer for the zemstvo rank and file.

Reform of the communal system of land tenure was viewed as a particularly legitimate means to bring about the modernisation of the countryside. In December 1906, a landed proprietor and politician with liberal views explained the advantages of abandoning the communal system to Nicolson.

> He was convinced that individual ownership would raise the self-respect and moral status of the peasant and would induce him to be more thrifty and more sober... Moreover, when his future depended on his individual labours, and the fruits of his toil would be enjoyed by himself and his family, it was clear that he would be stimulated to a more orderly and rational existence.[75]

British political intelligence gathering on the right-wing parties that emerged during 1906 illustrated a similar opinion. For example, the 'Russian National Party' founded in Moscow and described by Cranley as to the right of the Octobrists, 'proposes to settle the land question by purchase and cheap credit, with the abandonment of the communal system'.[76] Pares retrospectively stated that enlightened opinion had been travelling in this direction as early as 1904-1905, in a report on the proceedings of the Duma in 1907 submitted to Nicolson.[77]

In arguing for the abolition of the commune, the zemstvo rank and file applied concepts from Western Europe to their studies of Russian agriculture. Pares expressed this reference to Western styles of farming referenced in relation to the commune in a

[74] TNA, FO 881/8669 no. 97, Spring Rice to Lansdowne, 21 November 1905, 59.
[75] TNA, FO 881/8934, no. 36 Nicolson to Grey, 11 December 1906, 59.
[76] TNA, FO 881/8821, no. 38 Cranley to Nicolson, 12 September 1906, 59.
[77] TNA, FO 881/9304, no. 11 Pares to Nicolson, 9 July 1907, 19.

retrospective study of the second Duma in 1923, which included a section of Stolypin's November 1906 agrarian reform. According to Pares, Stolypin 'had behind him the evidence for an economic process which had already taken place in nearly every western country and was being copied in several parts of the empire by the peasants themselves'.[78] Therefore, the theoretical justification for zemstvo support of Stolypin's reform was clearly based upon a western model of the primacy of individual effort over communal effort.

To further support this contention, the defective position of education that was not provided by the zemstvos was blamed for the poor agricultural techniques utilized by the peasant and improvements in education were an important part of zemstvo political demands during the period in question. From the creation of the zemstvos in 1864, there was a remarkable expansion in the services that zemstvos offered to the local population. Zemstvos were involved in the expansion of education in Russia, the setting up of hospitals, and most importantly agricultural services for the local peasants, such as the provision of agricultural specialists and importation of modern agricultural machinery. The growing numbers of zemstvo employees, such as teachers, agronomists and medical staff, indicates the expansion of zemstvo services for the local populations which followed the large increase in zemstvo budgets from 1890 to 1900.[79] In particular, the money spent by zemstvos on education increased from 9 million rubles in 1893 to 25.3 million in 1906, with provincial zemstvos spending a majority of their education budget on vocational education for the peasantry.[80]

The success of these enterprises is debatable. Kingston-Mann has argued that on the basis of zemstvo statistical studies many peasants made an economically informed choice not to upgrade their farms even if they had the technical knowledge to do so. This was because they were faced with low grain prices and competition from extensive gentry estates with lower production costs and cheaper goods.[81] Among the Cossacks, people were also willing to adopt agricultural practices that were copied from

[78] Bernard Pares, 'The Second Duma', *The Slavonic Review* vol. 2, no. 4 (1923), 39.
[79] Atkinson, 'The Zemstvo and the Peasantry', 99.
[80] Jeffrey Brooks, 'The Zemstvo and the Education of the People', in Terrence Emmons and Wayne Vucinich (eds.), *The Zemstvo in Russia: an Experiment in Self-Government* ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 263-4.
[81] Kingston-Mann, 'Peasant Communes and Economic Innovation', 39-40.

Mennonite settlers as opposed to those taught to them by agronomists, who were viewed with suspicion.[82]

Bosanquet in 1905 stated that 'little has been done to improve the peasant's condition during the forty years which have followed the liberation of the serfs, and this is notably the case in the matter of education'.[83] The schools that did exist were not seen as being particularly effective. Bosanquet reported that in 1905 the peasants had received little instruction in advanced agricultural techniques due to the scarcity of education.

> Education would doubtless increase the number of his wants, but it would also bring with it, to some extent at least, the ability to satisfy them. In particular, there is a great need for technical instruction in agriculture. The peasant's methods of agriculture are, generally speaking, most primitive and inadequate, and carried out either on no system at all, or on such an imperfect one as the three-field system.[84]

In the 1920s an exiled Rodichev extensively criticized the Russian government for setting an annual limit for the increase in zemstvo budgets, because of the importance of expanding the philanthropic work of the zemstvos in education, which he described as 'an especially heavy charge on the zemstvos.'[85]

> Any zemstvo was doomed by this not merely to stagnation, but also to retrogression, since the expenses of the zemstvo, owning to the rise in prices and the growth in population, increased by more than 3 per cent. in the year.[86]

Rodichev's statement could be put down to an attempt to score retrospective political points, although the concern that this betrays among the zemstvo rank and file on the importance of educating the peasantry is significant. Wallace's contemporary study of the zemstvos supports Rodichev's thesis on the importance of educating the peasantry in agricultural techniques. The zemstvos that Wallace visited in his second visit to Russia had been galvanized by recent famines to place a greater importance upon the education of the peasantry, but had been greatly impaired by the government.[87]

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[82] Leonard Friesen, *Rural Revolutions in Southern Ukraine: Peasants, Nobles, and Colonists 1774-1905* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2008), 180.
[83] TNA, FO 881/8560, no. 48, Bosanquet to Smith, 25 September 1905, 54.
[84] TNA, FO 881/8560, no. 48, Bosanquet to Smith, 25 September 1905, 55.
[85] Fedor Rodichev, 'The Liberal Movement in Russia, 1891-1905', *The Slavonic Review* vol. 2, no. 5 (1923), 252.
[86] Rodichev, 'The Liberal Movement in Russia, 1891-1905', 251-52.
[87] Wallace, *Russia*, 252.

For the zemstvo rank and file, without the instruction supplied by the zemstvos the peasants lacked the correct instruction necessary for the introduction of new agricultural technology. Education was therefore an important part of the zemstvos' alternative to land expropriation, and fits in to the thesis that the zemstvo rank and file considered it important to improve the peasants' ability to farm on a commercial basis, using new agricultural techniques to make the best of their land. Although it is a possibility that improvements to education could have existed separately to the demand for individual farming practices, the implementation of such practices was firmly connected to improvements to the provision of individual credit and the abandonment of the commune, which suggests a link between education and the improvement of the sense of the individual among the Russian peasantry.

A system of compulsory land expropriation with compensation was advocated by the Kadet party in their 1905 party program, as well as certain members of the government such as Witte who believed that it would be preferable to transfer the land to the peasants in an orderly manner rather than let them take it by force.[88] This scheme was largely opposed by the zemstvo rank and file. Although this could have been an expression of economic class or social estate interest, the perceived crisis in peasant agriculture due to the lack of economic individuality posed a powerful economic argument against the forced handover of gentry lands to the peasantry. The basis for this argument was that the production of cereals, which lay at the base of Russia's economy, would have been severely reduced, and this further demonstrates the importance of individual economic effort in the wider economy for the zemstvo rank and file.

The overall impression is that the zemstvo rank and file regarded peasant agriculture to be deficient in comparison to their gentry counterparts, the key difference being the commercial manner in which gentry estates were generally farmed. A deputy of the right in the second Duma stressed that the forced expropriation of landlord land to the peasantry would severely affect the Russian economy due to a fall in the yield in grain.

> A deputy of the right maintained that it was not more land that the peasant required, but better methods of husbandry applied to what he already owned. He said that to do away

[88] 'The Program of the Kadet Party, 1905', in Basil Dmytryshyn (ed.), *Imperial Russia: a Source Book, 1700-1917* (Gulf Breeze, FL: Academic International Press, 1999), 442; Wcislo, *Reforming Rural Russia*, 177.

> with the great landowners would be to remove the one progressive element in Russian agriculture.[89]

The assumption made by this member of the Duma is that gentry farms, which tended to be farmed in a commercial manner when not leased out to local peasants,[90] were more productive than the communal style of peasant farming. Maurice Baring, a British travel writer and correspondent for the *Morning Post*, also echoed these assertions in his study of Russia in 1906, and reiterated the argument against land expropriation by pointing towards a resulting drop in the productivity of the land and expansion of poverty as a result of the peasants' inferior cultivation techniques.

> If all the land were given to them as a present tomorrow the result in the long run would be deplorable, because the quality of the land, once you eliminate the landlord and his more advanced methods, would gradually deteriorate and poverty would merely be spread over a wider area.[91]

Bosanquet made a similar point in relation to the peasants' methods. In March 1906 he reiterated landowner opinion that simple land expropriation would not be effective in alleviating peasant poverty, 'Moreover, unless stock and implements are given with the allotments, it seems probable that many of the poorer peasants will sooner or later sell their newly-acquired land to their richer neighbors...'.[92] This has many similarities with a popular argument made against land expropriation that due to the peasants' poorly developed individual farming practices the wholesale expropriation of gentry lands would not alleviate peasant poverty.

The zemstvo rank and file's opposition to the expropriation of their land was therefore not based purely upon economic self-interest and a wish to preserve their traditional dominant role in the countryside. It cannot be argued that this was not entirely the case, as studies of reactionary zemstvos such as the Tula provincial zemstvo, have shown a desire to protect the privileged position of the gentry in the countryside,[93] and Miliukov's retrospective assertion that the zemstvo rank and file possessed a 'class-orientated party spirit', and that, 'Our solution to the agrarian problem always remained

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[89] TNA FO 881/9034 no. 75, Claude-Russell to Nicolson, 11 April 1907, 111.
[90] Gatrell, *The Tsarist Economy,* 119.
[91] Maurice Baring, *A Year in Russia*, (London: Methuen, 1907), 146.
[92] TNA, FO 881/8755 no. 22, Bosanquet to Smith, 12 March 1906, 50.
[93] Rawson, 'Rightist Politics in the Revolution of 1905', 104; Manning, *The Crisis of the Old Order*, 181.

a target of attack for our class adversaries.'[94] While it is difficult to deny that some of the opposition to land expropriation would have been rooted in economic self-interest, concern for the economic future of Russia due to the perceived crisis in peasant agriculture must have played a part in the zemstvo rank and file's opposition to land expropriation. The recognition of the lack of peasant capital in the countryside illustrates a concern with peasant agriculture that is difficult to reconcile with class interest, as improvement to the peasantry's methods of farming and access to credit would have increased the economic power of individual peasant farmers, thus putting them in open competition with gentry farmers.

Reforms advocated by the zemstvo rank and file show the prevalence of the belief that the modernization of Russia's countryside rested in reforms based around inculcating a sense of individualism among the peasants. The zemstvo rank and file attempted to strengthen the purchasing power of the individual producer, and thus allow him to make improvements to his land through the extension of official credit institutions. Zemstvo criticism of the successfulness of education in the countryside shows their concern with the peasant's lack of individuality. Through arguing for expansion of the system of zemstvo education, the zemstvo rank and file considered the peasantry to lack any independent impetus to implement modern farming techniques. Improvements to the system of peasant education were therefore designed to enable the peasantry to be able to implement the advanced agricultural technologies with the help of the expansion of credit unions. Finally, the zemstvo rank and file followed the existing trend amongst educated society to attack the commune as a barrier to progress in the countryside. They therefore approved of plans to abandon the peasant commune, and it is significant that this was often cast in terms of improving the peasant's character, through the individual peasant working for himself rather than the collective. These proposed reforms indicate the importance that was attached to the expansion of individual commercial farming among the peasantry, as opposed to land expropriation that was considered to be economically unviable.

Conclusion

[94] Paul Miliukov, *Political Memoirs 1905-1907* ed. A. Mendel, trans. C. Goldberg (Ann Arbour: University of Michigan Press, 1960), 17.

The zemstvo rank and file's opinions on the subject on how to solve the agricultural crisis should not be seen as the same as the opinions of the reactionaries. Liberal narratives based upon the obtaining of economic freedom of the individual are clearly present in how the zemstvo rank and file rationalized the causation of the agricultural crisis. In their view, peasant individuality was critically undermined by the economic and social structures of the countryside, which resulted in the peasants' world and political views becoming dominated by very basic desire for more land as a salve for their economic woes, rather than an alteration to their existing mode of farming on an individual basis. Such an attitude amongst the peasantry was seen to result in a basic interaction with the Duma and wider political discourse in Russia, and a lack of respect for law and private property, particularly in the way in which they were seen to be particularly susceptible to the activities of left wing agitators. Due to these reasons the zemstvo rank and file recommended alterations to the structure of peasant life in the countryside, such as the abandonment of the commune, greater access to credit, and education, which would have facilitated a change in the peasantries' mode of agriculture towards a more individual, commercialized basis.

These findings can alter the model that the identities of liberal and landowner had become estranged in the early twentieth century, which was proposed by Hamburg and suggested by Manning's thesis whereby the zemstvo rank and file became alienated from liberal politics by the desire to preserve their dominant positions in the countryside.[95] The concern held by the members of the zemstvo rank and file for providing the structures that would inculcate values of individual initiative and self-reliance illustrates the importance that was attached to these concepts. The zemstvo rejection of land expropriation in favor of reforms that would strengthen the notion of the individual among the peasantry was in fact an expression of constitutional thought due to the connection that existed between economic individualism and a citizenry aware of their mutual rights and obligations.

This is significant because implicit in notions of fostering farming on a more individual basis in Russian liberal ideology at the beginning of the twentieth century were ideas of integrating the peasant masses into a wider constitutionalist society and political discourse. The creation of a strong, economically developed peasantry through extensive reform of the structures of Russian agriculture would have helped to achieve

[95] Hamburg, *The Politics of the Russian Nobility*, 55; Manning, *The Crisis of the Old Order*, 191.

this goal. How the zemstvo rank and file envisaged the creation of such a constitutional society, where the peasants were included in political discourses, and whether this was feasible at the time of the revolution of 1905-1907 will require further study into zemstvo opinions on the extension of the franchise and the role of the Duma in Russian society.

CHAPTER TWO
REPRESENTATION, GOVERNMENT, AND THE 'ZEMSKY SOBOR'

Calls for a representative assembly were present in the zemstvos as early as 1904, and were frequent during the banquet campaign of the winter of that year following the November zemstvo congress. Demands included calls for a representative assembly alongside a number of civil rights and freedoms, such as the inviolability of the person, the freedom of the press, and of association. However, the exact nature of this representation was often left very vague in political addresses and resolutions, reflecting the desire of the zemstvos for unanimity that led to such resolutions appealing to the lowest common denominator of zemstvo opinion.[1]

Manning's research into the resolutions of provincial zemstvos, noble assemblies and meetings of the marshals of the nobility has shown that demands for a constitutional form of government and a broad basis of representation spread slowly amongst the provincial and district zemstvos. Half had accepted these demands by the start of 1905, and by January 1906 this had increased to three quarters.[2] However, during 1906 the zemstvos repudiated the constitutional and representational policies of the Kadets due to the large number of peasant deputies returned to the first Duma.[3] Therefore there existed a large section of the membership of the zemstvo rank and file who advocated the formation of an institution elected upon the zemstvo principle, instead of the Kadets' desire for a broad basis of representation.

This conception of an assembly based upon limited suffrage endured from the beginning of 1905 and throughout the period of parliamentary politics until the dissolution of the second Duma and the subsequent restriction of the franchise in July 1907. It has been cited as an indicator of the reactionary leanings of the landed gentry because a restricted franchise would allow this group to protect their interests against the peasantry and the bureaucracy. According to Manning, the zemstvo rank and file in 1907 remained committed to the existence of a permanent national representative organ, sanctioned by law, to defend their interests.[4] This system was favored by supporters of

[1] Manning, *The Crisis of the Old Order*, 60-1.
[2] Manning, 'Zemstvo and Revolution', 37.
[3] Manning, *The Crisis of the Old Order*, 274.
[4] Manning, *The Crisis of the Old Order*, 316.

the autocracy after 1907 who believed that it would strengthen the existing structures of power in the noble-peasant relationship upon which the autocracy was seen to depend.[5] Further research into the constitutional period after the October Manifesto has found an increase in hostility between the landed gentry and the peasantry due to peasant support for the abolition of gentry land ownership, and the gentry's power to effectively veto undesirable peasant Duma candidates in the third and fourth Dumas.[6]

Historians have sought to explain the limited demands for four tail suffrage, or a combination of indirect elections with a broad base of representation, made by provincial zemstvos and the early zemstvo congresses of the period, as symptomatic of a gulf in political opinion between the leaders of the Zemstvo Constitutionalist movement and the zemstvo rank and file. Manning has argued that the greater organization of the Zemstvo Constitutionalists, embodied in the zemstvo congresses, Beseda, and the Union of Zemstvo Constitutionalists, contributed to the spread of oppositional views among the zemstvo rank and file, and that the resulting resolutions were not representative of the opinions of the majority.[7] According to this line of reasoning the vacillation of the central authorities in St Petersburg also contributed to conservative members of the zemstvo rank and file making similar demands to the liberals because they lacked clear leadership from the conservative authorities.[8] Manning has argued that as a result the zemstvo rank and file had always lagged behind their constitutionalist leaders even when zemstvo assemblies made constitutionalist demands, which explains the abrupt shift in zemstvo attitudes in the winter of 1905-1906 following the discrediting of Kadet influences in the zemstvos. [9]

Further analysis of the zemstvo rank and file's rejection of the immediate implementation of universal suffrage can inform our understanding of constitutional thought among this group. This chapter will determine to what extent the rejection of four-tail suffrage and exclusion of the peasantry from politics was a result of the belief among the zemstvo rank and file that the Russian peasantry was not sufficiently politically mature to be part of the political process. In light of these findings, it will then be possible to ascertain to what extent the zemstvo rank and file perceived the restricted assembly to play a role in gradual change to the political outlook of the

[5] Wcislo, *Reforming Rural Russia*, 307
[6] Acton, *Rethinking Revolutionary Russia*, 56.
[7] Manning, *The Crisis of the Old Order*, 63.
[8] Becker, *Nobility and Privilege*, 155.
[9] Manning, *The Crisis of the Old Order,* 131.

peasantry, in order to create a constitutional society that was defined by accepted standards of interaction between the government and the citizenry. To do so it will be necessary to establish the extension of the franchise that the restricted assembly entailed, and the role that perceptions of the political immaturity of the peasantry and the unproductive nature of the first two Dumas had on this. In light of the findings from this first research question, it will then be considered how the Duma was seen to be part of a process towards a constitutional regime, especially in terms of the effect that it would have upon the peasants' understanding of their political rights and obligations in a constitutional regime, and the potential for broader political participation once political modernization had occurred.

The 'Zemsky Sobor'

The Zemsky Sobor was an ancient institution first convened by Ivan the Terrible to enact legislation. It consisted of representatives of the nobility and high bureaucracy, the clergy, and the merchants and townspeople. It was a Zemsky Sobor that elected Mikhail Romanov to the throne in 1613, and it was last convened in 1686 to ratify the Eternal Peace Treaty with Poland. It was purely a consultative assembly, and had had no legislative powers. A similar representative assembly, elected through the zemstvos, was a key demand amongst the zemstvos in the period 1905-1907. The reasoning behind such demands is important, as it can reveal important information about the self-perception of the zemstvo activists, relative to the rest of the population.

According to Fischer, the presence of the autocracy in Russia meant that Russian liberalism was forced to embrace democracy in its development up until 1905. This was because western liberalism that entailed a laissez-faire state alongside a political oligarchy was not possible in Russia because the concept of the state sharing power with the liberals was not compatible with autocracy.[10] The zemstvos, on the other hand, did not go quite as far as the liberal intelligentsia. Manning contended that on the basis of official zemstvo records the zemstvos never really supported the idea of universal suffrage in 1905, and the concept was always subordinated to their political needs such as their opposition to the bureaucracy.[11] Right wing zemstvo representatives at the zemstvo congresses of 1905 favored a representative assembly purely to act as a check

[10] Fischer, '*Russian Liberalism*', 120.
[11] Manning, 'Zemstvo and Revolution', 51.

on the autocracy; Manning has documented the large numbers of telegrams sent to the government from the provincial nobility arguing against the wide suffrage of the first Duma which evidence the zemstvos' opposition to a broad electorate in 1905.[12] Noble assemblies of the provincial nobility also tended to support elections along estate lines, which supports the idea that the zemstvos tended to favor a system of representation that favored the landed nobility in the provinces.[13] This suggests that during the time period in question, the zemstvo rank and file did not favor a complete turn to democracy as a replacement for autocracy. However, it is important to consider Verner's assertion that even conservatives effectively joined in a system of active citizenship in making political demands for an assembly based upon land,[14] which indicates a desire to be involved in political change in Russia. Therefore it is important to consider why the peasantry was excluded from the Duma in the zemstvo rank and file's political thinking, in order to further examine the stance taken by the zemstvo rank and file on the issue of broader participation in government.

The preceding investigation into the attitudes of the zemstvo rank and file towards land expropriation found that the peasants were believed to regard the Duma as primarily a means to obtain more land. When considering issues of representation, it is therefore important to consider how the zemstvo rank and file perceived the political maturity of the peasantry, which is especially pertinent after the electoral law of December 1905 that favored the peasantry over the landed gentry. The levels of support for universal suffrage among the zemstvo rank and file will then be analyzed in light of these findings, in order to establish to what extent the zemstvo rank and file considered political maturity as an important pre-requisite to political participation.

Even the members of the Union of Liberation and the Zemstvo Constitutionalist movement regarded political activism amongst the lower classes as dangerous. In St Petersburg there was mixed responses to worker activism, with more rightwing liberals preferred a reform scenario restricted to the elites.[15] A similar opinion was observable in the zemstvo rank and file's opinions of the peasantry's political maturity. Along with the already documented tendency of the peasantry to regard the Duma as purely a vehicle for obtaining more land, there were serious concerns raised about the peasants'

[12] Manning, *The Crisis of the Old Order*, 93, 185.
[13] Becker, *Nobility and Privilege*, 156.
[14] Andrew Verner, *The Crisis of Russian Autocracy: Nicholas II and the 1905 Revolution*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), 196.
[15] Surh, *1905 in St Petersburg*, 167.

understanding of politics. At the August 1905 zemstvo congress, it was held that the peasants would not be able to differentiate between the political propaganda of the zemstvo movement and that of the far left.

> Some forcible sentiments were expressed on the subject of what may be called an appeal to the people, the prevailing opinion being that such appeals, to be effective, should be verbal rather than printed, as the peasants, already more or less accustomed to revolutionary and other propaganda, would but class further printed appeals of the kind, however moderate, among the "proklamastie", to be handed over to the police.[16]

The connection between the lower classes, including the peasantry is further developed by criticisms of the British address to the first Duma earlier in the year emanating from the conservative press, quoted in a dispatch by the British ambassador from 1906, Arthur Nicolson, to the British Foreign Secretary, Sir Edward Grey. 'Their friendship prevents them from seeing that the triumph of the rabble promises our country not freedom but a tyranny worse than that of Ivan the Terrible.'[17]

This patronizing view of the peasantry was expanded in the wake of the dissolution of the second Duma in July 1907. For Nicolson, the prevailing political opinion was that the dissolution of the Duma was justified, given the political immaturity of the majority of the population.

> In a sense this is true, but it was absolutely necessary, and on this all are agreed, that the present law, drawn up hurriedly, as were indeed also the fundamental laws, was not workable, and the mode in which it had to be amended was enforced by circumstances. An extended franchise in a country where some 70 per cent. are illiterate, and composed of many diverse races, was a dangerous experiment, which cool reflection would never have permitted to be tried; and until education has spread and tranquility is more assured it seems that a restriction of the franchise is a politic and necessary step, though it is not in accordance with Western ideas.[18]

Nicolson therefore cited the political immaturity of the majority of the population as the justification for the restriction of the electoral franchise that occurred after the dissolution of the second Duma. He echoed key aspects of the zemstvo rank and file's conception of the peasantry's ability to participate in politics further than a basic demand for land. He laid special emphasis on the importance of education of the peasantry in the political discourses of Russia.

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[16] TNA, FO 881/8581, no 68, Cooke to Hardinge, 22 July 1905, 76.
[17] TNA, FO 881/8821, no. 38, Nicolson to Grey, 17 September 1906, 47.
[18] TNA, FO 881/9034, no 133, Nicolson to Grey, 24 June 1907, 190.

Along with pessimistic attitudes towards the peasants' political aspirations, British diplomatic correspondence contains some evidence that the zemstvo rank and file considered the peasantry to be affected by political developments in Russia, and had gained a level of political maturity that was deemed acceptable by the zemstvo rank and file. For the majority of this group, such development was seen to affect only a minority of the peasantry, and was almost wholly limited to the more successful peasants. This further demonstrates that the zemstvo rank and file considered most of the peasantry to be too politically illiterate to be able to participate in politics in a constructive manner.

In November 1906 in the aftermath of some of the worse peasant disturbances of the revolutionary period, Donald Mackenzie Wallace, whilst acting on a royal commission to report on Russian affairs, acknowledged a minority of the peasantry were politically aware enough and placed enough faith in the proceedings of the Duma not to be persuaded by the myth perpetuated by extreme left-wing agitators that the Tsar had ordered the peasants to dispossess the noble landlords.

> Many of the more intelligent, well-to-do peasants, it is true, came gradually to recognise that the legend, if it had any real foundation, could not be taken as a basis for practical calculations; and they accordingly proceeded to buy land from their neighbouring proprietors.[19]

Similar trends are also detectable in 1907. Although in February Nicolson reported that a large landed proprietor had blamed the peasant disorders upon the action of a student, 'who had preached to them the doctrines of the extreme left, and had impressed on them that they had been defrauded of their just rights in not having been placed in possession of all the land which they desired',[20] the opinions of zemstvo activists indicate that the peasantry were becoming more amenable to legal methods of obtaining land. For example, in May 1907, Nicolson reported that the peasantry were making increased use of the Peasant Land Bank.

> It is, nevertheless, a fact that of late the peasantry in many districts have applied either to the peasants' bank or to the proprietors themselves to arrange for the purchase of lands. Sales, of course, have been proceeding during the past two or three years, but in many districts the peasants abstained from applying for land, as they consider that they would

[19] TNA, FO 881/8934, no. 7, Wallace to Nicolson, 1 November 1906, 8.
[20] TNA, FO 881/9034, no. 27, Nicolson to Grey, 7 February 1907, 57.

> obtain what they required free of expense. It is such districts that, in many instances, a change has been noticed, and that the peasant is now willing to purchase.[21]

For Nicolson, this change was significant, and, 'These symptoms show, in a measure, that the peasant in some districts is closing his ears to the suggestions of the Socialists.'[22] Therefore, there was awareness that groups of peasants regarded the Duma as something more than a vehicle for obtaining state and gentry lands, thus displaying a level of political sophistication. What these perceived levels of political sophistication among a minority of peasants represented was a level of political understanding that had largely not been achieved by the peasantry upon the dissolution of the second Duma and the change to the electoral law, but which the zemstvo rank and file considered as an acceptable benchmark for political participation.

The poor opinion held by the zemstvo rank and file on the state of political understanding among the peasantry therefore lay behind their opposition to the extension of the franchise to include large numbers of the peasant population. Even though under the electoral law of 11 December 1905 the vote of a landed proprietor was equal to roughly 26 peasant votes because of the collegiate system of voting, Emmons has argued that the liberal electoral program seemed to inundate the gentry vote in a sea of peasant votes which, it was widely believed, would be manipulated by extremists and would bring an end to gentry predominance in the organs of self-government as a result of the peasants' lack of political maturity.[23] This had an effect on the mode of representation that was favoured by the zemstvo rank and file early in the revolutionary period, resulting in a significant lack of consensus on the topic.

As early as November 1904, significant splits had emerged within the zemstvo movement regarding the extension of the franchise to the peasantry. In January and February 1905, the majority of provincial zemstvo assemblies supported the constitutionalist 11-point plan of the zemstvo congress held in November 1904, which calling for four-tail suffrage.[24] However, only five provincial zemstvos actually

[21] TNA, FO 881/9034, no. 105, Nicolson to Grey, 20 May 1907, 150.
[22] TNA, FO 881/9034, no. 105, Nicolson to Grey, 20 May 1907, 150.
[23] Emmons, *The Formation of Political Parties*, 103.
[24] Manning, *The Crisis of the Old Order*, 83.

endorsed it.[25] Noble assemblies called for representation along estate lines, as opposed to the proposals of the leadership of the zemstvo constitutionalist movement that advocated equal and direct suffrage.[26] This belies a difference in political opinion between the local zemstvo rank and file, and the leaders of the liberation movement. According to Manning, the latter tended to not be representative of the rank and file, as they were usually on executive boards, more committed, better educated, and more politically active.[27] This evidence could be corroborated by reports of the provincial press that tended to not criticise the December 1904 Ukase, which had made no promises of a representative assembly. According to the British ambassador at the time, Charles Hardinge, 'The provincial press is the only one which affects to see all its expectations satisfied by the provisions of the Ukase, but that was only natural, as the political dissensions of the capital have not permeated the provinces.'[28]

These differences in the political opinions of the zemstvo rank and file on the franchise manifested themselves more prominently in the May zemstvo congress of 1905. This was directly alluded to by Cecil Spring Rice, the British charge d'affaires, who attested to a split between those who were inclined to accept the representation in the Bulygin Duma, and those whose' 'demands went much further'.[29] This split was so pronounced that Trubetskoi, in a delegation to the Tsar after the congress, was forced to concede that the zemstvo delegation was not in a position to decide upon the mode of representation to be taken. 'We do not regard ourselves as competent to discuss here either the definite form in which national representation is to be couched or the method of election.'[30] This may be a product of the nature of zemstvo meetings, which Manning argued created a pressure to appeal to the lowest common denominator of zemstvo opinion in order to present a united front to the government.[31] This may explain Trubetskoi's inability to articulate the exact mode of representation agreed on by the congress.

A similar lack of consensus regarding the question of representation is detectable at the second zemstvo congress in July 1905. The congress voted to support a lower chamber

[25] Manning, *The Crisis of the Old Oder*, 86.
[26] Becker, *Nobility and Privilege*, 157.
[27] Manning, 'Zemstvo and Revolution', 33.
[28] TNA, FO 881/8473, no. 4B, Hardinge to Lansdowne, 9 January 1905, 5A.
[29] TNA, FO 881/8580, no. 22, Spring Rice to Lansdowne, 10 May 1905, 24.
[30] TNA, FO 881/8580, no. 51, Hardinge to Lansdowne, 21 June 1905, 53.
[31] Manning, *The Crisis of the Old Order,* 61.

with direct manhood suffrage, with no mention of universality, and an upper chamber elected upon the zemstvo principle. This could reflect a compromise between the more liberal minded Zemstvo Constitutionalists and zemstvo rank and file, indicating that there was a strong movement within the rank and file to support representation based upon the zemstvo principle. Hardinge reported that there was a considerable diversity of opinion amongst the members of the congress, 'but the moderate party appears to have held their own against the more radical section'.[32] A similar compromise was made at the August zemstvo congress, where the Zemstvo Constitutionalists were forced to abandon the four tails and legislative powers for the representative assembly.[33] This evidence supports the contention that the zemstvo rank and file in 1905 supported the exclusion of the peasantry from the political process.

It is highly significant that the zemstvo rank and file considered that the peasantry should be excluded from the political process in 1905, as well as in 1906-1907 when they had rejected Kadet party principles. It can be linked to the finding that the peasants were perceived to be politically immature during the revolutionary period, because they were believed to regard the Duma as a vehicle for the acquisition of land, and unable to discriminate between the various political bodies operating in Russia at the time. Improvements in the political awareness of the peasant were consigned to small minorities of the peasants, and were seen as a level for the rest of the population to aspire to. As a result, before the granting of the October Manifesto, opinion was already split between the zemstvo rank and file and the leadership of the Zemstvo Constitutionalists regarding the extension of the franchise to the peasantry. After the granting of a fairly wide franchise to elect the first Duma, prevailing opinion among the zemstvo rank and file remained firmly that the peasantry should be at best a small minority in any future assembly. However, it is important to note that the rhetoric against inclusion of the peasantry in an elected assembly was not necessarily directed at the prospect of the peasantry being included in the electorate of a future Duma. This prospect, along with the prospect of a Zemsky Sobor being part of a process of modernizing the political outlook of Russia will now be examined.

[32] TNA, FO 881/8581, no. 79, Hardinge to Lansdowne, 1 August 1905, 89.
[33] Manning, *The Crisis of the Old Order*, 106.

The 'Zemsky Sobor' and the Political Evolution of Russia

The zemstvo rank and file's proposed exclusion of the peasantry from a representative assembly on the basis of the latter's political immaturity raises the possibility that the zemstvo rank and file connected a restricted Duma with gradual constitutional reform. In order to further investigate this proposition, it will be necessary to establish whether the political immaturity of the peasantry resulted in the Duma being regarded as a force for change in the political conditions of Russia, and whether this can be connected with the liberal idea that the development of Russian political discourse had been suffocated by previous government restrictions on political participation.[34] To investigate this, it is worth considering to what extent the zemstvo rank and file considered the Duma to play a role in the gradual political modernization of the peasantry through exposure to parliamentary politics and reasoned political debate. It will also be considered how the restricted Duma was regarded as being necessary for the pacification of Russia through successful cooperation with the government due to the unrest in Russia during the revolutionary period. This section will then examine if, in light of the modernizing and pacifying role of the Duma elected on a restricted basis, the zemstvo rank and file considered a broader basis of representation and political participation as an acceptable end point of these developments.

The zemstvo rank and file regarded parliamentary politics to possess a modernizing influence upon the basic political knowledge of the peasantry, even in a Duma that was elected upon a restricted franchise. At the November zemstvo congress in 1905, Hardinge described the reaction to the October Manifesto among the zemstvo rank and file as one of emphasizing the importance of political evolution in Russia.

> The more moderate members of the congress appreciate the magnitude of the concession which has been granted and the great importance to be attached to the peaceful evolution of a great political crisis which has now taken place and which has borne as its fruit the early convocation of a national chamber of freely elected representatives of the people.[35]

That this political evolution for the moderate members of the November zemstvo congress was a phenomenon that would be continuous was supported by Hardinge's further analysis of the delegates' opinions.

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[34] Breuillard, 'Russian Liberalism: Utopia or Realism?', 101.
[35] TNA, FO 881/8581, no. 91, Hardinge to Lansdowne, 20 August 1905, 100.

> Through the medium of the new chamber, an opening is offered to the energy and talents of the country in the persons of the freely elected representatives of the people which should tend to the disclosure of new horizons, and more particularly to the free development of national life and spirit with a view to the attainment of the highest political and social ideals.[36]

The emphasis placed upon the development of national life and spirit is noticeably vague, and there have been questions raised as to the applicability of the opinions of the zemstvo delegates at the conferences in 1905 to the zemstvo rank and file.[37] The November congress was highly divided between the Zemstvo Constitutionalist group and the Shipovites, who represented a more moderate group of zemstvo delegates who opposed the extension of the franchise.[38] Such a broad statement as to the opinions of the prospects of the Duma is indicative of a much broader belief in the role that the Duma would play in the political evolution of Russia.

In response to the promise of the convocation of a representative assembly in the Ukase of February 1905, Prince Trubetskoi, a leading member of the Zemstvo Constitutionalists, stated that it was important for the Tsar to establish a time frame in which popular representation should be implemented. Further, committees charged with implementing the regulations of popular representation should operate publicly, and not in secret.[39] Trubetskoi also argued that reforms of public life such as freedom of religion, the press, and association presuppose political freedom, and a system of public life based upon law and a properly organized popular representative form of government, 'or else they are incapable of being duly developed'.[40] These demands are significant because Trubetskoi was speaking on behalf of the Moscow nobility, and could therefore indicate that the zemstvo rank and file considered the political modernization of Russia and the attainment of a properly organized system of public life as essential to the productive work of a parliament. This extract also highlights the importance that the state could have in this process, by not operating in secret and involving the population in the implementation of reform.

Considering that Trubetskoi's speech to the throne came at a time when divisions in the zemstvo movement on the attitude to be taken towards constitutional reform were

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[36] TNA, FO 881/8581, no. 91, Hardinge to Lansdowne, 20 August 1905, 100.
[37] Manning, 'Zemstvo and Revolution', 33.
[38] Manning, *The Crisis of the Old Order*, 185.
[39] TNA, FO 881/8473, no. 78, Prince Trubetskoi, Note presented to the Moscow Province Nobles' Assembly, 21 January 1905, 75.
[40] TNA, FO 881/8473, no 78, Hardinge to Lansdowne, 14 February 1905, 72.

already apparent,[41] his speech to the throne can be construed as part of the tendency of the zemstvo movement's leadership to address the lowest common denominator of zemstvo opinion. Therefore it is likely Trubetskoi's speech had a level of applicability to the zemstvo rank and file.

The zemstvo rank and file was therefore not as adverse to gradual political changes that would have frustrated members of the Kadet party. Spring Rice reported that the appointment of Goremykin was seen in a good light by the moderates because 'it shows a disposition on behalf of the Emperor to consider the wishes of the representatives of the people, and that the change will probably, and after a short interval, be succeeded by another change of a more liberal character'.[42] Thus the overriding expectation was for gradual change, and not the overnight political change that the Kadets and extreme left advocated, which has been attributed by Ascher as a significant factor in the inability of the first two Dumas to cooperate with the government.[43]

Part of the reasoning behind the need for a gradual implementation of a legislative body was that the tsarist government was not considered to be able to implement major reform independently of the moderate opposition. The government's long history of intransigence meant that often government announcements inspired little confidence. [44] This made the implementation of the Duma especially pertinent to the political modernization of the rest of the Russian population, because of the perceived inability of the bureaucracy to implement any kind of reform that could run counter to their interests. The criticisms leveled at the December 1904 Ukase, which made vague promises of political reform, are particularly indicative of this. In particular, the Ukase was critiqued for not provisioning for redress from arbitrary action of the government, and this was attributed to the fact that it was formulated by bureaucrats.

> But the task of elaborating a scheme for redressing these failings has been entrusted to a committee of bureaucrats who for a long time have held all the power within their own hands, and who will not be ready to relinquish it. It is hardly to be expected that they would knowingly thus undermine their own position and remove the barriers by which their power and authority are maintained.[45]

[41] Manning, *The Crisis of the Old Order*, 70.
[42] TNA, FO 881/8756, no 14, Spring Rice to Grey, 9 May 1906, 26.
[43] Ascher, *The Revolution of 1905* vol. 2, 369.
[44] Verner, *The Crisis of the Russian Autocracy*, 143.
[45] TNA, FO 881/8473, no 3, Hardinge to Lansdowne, 4 January 1905, 2.

This passage reveals the low level of confidence held in the bureaucracy, as the promise of significant reform inspired little hope among the sources of British political intelligence gathering.

Promises of reform by the current government were also seen as transitory at best. The December 1904 Ukase, which promised political reform, clearly inspired little confidence among the opposition.

> [The December Ukase] inspired the conviction that no honest effort will be made to carry out the reforms suggested by his majesty. The barren results of the Emperor's manifesto of 13 February, 1903, are remembered, and it is confidently felt that no more can be expected from the Emperor's more recent pronouncement.[46]

These passages indicate that at the beginning of the revolutionary period, the zemstvo rank and file did not trust the government to fulfill its promises of reform. This qualifies the demands that were made for a representative assembly, because the zemstvo rank and file regarded the government as incapable of implementing wider constitutional reform, which made the convocation of a representative assembly a necessity.

The lack of confidence placed in promises of reform translated into active distrust of the government's commitment to any reform it implemented in the period, and the zemstvo rank and file therefore viewed reform implemented by the government in this period with a level of skepticism. The reaction to the Russian Prime Minister Peter Stolypin's agrarian reforms is particularly indicative of this trend.

> Any proposal which was believed to afford a real remedy would obviously be received with immense relief; but while there are many who believe in Stolypin's good intentions, the country has a greater belief in the power of the bureaucracy to defeat the purpose of every measure of reform, and it cannot be persuaded that an effective cure will be provided by M. Stolypin's or any other 'bureaucratic' government.[47]

The zemstvo rank and file in this particular passage clearly distrusted the government's ability to implement any kind of meaningful reform due to the way in which the bureaucracy prevented reforms being implemented, which led to a belief that the bureaucracy was generally opposed to reforms of a constitutional nature. For example, the decision of the Senate to remove the right of visitation to jails to check for

[46] TNA, FO 881/8473, no 3, Hardinge to Lansdowne, 4 January 1905, 3.
[47] TNA, FO 881/8821, no 97, Nicolson to Grey, 29 October 1906, 101.

unwarranted detention from local officials in 1906 was viewed as fairly typical of the bureaucracy's negative attitude towards reform.

> It is to be feared that there are not many people in Russia who will regard this decision as an impartial interpretation of a legal text; it is likely to be taken merely as an example of that inveterate hostility of the higher Russian governing classes to liberal reforms, which has done so much to bring about the national hatred of the bureaucracy.[48]

Therefore, the proposed restricted assembly was seen by the zemstvo rank and file to be a better vehicle for the implementation of gradual reforms towards a fuller version of constitutionalism because of the government's unwillingness or inability to entertain or implement constitutional reform. Coupled with the support of the zemstvo rank and file for a limited assembly, this further supports the contention that the zemstvo rank and file viewed a Duma elected on the basis of narrow suffrage as a catalyst for the political modernization of the Russian population and political scene.

Part of this modernization involved the eradication of extremist politics from Russian political discourses that were seen as a product of the revolutionary upheavals in Russia. For the zemstvo rank and file, this necessitated the formation of a productive Duma, able to share in the responsibility of legislation in a productive manner. Analysis of political expression on behalf of the zemstvo rank and file indicates that the restricted Duma would provide stability for Russia's interior through productive cooperation with the government, which could only be achieved with a restricted assembly. Writing in the aftermath of the turbulent second Duma, Nicolson stated that opinion among the moderates in the towns and country held that a new Duma with a restricted franchise would be more productive in implementing reform.

> A new Duma, elected under an amended electoral law, is to meet on 14 November, and as the franchise is to be more restricted, it will, according to the views of some, be a more subservient assembly, and in the opinion of others a less revolutionary and more businesslike and constitutional chamber.[49]

A restricted franchise would produce candidates elected from the class of landed proprietors, who were seen as more able to address important questions of reform in a productive fashion. According to Nicolson, 'No one, so far as I have ascertained, defends the existing cumbrous and complicated electoral law, or disputes that it should

[48] TNA, FO 881/8821, no 97, Nicolson to Grey, 29 October 1906, 101.
[49] TNA, FO 881/9034, no 133, Nicolson to Grey, 17 June 1907, 189.

be amended.'[50] Similar conclusions were drawn in the liberal camp, albeit less in favor of restricting the franchise. Paul Miliukov, a key member of the Kadet party and instrumental in the formation of the Union of Liberation, although sticking to the usual Kadet narrative that the landed gentry had done all they could in order to bring about a more restrictive electoral law in order to serve their own interests, did later concede that the large numbers of delegates belonging to the extreme right and left in the second Duma, 'did not favor peaceful parliamentary politics'.[51] The zemstvo rank and file and the Kadet positions can be seen to have been quite similar in this regard.

The zemstvo rank and file's case that the restricted franchise would be more productive also included the examples of the failures of the first two Dumas, by blaming the intransigence of extremist parties and the Kadets for the lack of productivity of the Dumas.

> In its prosecution of the campaign against the government the Duma undoubtedly showed no spirit of compromise and no desire for a truce. The war was unrelenting. In this respect the Constitutional Democrats (or 'Cadets') might have played a useful and participatory part, but their line of action has not been on all occasions worthy of the reputation which many of their chief adherents deservedly enjoy for intelligence, moderation and political capacity.[52]

The Kadets were seen to have been involved in extremist politics because of their reliance on peasant votes in the elections, and their refusal to repudiate revolutionary violence in order to garner more support in the Duma.[53] Therefore, the Duma with its wide franchise was seen as not being able to maintain a working relationship with the government, due to the extremist views that were maintained. To British diplomats, this was seen as a reasonable justification for the disenfranchisement of large sections of the population as early as November 1906. According to O'Beirne, the British commercial attaché, 'Many of the classes disenfranchised would, it is true, probably have voted with the opposition parties, but the advantage gained by disenfranchising them is likely to be outweighed by the exasperation which the measure has produced amongst liberals generally.'[54]

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[50] TNA, FO 881/9034, no 133, Nicolson to Grey, 17 June 1907, 189.
[51] Miliukov, *Political Memoirs*, 144-5.
[52] TNA, FO 881/8756, no 54, Nicolson to Grey, 23 July 1906, 52.
[53] Manning, 'Zemstvo and Revolution', 46.
[54] TNA, FO 881/8934, no 24, O'Beirne to Nicolson, 22 November 1906, 36.

It becomes clear from other reports that the demand for a restrictive assembly was based upon the desire to pacify the country. At the November 1905 zemstvo congress, Spring Rice reported that support for the government was dependent upon the maintenance of a peaceful constitutional monarchy.

> It was first evident that there was a considerable body at the congress who were not disinclined to support the existing government… I understand, however, from an informant who was present at the debates that the inclination of most of the delegates was in reality to support any government which could assure order or the maintenance of the monarchy on a popular and constitutional basis.[55]

For the zemstvo delegates a constitutional form of government was important for the pacification of Russia. Although the zemstvo delegates were not necessarily representative of the rank and file, it is significant that at the November zemstvo congress there was such broad consensus in the political outlook of the delegates. This broad political consensus that the proposed Duma could successfully cooperate with the government for the pacification of Russia was probably pitched at the political leanings of the majority of the zemstvo rank and file.

The zemstvo rank and file regarded the restricted Duma as a temporary measure, and the implementation of universal suffrage as an eventuality, which further supports the argument that the restricted assembly represented a means by which the Russian population could be induced to engage in politics in a modern and constructive manner. Evidence of such attitudes would support the contention that a Duma with a restricted franchise was considered to be a means to develop the political maturity of the population of Russia, and that a restricted franchise was due to the political immaturity of the population, rather than an attempt by the zemstvo rank and file to preserve their positions in the countryside.

In 1905, indications existed at the May zemstvo congress that the peasants should eventually be given direct and universal suffrage. Spring Rice reported that on the question of universal suffrage, a surprising resolution was passed on the necessity of extending the franchise to the peasantry.

> It was held that unless the peasants were invited to take direct part in the new representative institutions, it would be easy for the autocracy and the bureaucracy to call in the aid of the great majority of the Russian people against the new regime;

[55] TNA, FO 881/8669, no 133, Spring Rice to Lansdowne, 29 November 1905, 104.

> secondly, it was maintained that the new regime to be lasting must be based on the people as a whole and not a class; and thirdly, that the regeneration of Russia was impossible unless Russia, as a whole, was invited to take part in it.[56]

While at the same time it is evident that the rank and file of the zemstvos rejected the implementation of universal suffrage in the forthcoming Duma, it was considered imperative that universal suffrage be eventually implemented. This line of reasoning is also evident in Trubetskoi's speech to the throne after the congress, which probably represents a compromise between the values of the rank and file and the zemstvo constitutionalists. Trubetskoi advocated that whilst the zemstvo delegation was not in a position to decide upon the mode of representation at that point, a representative assembly should not become a tool of disunity.

> It is necessary that all your subjects, without grade or distinction, should feel that they are Russian citizens, that no separate parts of the population or classes of the public should be excluded from the national representation and be converted thereby into enemies of the reformed body politic; there must be no persons deprived of rights or of the franchise.[57]

There is a similar desire present in reports of the June 1907 zemstvo congress, even though it was dominated by right-wing factions. The correspondent to *The Times* reported that it was more likely to support a certain popularization of the franchise, although they still supported property qualifications.[58] In light of the evidence that the zemstvo rank and file supported broadening the basis of political participation, the limited extension of the franchise evidenced here should not be viewed as an attempt to restrict the franchise, but a stepping stone to further representation.

The idea that this was backed by self-interest cannot be sustained, because Trubetskoi very clearly stated that the representative assembly should not become a simple instrument of class power. 'Class representation will inevitably produce class discord, even where there is complete absence of it.'[59] While it is clear that at the zemstvo congresses the issue of the extent of the franchise was addressed in vague terms in order to generate maximum consensus among the zemstvo delegates, this passage illustrates that the zemstvo delegates recognized the need to integrate wider elements of society in the political process.

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[56] TNA, FO 881/8580, no 35, Spring Rice to Lansdowne, 24 May 1905, 36.
[57] TNA, FO 881/8580, no 51, Hardinge to Lansdowne, 21 June 1905, 54.
[58] 'Zemstvo Congress in Moscow', *The Times,* 24 June 1907, 6.
[59] TNA, FO 881/8580, no 51, Hardinge to Lansdowne, 21 June 1905, 54.

For the zemstvo rank and file, the Duma represented a part of the process of the political modernization of Russia. The Duma with a restricted franchise represented a mode of political modernization of a peasantry that was generally viewed as politically immature. The proposed Duma represented a stepping stone to further political developments, because further political developments in the revolutionary period were cast in terms of a process towards a fuller constitutionalism. This conclusion is further supported by the belief that was prevalent in zemstvo circles that a Duma with a restricted franchise would play a better role in the pacification of Russia through constructive reform. This would have been an emotive issue for the zemstvo rank and file. Their estates would have been endangered, as well as their dominant positions in the countryside due to the composition of the first two Dumas.[60] Charges of self-interest can be modified by the belief amongst zemstvo circles that a restricted Duma would be a steppingstone to further broadening of the franchise, through evidence of the belief that the entirety of the Russian population should be involved in a future constitutional regime.

Conclusion

Peasant representation in the first two Dumas was therefore seen to be highly detrimental. Due to the restrictions that had been placed upon the peasants' political articulation throughout Russian history, the peasantry were regarded as not possessing sufficient political knowledge or interest to be able to constructively participate in a representative assembly. The manner in which the zemstvo rank and file regarded the Duma as a catalyst for the modernization of the Russian political scene can challenge the assertion that the zemstvo rank and file supported a restricted franchise in line with their class interests. The zemstvo rank and file saw it as a platform to further reform, and regarded a restricted assembly as having a better chance of working constructively with the government. Charges of self-interest can be challenged by looking at how representation was seen as a stabilizing factor in Russian politics, and proposals for the eventuality of a fuller mode of representation are also detectable, showing that the restricted assembly advocated by the rank and file was seen to be a temporary measure.

[60] Manning, 'Zemstvo and Revolution', 48.

These findings could in part be due to the recognition among the landed gentry that in the new period of parliamentary politics they could no longer be seen to be protecting their own exclusive interests.[61] Admittedly, there were certain sections of the zemstvo rank and file who did aggressively lobby the government to exclude the peasants from politics, such as the United Nobility from 1906.[62] However, the implication that the restricted assembly was just a temporary measure, and that a fuller assembly was both a necessity and a reasonable object of more gradual reform can question whether the reactionary attitude of some sections of the zemstvo rank and file is applicable to the wider zemstvo constituency.

In fact, the zemstvo rank and file's goal to use the Duma as a way of modernizing the Russian peasantry's political outlook has a lot in common with the development of Russian liberal thought before the outbreak of the Revolution. Russian liberalism favored the promotion of the freedom of development of individual conscience,[63] and in the previous chapter it was discussed how this was linked to material freedom, hence the zemstvo support for lifting restrictions on the promotion of individual farming. In a similar way, the zemstvo rank and file attempted to facilitate the political development of the peasantry through gradual reforms, regarding overnight wholesale extension of the franchise to be dangerous, given the extreme ideologies that they considered to be permeating the Russian countryside.

The desire to curb the arbitrary actions of the bureaucracy was also a motivating factor in the zemstvo movement to introduce gradual political reform. Historians have pointed out that there existed a division between the landed gentry active in the zemstvos and the members of the bureaucracy along socio-economic lines that, by the beginning of the twentieth century, had become almost unbridgeable.[64] Research into the political disagreements caused by the findings of the 1900 commission into the alteration of the requirements for entrance into the noble estate highlights this process particularly well.[65] This had been exacerbated by Sergei Witte's pursuit of industrial policies as Minister of Finance from 1892 to 1903, that the majority of the landed gentry regarded

[61] Michael Brainerd, 'The Octobrists and the Gentry, 1905-1907: Leaders and Followers?' in L. Haimson (ed.), *The Politics of Rural Russia, 1905-1907* (Ann Arbor: Books in Demand, 1998), 68.
[62] Manning, *The Crisis of the Old Order*, 229; Rawson, 'Rightist Politics in the Revolution of 1905', 101.
[63] Pipes, *Struve: Liberal on the Left*, 293.
[64] Hamburg, *The Politics of the Russian Nobility*, 13-15; Becker, *Nobility and Privilege*, 156.
[65] Mosse Werner 'Bureaucracy and Nobility in Russia at the end of the Nineteenth century', *The Historical Journal* vol. 24, no. 3 (1981), 605.

as being implemented to the detriment of Russian agriculture.[66] Whilst this could have resulted in the development of calls for a representative assembly to act as a check on the policies of the bureaucracy to the benefit of the landed nobility, the inclusion of the peasantry in the proposed system of representative government indicates that the proposed Duma was not based solely upon a power struggle between the bureaucracy and the landed gentry about the future of Russian agrarian policy. The arbitrary action of the government, and the way in which the zemstvo rank and file viewed it as impinging upon the development of a constitutional regime is important, however, and will be addressed in the next two chapters.

[66] Hamburg, 'The Russian Nobility on the Eve of the 1905 Revolution', *Russian Review* vol. 38, no. 3 (1979), 324.

CHAPTER THREE
THE IMPORTANCE OF CIVIL RIGHTS IN THE PROVINCES FOR A CONSTITUTIONAL REGIME

For the zemstvo rank and file, the formation of a civil society under a constitutional regime required more than popular participation in government and the formation of a financially secure and independent peasantry. Change also had to be initiated in government; if one of the main zemstvo arguments against universal suffrage was that the peasantry did not possess the political maturity to be aware of their obligations in a constitutional society, it followed that the government should respect the rights of its citizens and be aware of its obligations towards them. Paul Miliukov, an important member of the Kadets and Zemstvo Constitutionalists, had stated prior to the events of 1905 that in the intercourse of law, the idea of legality 'had been but lately developed in the common consciousness, and until present have remained incomplete.'[1] Charles Hardinge's summary of the opinions at the zemstvo congress in August 1905 while he was the British ambassador to Russia illustrated the perceived importance of these freedoms in the constitutional order that was in the process of being debated both in government and in public.

> The realizations of the intentions of the Emperor is only possible on the express condition of the immediate grant to the whole population of the fundamental rights of citizenship, comprising liberty of speech, freedom of the press, of meeting and discussion, together with the inviolability of the person of every individual.[2]

While the zemstvo congresses were highly vociferous in expounding the importance of civil rights in society, it should be remembered that the conference delegates were not entirely representative of the rank and file of the provincial nobility involved in the zemstvos. The zemstvo rank and file by 1905 had become much more involved with agriculture, and tended to spend more time on their estates and to become more active in local affairs as a result of the increasingly meager government positions that were open to them in St Petersburg.[3] The zemstvo rank and file may also have had different motivations to the Zemstvo Constitutionalists in opposing repression. The use of the 1881 emergency laws was often seen as increasing the power of local officials at the

[1] Miliukov, *Russia and its Crisis*, 20.
[2] TNA, FO 881/8560, no 1, Harding to Lansdowne, 28 August 1905, 3.
[3] Manning, *The Crisis of the Old Order*, 39.

expense of the autonomy of the zemstvos.[4] Such interference from the center was generally resented by the zemstvo rank and file who considered control over local affairs through zemstvos offices as their own political preserve. This difference is important when considering the articulation of an individual's rights in relationship to the government.

As Manning has demonstrated, defense of civil rights barely feature in the records of provincial and district zemstvos, especially after the peasant unrest had peaked in the winter of 1905 to 1906.[5] However, British political intelligence gathering can offer a different perspective on the opinions of the zemstvo rank and file. Rather than studying concrete assertions of the rights of the individual and the obligations of government, criticisms of the repression carried out by the government in the period can be studied to illustrate which rights were perceived to have been violated and the behavior of the government that was deemed acceptable.

Criticisms that originated from the provincial members of the zemstvos would have been rooted in their assumptions about the way in which a government should respect the civil rights of its population in a constitutional setting. Therefore, they offer a unique window onto the opinions of the zemstvo rank and file about the role that civil rights should play in the constitutional regime that they demanded. In particular, analysis of these criticisms can illustrate the importance that the zemstvo rank and file attached to the observance of due process in criminal cases and an independent judiciary, which were key areas that government repression infringed upon. It will then be considered how the widespread infringement of due process was perceived to be detrimental to the development of a constitutional regime by the zemstvo rank and file, through damaging the relationship between the government and the emerging civil society by a lack of observance of such principles in government and in regards to political discussion. The potential brutalization of society through state violence will also be considered in terms of how it was seen to be incompatible with constitutionalism. Answering these questions will reveal the extent that civil rights played in the zemstvo conception of the constitutional regime, and challenge the idea that in the face of large-scale peasant unrest the landowning nobility in the zemstvos

[4] Jonathan Daly, 'On the Significance of Emergency Legislation in Late Imperial Russia', *Slavic Review* vol. 54, no. 3 (1995), 612.
[5] Manning, *The Crisis of the Old Order*, 188.

turned uniformly to reaction and disregard for the rights of the peasants in their localities.

Russian Law and Civil Rights

Among Alexander II's great reforms was a much needed reform to the judicial system in Russia, which before the emancipation had existed as an arm of the administration. Judicial reform in 1864 created an independent judiciary and judicial process, with irremovable judges. The reform also allowed for the principle of equality before the law, public hearings, and Jury trials at the district level.[6] Due to the large numbers of peasants who had been released from seigniorial supervision of serfdom, the administration recognized the need to reform the judicial system to compensate for the new post-emancipation conditions, although Alexander II did not initially envisage an independent judicial system.[7] Theoretically, this reform would have safeguarded the rule of law in Russia because the judicial process was independent of the administration; however the reform did not completely remove the influence of the administration from the operation of justice in Russia, with the result that the concept of the rule of law in Russia was significantly underdeveloped by 1905.

For the majority of the population, the concept of participating in a judicial process separated from the administration was not realized in practice. Peasants were subject to the volost courts that were separate from the new judicial system, and dealt with most civil cases and misdemeanors. However, by 1905 these courts were not completely independent of the judicial system. Legislation in 1889 that created the land captains obliged the judges of the courts to be selected by the land captain, and added more restrictions to the ability of peasants to access the general system of courts.[8] These courts did not always have the result of enforcing the rule of law in the countryside; they often represented a last resort where mediation between the two parties had not been successful, and were also happy to accept the terms of an agreement between the

[6] 'The Judicial Reform of 20 November 1864', in G. Vernadsky (ed.), *A Source Book for Russian History from Early Times to 1917,* vol. 3 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1972), 615.
[7] Richard Wortman, *The Development of Russian Legal Consciousness* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976), 249.
[8] 'The Law Instituting Land Captains, 12 July 1889', in G. Vernadsky (ed.), *A Source Book for Russian History from Early Times to 1917,* vol. 3 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1972), 687-88.

two parties even after the court had passed judgment.[9] Judges were also selected from local communities, and on this basis it has been suggested that they were subject to influences within the community such as bribery or intimidation, and were very rarely legally educated.[10] This suggests that the uniform rule of law would not have been applicable to the majority of the Russian population in the years before 1905.

In the new courts created by the judicial reforms, administrative interference still existed. As a result of Alexander III's counter-reforms, provincial governors could exclude individuals from the list of approved jurors in the provinces without giving an explanation. The property requirements for jury service were also raised to the extent that they excluded the vast majority of the Russian population from sitting on juries.[11]

The Russian government also infringed upon the rule of law through its use of summary justice against its population. This was codified by the emergency regulations of 1881, which enabled the government to place provinces under martial law, which allowed for citizens to be tried before military courts-martial.[12] These powers were used liberally by the police and the military in the period 1905-1907. Although rules were established for the prevention of arbitrary arrest, the police still continued to enjoy the use of preliminary detention and immunities from official responsibility.[13] The activities of the secret police also extensively infringed upon the civil rights of the Russian population. Due to Russia's political and administrative tradition where the Tsar, and by extension his officials, were guided solely by his will, Russian citizens had very few legal comebacks to the actions of the Okhrana such as administrative exile.[14]

A result of the judicial reforms that can be cautiously considered is the development of the knowledge and respect of the rule of law in Russia. Conservative support for the institution of an independent judiciary emerged as a result of a desire to protect the

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[9] Peter Czap, 'Peasant Class Courts and Peasant Customary Justice in Russia, 1861-1912', *Journal of Social History* vol. 1, no. 2 (1967), 163.
[10] Czap, 'Peasant Class Courts', 154.
[11] Alexander Afanas'ev, 'Jurors and Jury Trials in Imperial Russia, 1866-1885', trans. W. Sutherland, in B. Eklof, J. Bushnell, L. Zakharova (eds.), *Russia's Great Reforms 1855-1881* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994), 215.
[12] 'Statute Providing Special Measures for the Maintenance of Order, 14 August 1881', in G. Vernadsky (ed.), *A Source Book for Russian History from Early Times to 1917* vol. 3 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1972), 680.
[13] Wortman, *The Development of Russian Legal Consciousness*, 269.
[14] Dominic Lieven, 'The Security Police, Civil Rights, and the Fate of the Russian Empire, 1855-1917', in O. Crisp and L. Edmondson, (eds.), *Civil Rights in Imperial Russia*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), 257.

nobility in the post-emancipation period, which led to the potential educational impact of the new courts being emphasized due to the role that they could play in spreading respect of justice and due process, and this has also been connected to the effect this had on economic enterprise.[15] The new jury courts system would have provided a forum for such instruction. In the provinces peasants outnumbered other social estates by a ratio of two to one, due in part to absenteeism among other estates.[16] The reformers also considered the importance of customary law in Russia, and therefore introduced the office of the Justice of the Peace in order to bridge the gap between the official law and customary law, by dealing with common petty criminal cases and civil suits with as little formality as possible.[17]

Certainly, the activity of the volost courts indicates that the peasantry in Moscow province had a good understanding of the law. Peasants prosecuting violent crimes under insult statutes followed national legal patterns of punishing insult and defense of honor rather than following local customary judicial practice.[18] The general courts with peasant jurors returned simple and just verdicts, and led to the withdrawal of obsolete and inhumane laws, and this process has been argued to have an important educational impact upon peasant jurors.[19] Due to the laws of 1887 that restricted peasant jurors to only the most wealthy of peasants, it is likely that these individuals would have passed on their experiences to the volost courts and their local communities. In a similar fashion, the courts of the justices of the peace in the countryside have been credited with improving the legal consciousness in Russia, although their office had been replaced by the land captains by Alexander III's reforms.[20]

The arbitrary negation of common law was mainly justified by the state through the use of the 1881 emergency legislation, which stated that provinces could be put under reinforced or extraordinary safeguard, giving governors wide-ranging arbitrary power, and sanctioning the trial of civilians in field-courts-martial. It is important to note that at the time that the laws were first implemented they were not considered epoch

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[15] Wortman, *The Development of Russian Legal Consciousness*, 260.
[16] Afanas'ev, 'Jurors and Jury Trials', 219-223.
[17] Joan Neuberger, 'Popular Legal Cultures: The St Petersburg Mirovi Sud', in B. Eklof, J. Bushnell, L. Zakharova (eds.), *Russia's Great Reforms 1855-1881* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994), 231-2.
[18] Jane Burbank, 'Insult and Punishment in Rural Courts: the Elaboration of Civility in Late Imperial Russia', *Études Rurales* no. 149/150 (1999), 155.
[19] Afanas'ev, 'Jurors and Jury Trials', 227.
[20] Neuberger, 'Popular Legal Cultures', 233.

changing.[21] However, the widespread use of the emergency regulations engendered resentment amongst the intelligentsia. Fuller's statistics have shown that the number of civilian defendants tried in military district courts increased from a total of 308 in 1905 to 4,698 in 1906, and 4,335 in 1907, and these numbers take no account of the action of field courts-martial, the activities of the 'flying detachments' sent to the countryside to quell unrest, and those sent into administrative exile without trial.[22]

The picture that emerges from this overview of the obstacles to the rule of law and the growing legal consciousness of the peasant population in Russia is that the judicial reforms of 1864 were stunted by the manner in which the autocracy was still able to interfere in the application of justice in the countryside, and the amount of judicial activity that occurred outside of the independent courts, such as in military courts-martial. This phenomenon grew out of the incompatibility of the autocratic regime to bestow powers that had previously been the theoretical preserve of the Tsar and his officials. This contention has been supported by Wortman, who has argued that the new legal profession had impinged upon the autocrat's claim to be the sole source and protector of legality.[23]

The Importance of Due Process and Consistent Application of the Law

Analysis of the criticisms of repression emanating from the provinces based upon how repression was inconsistent with the rule of law reveals consistent themes with the ultra-liberal Zemstvo Constitutionalists and the Kadets. In particular the use of the 1881 emergency regulations of reinforced and extraordinary safeguards was opposed on the basis that it contravened the normal operation of law. Secondly, this analysis will show that attempts to subjugate the judiciary to the administration were also opposed upon similar principles. This indicates a different position from prevailing conservative thought in Russia, which rejected the idea of a state based on the rule of law and separate judicial powers.[24]

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[21] Daly, 'On the Significance of Emergency Legislation', 610.
[22] William Fuller, *Civil-Military Conflict in Imperial Russia, 1881-1914* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), 171.
[23] Wortman, *The Development of Legal Consciousness*, 288.
[24] Mikhail Loukianov, 'Conservatives and the 'Renewed Russia', 1907-1914', Slavic Review vol. 61, no. 4 (2002), 766.

Opposition to the arrogation of law was well established amongst the Zemstvo Constitutionalist group by 1905. The last of the eight resolutions that were passed by the August zemstvo congress, described by Henry Cooke, the acting consul at Moscow, as the most complete expression of the political beliefs of the progressive element of the zemstvos to date, called for the recognition of the principle of the inviolability of the person.

> 8. Recognition of the principle that there can be no exception to the principle of inviolability of the person, and of the fundamental rights of Russian citizens, and of moral jurisdiction. (Passed by 80 votes to 44). Removal everywhere of martial law and its equivalents. Non-Admittance of extraordinary military and other courts. Full amnesty for so-called political offenses. Abolition of administrative penalties, etc. Suspension of all now-continuing persecutions of this kind. (Passed unanimously.)[25]

The 44 dissenters for the first point of the eighth resolution did not dissent according to rejection of the principle of there being no exception to the principle of inviolability of the person, rather on the basis of a desire to create a stronger resolution that would carry more weight. According to Cooke,

> The subject of martial law gave rise to some heated discussion, some thinking that the resolution had been weakened rather than strengthened by the adoption of the principle that there could under no circumstances be any justification for the abrogation of the common law.[26]

Therefore, those present at the zemstvo congresses possessed a conception of a civil society where the rights, the inviolability of the person, and the consistent, universal application of law were implemented, and judicial authority was separated from administrative authority. This notion that there could be no justification for the arrogation of common law underpinned the support for the abolition of the death penalty, rather than opposition to the application of the death penalty on principle, which had been debated at the July zemstvo congress.

> Subsequently, the subject of the death penalty, and its too frequent recurrence of late, came under discussion, not so much in itself, as it has no existence under ordinary law, but as an accompaniment of military or martial law, or its equivalents, state of siege, or whatever designation may be applied to the abrogation of common law. A motion condemning the increasing application of the death penalty for political offenses was carried about 2.30 A.M. by 48 votes against 35, the lateness of the hour again probably explaining the falling-off in the number of votes.[27]

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[25] TNA, FO 881/8560, no 47, Cooke to Hardinge, 28 September 1905, 47.
[26] TNA, FO 881/8560, no 47, Cooke to Hardinge, 28 September 1905, 47.
[27] TNA, FO 881/8581, no 68, Cooke to Hardinge, 22 July 1905, 77.

Although this was clearly a divisive issue, there is probably not enough evidence here to ascertain the majority of the zemstvo delegates' attitudes towards the death penalty. What is interesting is that the resolution seems to be designed to be more against the abrogation of common law that occurs when the death penalty was applied, especially in the field courts-martial, so it is clearly aimed at the zemstvo delegates' common opinion that there should be no abrogation of common law.

This sentiment is observable in response to the police attempt to break up the July zemstvo congress by the Moscow police. The zemstvo delegates protested on the grounds that they were private guests at Prince Dolurgov's house, and that, 'The law of the land, and the ipsissima verba of the Emperor cannot be abrogated by police orders or even ministerial circulars.'[28] The zemstvo delegates argued that they were not breaking any laws; therefore their conference could not be arbitrarily broken up, through arbitrary use of repression by the regime.

The concern for the ability to be able to hold political meetings without interference from the authorities was therefore an important part of zemstvo opposition to the arrogation of law. In December 1905, prominent zemstvo activists and members of the Kadet party met the English journalist, W. M. Stead, to discuss a paper published by the latter which extolled the strengths of the October Manifesto. The responses adequately support the point made above. A pertinent example is that of Fedor Rodichev, a liberal landowner and an active member of the Kadets.

> While freedom is being preached to us, the members of the Tiflis town council are being shot at by Cossacks. Does Mr. Stead understand what being flogged in the face is? Here we are safe, of course, for we have an honored foreigner with us; but try to hold a meeting in any other part of this government, and the police will appear and act in a way that England would not have tolerated in the thirteenth century.[29]

This thinking underpinned the political demands made by the Zemstvo Constitutionalists during 1905. Hardinge recorded that the December 1904 Ukase promised reforms that fell far short of the expectations of the zemstvo movement, and responses to it centered on the opinion that the current state of affairs could not continue.

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[28] TNA, FO 881/8581, no 63, Cooke to Hardinge, 20 July 1905, 70.
[29] TNA, FO 881/8560, no 56, Cooke to Hardinge, 3 October 1905, 78.

> It is therein admitted that there has hitherto been no redress from the arbitrary actions of government officials, that there is no equality of treatment before the law, and that there is neither religious liberty nor any freedom of the press.[30]

It is also important to consider the value of an independent judiciary when considering the opposition to the use of arbitrary contravention of common law of the Zemstvo Constitutionalists. The seventh resolution of the August zemstvo congress called for the separation of judicial authority from administrative authority.

> 7. Full separation of judicial from administrative authority, irremovable judges, various-named minor emendations of prevailing judicial customs, and, in general the strictest application of the principle that otherwise than by sentence of an authorized court of law there should be no penalty or exaction of any kind imposed, or any limitation of rights. The death penalty to be abolished forever. (Passed unanimously).[31]

The unanimity of the opposition to the death penalty may well have been due to a wider aversion to the death penalty in Russian politics and the zemstvos. However, the significance that this opposition to the death penalty took on in this instance is its attachment to the resolution that there should be no extra-juridical punishment imposed in Russia, when one of the main manifestations of such punishment was the arbitrary use of violence or the taking of life by the regime. In the period in question, military district courts handed down 781 death sentences to civilians, a huge increase on the preceding three years, which totaled 25.[32] Therefore, the seventh resolution was constructed to challenge the government's use of the 1881 emergency regulation as effectively turning back the clock to pre-1864 standards. This is a significant demand, because it attacked the basis on which the military courts-martial operated, and in so doing underlines the point that the zemstvos in September 1905

Opposition to the abrogation of common law, and the amalgamation of judicial authority and the administration through field courts-martial, was therefore cast in terms of regression by the Zemstvo Constitutionalists. As the above passages have shown, it was considered that for the country to move forward, the constitutional regime should be based upon clear laws and a separate judicial authority and not the arbitrary use of force by the government. An analysis of the criticisms of repression and the predictions of the detrimental effects that it would have in the countryside will further enforce this point. It will also illustrate how the Zemstvo

[30] TNA, FO 881/8473, no. 3, Hardinge to Lansdowne, 4 January 1905, 4.
[31] TNA, FO 881/8560, no 47, Cooke to Hardinge, 28 September 1905, 47.
[32] Fuller, *Civil Military Conflict*, 171.

Constitutionalists and the zemstvo rank and file held closer positions on the use of repression than has been previously thought.

The Importance of the Structure of Constitutionalism

It was considered that the effects on the relationship between the regime and the emerging civil society caused by the negation of common law would create issues when attempting to introduce a constitutional regime. For the zemstvo rank and file, a constitutional regime could not exist side by side with a government that did not act in a constitutional manner. It followed that the modernization that occurred among the population through participation in the Duma must be mirrored through the actions of government. This is particularly observable in two key areas: the manner in which new legislation was drafted, and the attitude of the government towards the freedom of political expression.

In January 1905 the Moscow nobles' assembly presented a note to the central government that, while calling for sweeping reforms to Russian political life, emphasized that, 'these reforms presuppose political freedom, a system of public life based upon law and a properly organized popular representative form of government'.[33] Therefore, for the Moscow nobility, who were typically more liberal and connected to the Zemstvo Constitutionalists than in other provinces, the government operating outside of the bounds of law would retard the implementation of constitutionalist reform.

Such government action that fell outside of the established regulations through which the government could enact legislation, such as those established by the October Manifesto and Fundamental Laws, was therefore heavily criticized on the basis that it did not fall within the rule of law. Peter Durnovo's influential political position at the beginning of 1906 as Minister of the Interior was considered to symbolize the government's attitude towards the limitations imposed upon it by the October Manifesto. Cecil Spring Rice, the British charge d'affaires, commented that there existed a perception that Durnovo had 'lately, on several occasions, carried through certain important proposals (contrary to the conditions laid down in the manifesto),

[33] TNA, FO 881/8473, no. 78, Prince Trubetskoi, Note Presented to the Moscow Province Nobles' Assembly, 21 January 1905, 72.

without reference to the Council or the Prime Minister'.[34] Therefore, backwards ways of running government through emergency laws was connected to a backwards style of ruling, allowing individuals such as Durnovo to bypass legal safeguards.

Respect for the normal operation of law also conversely applied to the action of the Kadet party. The Vyborg Manifesto, composed in response to the dissolution of the first Duma, received little sympathy among the zemstvo rank and file for these reasons. In 1906 Arthur Nicolson, the British ambassador, reported that the Kadets had lost much ground in the central districts, the Vyborg Manifesto receiving a limited reception there due to its avocation of civil disobedience such as the non-payment of taxes and noncompliance with army drafts.[35] This shows that even after the winter of 1905-1906, which featured large scale peasant revolts that were suppressed with considerable brutality, there remained a significant respect for the normal working of the law, which was also extended to the actions of the Kadet party.

Along with insisting that the government act in a legalistic manner, the zemstvo rank and file emphasized that this was especially important in the government's relationship with the expression of political opinion, and this was made clear in demands made in the provinces for the institution of proper freedom of speech. It has already been emphasized that the zemstvo activists attached importance to the formation of a viable citizenry from the mass of peasants in Russia. However, draconian laws on censorship and freedom of the press existed in Russia, which would have restricted the flourishing of free political opinion amongst the mass of peasantry, many of whom were becoming increasingly literate.[36]

The Moscow nobility recognized the need for freedom of speech and political expression in early 1905. In their note to the government in January 1905, they stressed the importance of free speech and a free press in the constitutional regime.

> The absolutism of the bureaucracy has only been able to maintain itself under the regime of a state of siege, and withal a regime of ever-increasing severity. Real freedom of the press, guaranteed and regulated by law, is incompatible with it, in so far as a free press is

[34] TNA, FO 881/8710, no 28, Spring Rice to Grey, 2 January 1906, 38.
[35] TNA, FO 881/8821, no 1, Nicolson to Grey, August 18 1906, 2.
[36] Ben Eklof, 'Peasant Sloth Reconsidered: Strategies of Learning and Education in Russia Before the Revolution', *Journal of Social History* vol. 14, no. 3 (1981), 363.

> the organ of free public opinion, and necessarily bound to facilitate the organization of the forces of society, the creative labors of society.[37]

The right of freedom of speech was seen as especially pertinent to the convocation of the Duma. In stressing the incompatibility of a free press with the autocratic regime, the nobles' association thus emphasized the role that a free press and free speech would play in integrating the wider population into a political community under a constitutional regime. Therefore, the partial alleviation of press laws at the time served to illustrate the abnormality of the situation.

> The beneficial, although as yet extremely inadequate alleviations of the press from censure restrictions, which have been granted of late, only serve to bring into prominence all the abnormality of the general position of the press at the present time under a regime of police censorship: all such freedom as it possesses is now involuntarily turned towards a destructive criticism of the bureaucracy, towards the expression of a protest against bureaucratic caprice of power.[38]

The Taurida nobles' assembly made demands along similar lines to the Moscow Nobles' association, that freedom of speech and political expression was necessary for a constitutional regime.

> The institution of a National Assembly to which representatives of the people are to be elected would be a farce if freedom of speech and discussion and the right of public meeting were denied to the people.[39]

The government action against the freedom of speech and the articulation of political ideas was therefore seen by the zemstvo activists as being detrimental to the formation of a constitutionalist society, and was protested against on this basis. This further reinforces the view that certain freedoms were held to be important for the functioning of a constitutional regime.

Repression and the Brutalization of Society

The use of arbitrary violence by the government in its repressive activities was seen to produce worrying effects upon Russian society's attitude to violence, whether

[37] TNA, FO 881/8473, no. 78, Note Presented to the Moscow Province Nobles' Assembly by Eighty Prominent Nobles of the Province, 21 January 1905, 73.
[38] TNA, FO 881/8473, no. 78, Note Presented to the Moscow Province Nobles' Assembly by Eighty Prominent Nobles of the Province, 21 January 1905, 73.
[39] TNA, FO 881/8560, no 1, Harding to Lansdowne, 28 August 1905, 3.

revolutionary or otherwise. This belief was held by the Kadet party, who believed that the authorities were responsible for the growing use of brute force in public life.[40] A speech in the second Duma by A. V. Maklakov, a Kadet deputy, against the use of military courts-martial employed in the inter-Duma period can illustrate this concern. Maklakov argued that 'the military field-courts beat against the very conception of the state, the conceptions of right and law, and they destroyed the basis of community life and threatened to replace civilized society with a herd of beasts'.[41]

That this was a significant concern for the zemstvo rank and file is likely because the development of the normalization of violence in society contradicted their ideas about the development of a citizenry who were aware of their rights and obligations. Consideration of the ideas expressed by the zemstvo rank and file about the effects that the widespread use of repression would have on society will further inform our understanding of the importance that the zemstvo rank and file attached to the government acting within defined legal frameworks. It is also important to investigate the effect that the repression would have had on fostering grievances against the government, due to the latter's arbitrary use of force and punishment, and the implications that this would have had on a future constitutional regime.

One of the perceived effects of the illegal actions of the government was that political violence was normalized, and even to an extent condoned. Due to the existence of the repression in the regime, for the Moscow nobility in January 1905 it did not follow that the abolition of the emergency regulations would result in a more well-ordered society.

> The attitude of the Russian public towards the death of V. K. von Plehve shows that the plan of terrorization, directed against the regime of police despotism, is not rejected by society at large, an ominous sign, which portends to the old order of things. But this crumbling, internally rotten old order of things must be replaced by some new order.[42]

Therefore, for the Moscow nobility who countersigned this note the repression in Russia had had adverse effects on Russian society, namely that revolutionary violence

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[40] Shmuel Galai, 'The Kadet Question for the Masses', in R. B. McKean, (ed.), *New Perspectives in Modern Russian History: Selected Papers from the Fourth World Congress for Soviet and East European Studies, Harrogate, 1990* (London: Macmillan, 1992), 83.

[41] Miliukov, *Political Memoirs*, 151.

[42] TNA, FO 881/8473, no 78, Note Presented to the Moscow Province Nobles' Assembly by Eighty Prominent Nobles of the Province, 21 January 1905, 72

had not been rejected. Citing the warm reception of the murder of Plehve, the nobility placed the blame for the revolutionary violence in the repressive policy of successive tsarist governments.

Although this could be an expression of discomfort at the memory of a high official being murdered in broad daylight, a similar trend of opinion relating to the effects of repression was observable in how the zemstvo rank and file perceived the rest of Russian society to have sympathy with the perpetrators of revolutionary violence. In November 1906, Spring Rice commented that in Russia the sympathies of society often lay with the victims of repression, regardless of their culpability.

> In Russia it is pretty generally received doctrine that repressive measures must be, and always are, ineffectual; and when disorders of this kind occur, the sympathies of the 'intelligentsia' are given much more largely to the punished malefactors than to their victims.[43]

This represented a normalization of revolutionary violence in the Russian political scene that would go against the zemstvo rank and file's desire for a constitutional society made up of citizens who were aware of their rights and obligations, and engaged in politics in a constructive manner, whilst denying the revolutionaries their support.

These concerns remained pertinent in 1907, because such use of terror by the regime was seen to result in a cycle of retaliation against it in the form of increased revolutionary terror. Nicolson reported that in 1907 the greatest fear in Russian society was that the government would turn back to reaction. Of Peter Stolypin, the Russian Prime Minister from 1906, Nicolson commented that 'I have some fears that he may be somewhat inclined to give too much importance to the efficacy of repressive measures, and be disposed to turn a little towards the side of the reactionaries, who are now an important factor.'[44] Spring Rice also commented that in January 1906, in the wake of large scale peasant unrest and revolutionary uprisings in urban centers, the argument was made by the opposition that the use of repression, 'can only lead to the worst features of the old regime, in which terror was answered by terror'.[45] This is also evident in a report compiled by Spring Rice in March 1906, who stated that although the repression was necessary, the longer it continued the more problems it would create.

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[43] TNA, FO 881/8934, no 7, Wallace to Nicolson, 1 November 1906, 9.
[44] TNA, FO 881/9034, no 4, Nicolson to Grey, 1 January 1907, 9.
[45] TNA, FO 881/8710, no 28, Spring Rice to Grey, 2 January 1906, 38.

> It is clear that the government must continue its present policy, at least in a modified form, for a sudden relaxation would have the most deplorable effects. But the longer its present policy is continued the more dangerous will be the reaction.[46]

Such normalization of violence in the political arena would not have been compatible with the zemstvo conception of a constitutional regime based upon the rule of law, consisting of an individualistic peasantry engaged in constructive politics. It therefore suggests that arbitrary violence on behalf of the regime was seen as detrimental to this development.

Along with a certain acceptance of violence in society, an important perceived side effect of the repression brought about by the government was the long-term grievances against the regime that the arrogation of normal law would bring about. This was viewed as not being constructive, and would not engender the mutual trust through which mutual cooperation between rulers and ruled could exist. Therefore, it is important to consider how the use of the arbitrary use of force by the state was perceived by landowners in Russia's provinces to result in long-term grievances against the government.

A facet of this is the reliance of repression by troops in the countryside, which was criticized by Spring Rice in March 1906.

> But sometimes it was found necessary that the troops act with severity. In some places it is to be feared that Cossack methods for the restoration of quiet have created fresh grievances. Punishment is heavy-handed and indiscriminate, and there have been innocent villages where both sexes have been ill-treated. [47]

This is an acknowledgment that at best repression was merely a quick fix, and that at worst it inflamed grievances and alienated populations from the authorities, contributing to further disorders in the longer term. The futility of repression in the countryside was summarized by Spring Rice in February 1906. 'The country is submitting, and daily telegrams are sent to the Emperor reporting the progress made. The feeling left behind by the cruel measures of repression is likely to be permanent.'[48] This is similar to

[46] TNA, FO 881/8755, no 17, Spring Rice to Grey, 14 March 1906, 39.
[47] TNA, FO 881/8755, no. 22, Smith to Grey, 16 March 1906, 46.
[48] TNA, FO 881/8710, no. 112, Spring Rice to Grey, 14 February 1906, 116.

sentiment recorded by the British vice-consul to Odessa, V. H. Bosanquet, in the province of Kherson in September 1905.

> The opinion was expressed that without the aid of troops the disturbances could not have been checked and might have attained serious proportions. There is little consolation in the reflection that this method of treating the popular disorder may prove in the long run to have aggravated the malady which it was designed to cure.[49]

Bosanquet in September 1905, based on detailed interviews with landowners and zemstvo activists, connected the agrarian movement to the atrophy of authority at that present time in Russia. For Bosanquet, the problem faced by the government was intimately linked to the question of 'How to restore a respect for law and order without leaving behind a permanent root of bitterness'.[50] Therefore, there is evidence that landowners, who would have made up a significant proportion of the zemstvo rank and file, linked the government repression to the development of long-term grievances against the government within the peasant masses.

Long term grievances against the state, resulting from ill-treatment at the hands of Cossacks and the destruction of life and property, in provincial opinion caused problems for the emergence of a constitutional state based upon consent. In March 1906 Spring Rice commented that the uncertainty produced by the repression was leading to exasperation with authority as a result of the lack of the use of law in the countryside.

> There can be no doubt as to the extreme rigor with which the country is now governed. The greater part of the Empire is under exceptional regulation, under which persons suspected of political crimes can be arrested without trial... The uncertainty which prevails everywhere as to the security of life or freedom is causing wide-spread exasperation. It is difficult to believe that this state of things can last for long without a reaction.[51]

Therefore, the government was not considered through its actions to be engaged in garnering the trust from society that would have been necessary to convince the wider population of the sincerity of its reform program. Whether the government was sincere about reform is hotly debated, and historians have pointed towards the conflicting motivations of various groups at court towards the subject of constitutional reform, such as the United Nobility.[52]

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[49] TNA, FO 881/8560, no 48, Bosanquet to Smith, 25 September 1905, 60.
[50] TNA, FO 881/8560, no 48, Bosanquet to Smith, 26 September 1905, 56.
[51] TNA, FO 881/8755, no 37, Spring Rice to Grey, 28 March 1906, 77.
[52] Manning, *The Crisis of the Old Order*, 229.

Government support for reform was likewise not taken for granted in high society, due to the conflicting interests of various factions at court. At the beginning of 1906, when Sergei Witte's position as Prime Minister was becoming more tenuous, Spring Rice reiterated prevailing opinion amongst high society that the most likely appointment of Durnovo in his place would have dire repercussions. 'If Witte alone was allowed to retire, and Durnovo remained in office, the effect in Russia and abroad would be disastrous, for it would be concluded that an era of pure repression was about to be inaugurated.'[53] This lack of trust in government was therefore seen as a product of the government's repressive policies, producing among the zemstvo rank and file a view which supports Verner's assertion that past government repression and broken promises produced a lack of trust in the government.[54]

What becomes clear here is that the arbitrary arrogation of the common law through the use of repression was criticized by the zemstvo rank and file because it would have led to the normalization of violence in Russian politics, which would have not been conducive to the formation of a constitutionalist society. Linked to this, repression would also have not led to the formation of trust between government and society due to the long-term grievances that such violence entailed.

Conclusion

There emerges a clear trend in constitutionalist thought among the zemstvos during the revolutionary period, which supported the notion that the actions of the government should be constrained by legal boundaries. The government breaking legal boundaries and not adhering to clearly defined standards in the way in which it applied repression to the countryside was vociferously criticized by the zemstvo rank and file, in a manner similar to that of the Kadet party and Zemstvo Constitutionalists. However, it is clear that in this analysis repression was criticized on the basis of the violation of the normal operation of law, rather than upon humanitarian principles. This theme was continued in zemstvo opinions on the manner in which the government acted in other areas, such as legislation and its relationship with political discussion and dissension. The government not following legislative procedures outlined in the October Manifesto was seen to be

[53] TNA, FO 881/8756, no 14, Spring Rice to Grey, 9 May 1906, 25.
[54] Verner, *The Crisis of Russian Autocracy*, 143.

especially damaging to the political community as it did not encourage the development of mutual cooperation between the government and the Duma. Similarly, the way in which the government limited political expression and debate within the period was criticized for retarding the development of mutual cooperation with the government, and the development of an informed political community.

The brutalization of society that was perceived to accompany repression was antithetical to the emergence of a regime that placed debate, not violence, at the center of political discourse. Most importantly, repression was seen to generate long-term grievances against the government amongst the peasantry, which was seen to create a level of exasperation against the government, and would not have been conducive to cross cooperation between the state and society.

In emphasizing the importance of the rule of law in government, the zemstvo rank and file argued that repression and government legislation that occurred outside of the boundaries of law and due process, along with the acceptability of political violence that repression entailed, resulted in a breakdown of the structure of public life. Such lack of structure, and the resulting absence of sets of norms in which the government was perceived to act, has been equated with breakdowns of trust in society.[55] The zemstvo rank and file equated the development of these structures of public life that defined standards through which the government could act as being of central importance to the emergence of a constitutional regime based upon the rule of law. This can be seen as equally as important as the modernizing process which the Duma was meant to have on the Russian population. Through setting defined legal standards upon how it could act, the zemstvo rank and file demanded that the government also act as a force for change upon the Russian population, which would result in greater acceptance of the rule of law and mutual respect of the rights of both state and society.

[55] Geoffrey Hosking, 'Trust and Distrust in the USSR: An Overview', *The Slavonic and East European Review* vol. 91, no. 1 (2013), 3.

CHAPTER FOUR
CHANGING ATTITUDES TOWARDS REPRESSION IN THE SOUTHERN PROVINCES: UTILITY VERSUS LONG TERM INSTABILITY

There are very few recorded criticisms among the zemstvo rank and file of the repression carried out by the Russian government in the countryside during the winter of 1905-1906 and beyond, which has led to assertions of the reactionary tendencies of this group in the wake of mass peasant unrest.[1] However, zemstvo meeting minutes and resolutions were designed to appeal to the lowest common denominator of opinion, and were designed to encourage consensus.[2] It is a possibility that this evidence represents a lack of consensus in zemstvo attitudes towards repression in 1906 as opposed to 1905, rather than a uniform shift to reaction.

Investigation into the attitudes of the zemstvos using other sources can be used to explore this conflict of attitudes towards repression that developed during the winter of 1905 and the first half of 1906. Firstly, changes in the zemstvo rank and file's attitudes towards repression on a moral basis will be investigated, to see whether in the face of increased peasant violence the members of the zemstvos were prepared to compromise on their previously held belief in due process and the detrimental effect of violating the latter had in instilling confidence in society and government. Secondly, the perceived utility of the repression will be investigated. Members of the zemstvos were, after all, landed proprietors, and the effectiveness of repression in dealing with the disturbances which would have endangered their property would naturally have been evident in their political discourse. It will then be considered how these two strands of opinion would have created conflict and a lack of consensus in zemstvo resolutions and meetings throughout the period.

A good source for the opinions of landowners regarding the repression carried out by the government is reports compiled by the British vice-consul at Odessa, V. H. Bosanquet, on behalf of the British Foreign Office regarding peasant disturbances in September 1905 and March 1906. As explained in the introduction, he would have been

[1] Manning, *The Crisis of the Old Order*, 188.
[2] Manning, *The Crisis of the Old Order*, 61.

fairly well connected in local high society, and would have had little difficulty assimilating into it where he was not. It is therefore likely that he would have shared the world view of the landowners in connection with the peasant disorders. In his September 1905 report he stated that his sources included landowners, members of local zemstvos in the main, as well as a limited amount of contact with the peasantry.[3] By comparison in March 1906, although he visited more provinces, he was only able to visit the chief towns of the provinces, due to the agrarian unrest, therefore he admitted that his report had more emphasis on information provided by the zemstvos and local administration.[4] It is also likely that some of his information would have come from landowners who had fled their estates for the provincial towns.

The content of Bosanquet's reports also suggests that his principle sources were landed proprietors, as they are permeated with a simplistic explanation of the peasantry's motivations for participating in unrest. For example, in Kiev September 1905, on the arrival of troops, 'mischief was, generally speaking, successfully averted'.[5] The term 'mischief' is indicative of a certain frame of mind in relation to the aspirations of the peasantry, which portrayed their activities to be almost childlike. This view was shared by other British travelers to Russia. Maurice Baring, a British travel writer and correspondent for the *Morning Post*, stated that the Russian peasant was not suited to regular hard work, instead preferring to work in short bursts when necessary, which implies that there existed a perception that the Russian peasant lacked much discipline.

> Again, the Great Russian peasant is convinced above all things the he must make hay while the sun shines, that summer is short, and the time for agricultural labor brief. This leads him to work hard for a short period, to achieve much in a short time, and then do nothing in autumn and winter. The result is that there are no people who are capable of making so sharp an effort during a short time, and no people with so little aptitude for continuous and regular hard work.[6]

As a result, Bosanquet's reports represent a unique source into the opinions of the landowners on the subject of repression in the countryside, and the effect that they thought it would have upon the peasantry.

Bosanquet toured the southern provinces of the Russian Empire, and reported upon the salient facts of the agrarian disturbances. Bosanquet visited 13 provinces in total,

[3] TNA, FO 881/8560, no 48, Bosanquet to Smith, 25 September 1905, 49.
[4] TNA, FO 881/8755, no 22, Bosanquet to Smith, 16 March 1906, 45.
[5] TNA, FO 881/8560, no 48, Bosanquet to Smith, 25 September 1905, 60.
[6] Maurice Baring, *The Russian People* (London: Methuen, 1911), 44.

however direct comparison is only available for the six provinces of Kherson, Kiev, Poltava, Ekaterinoslav, Kharkov, and Saratov. This is because Bosanquet was not able to visit Taurida, Kursk, Orel, Voronezh, and Penza in 1905, and was unable to visit Podolia and Chernigov in 1906. These provinces predominantly fall within Ukraine and not Great Russia, so it is important to recognize the regional basis of these reports.

It is important to consider the agricultural backgrounds of these provinces, as this would have affected the level of peasant poverty that was partly to blame for the peasant disturbances, and thus the context for the landowners' reactions to the government's attempts to repress the peasant movements. In general, the southern provinces were worse hit by the agricultural crisis that sparked the peasant movements than the North, where diversification of agriculture involving the growing of crops such as sugar beets, potatoes, flax and grasses was much more advanced.[7] In comparison, innovation in the southern provinces was hindered by the climate and soil conditions which made agricultural innovation very risky.[8]

The predominant system of farming in the southern provinces was the three field system, which utilized a rotation of different crops and fallow, and was used extensively in Kursk, Orel, Chernigov, and in the north of Saratov and Poltava. In comparison, in Ekaterinoslav, Kherson, Kharkov, Voronezh and the south of Saratov and Poltava, the system of long fallow dominated, where land was utilized until yields fell, which resulted in a larger amount of land left fallow.[9] Both areas were badly affected by the agricultural crisis and the fall in the price of crops, which was manifested in farmers not sticking to their normal crop cycles and leaving less land under fallow, leading to an exhaustion of the land and fall in yields.[10]

Such exhaustion of the land would have been especially devastating in the southern provinces. Many of the former serfs, especially in Poltava and Kharkov, had opted for the pauper's allotment during the emancipation of the serfs that entitled them to only a quarter of their land but excluded them from redemption payments. By 1905, these

[7] Lazar Volin, *A Century of Russian Agriculture: From Alexander II to Khrushchev* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1970), 69.
[8] Friesen, *Rural Revolutions in Southern Ukraine*, 156.
[9] Judith Pallot and Denis Shaw, *Landscape and Settlement in Romanov Russia, 1613-1917* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), 130-131.
[10] Pallot and Shaw, *Landscape and Settlement*, 118.

pauper's allotments were insufficient to support most peasant families.[11] Tensions between large landowners and peasants in the southern provinces were also generally high because, due to a lack of intensification of their agricultural practices, they were largely dependent upon acquiring more land in order to sustain their households.[12] The implications of this are that tensions between peasants and landowners may have been higher than in the rest of Russia where zemstvos existed. However, the widespread nature of the peasant unrest in 1905-1907 indicates that the experience of the southern provinces does have some applicability to the rest of the provinces of Russia with zemstvos.

Criticisms of Repression

The opinions expressed to Bosanquet regarding the suppression of disturbances in both reports indicate two major points. Firstly, criticisms of repression increased from September 1905 to March 1906 in five of the provinces that are comparable, most notably in Poltava, Ekaterinoslav and Saratov. Secondly, in March 1906 there was simultaneously a wider recognition of the utility of repression in quelling violent peasant disorders.

Comparisons of the two reports compiled by Bosanquet show that government repression tended to be criticized more widely in March 1906 than in September 1905. This is significant because it coincided with mass peasant unrest, which has been linked to the development of reactionary tendencies among the zemstvo rank and file. To further explore this significance, the basis upon which repression was criticized by the local zemstvo must be interrogated, as the mere assertion that more criticism was recorded during March 1906 is probably insufficient to draw conclusions from.

Of the southern provinces generally Bosanquet stated that in September 1905 the disorders were subdued by the appearance of dragoons and Cossacks, 'provided with whips, which they used mercilessly when any opposition was offered, and sometimes when no need was apparent. It is believed that in certain cases peasants died under the blows inflicted by the troops, or afterwards in hospital'.[13] Although some of the central

[11] Werner Mosse, *An Economic History of Russia 1856-1914* (London: I. B. Tauris, 1996), 155.
[12] Friesen, *Rural Revolutions in Southern Ukraine*, 226.
[13] TNA, FO 881/8560, no 48, Bosanquet to Smith, 25 September 1905, 49-50.

themes seen here are continued, the authorities are perceived to have acted with greater ferocity in 1906.

> Generally speaking, the punishment inflicted by the Cossacks or dragoons appears to have been very severe, and I was told that in some places peasants had been beaten to death, mutilated, or so seriously injured as to require hospital treatment. Whether such occurrences were numerous I have no evidence to show, but it is to be feared that in various governments the line which divides needful severity from brutality has been overstepped.[14]

Importantly, in 1906 the authorities were characterized as acting in an indiscriminate and arbitrary manner which is not observable in 1905. Consul Charles Smith, of Odessa, in a preface to Bosanquet's report stated that, 'In some places it is to be feared that Cossack methods for the restoration of quiet have created fresh grievances. Punishment is both heavy-handed and indiscriminate, and there are innocent villages where both sexes have been ill-treated.'[15] Comparisons of how Bosanquet characterized the behavior of the authorities in September 1905 and March 1906 shows that in March 1906 the authorities were seen by provincial landowners to have overstepped their remit. Although the brutality of the behavior of the troops was acknowledged in 1905, it is clear that in March 1906 the troops had acted in an unacceptable manner. How government brutality was perceived to have overstepped this line can be investigated by comparing Bosanquet's reports on the individual provinces.

A particularly striking example is the province of Poltava, where Bosanquet found that repression was greeted with approval in September 1905.

> An ordinary form taken by the movement, as explained to me in Poltava, was that the peasants would make a request for grazing land at a certain rent, and, on the refusal of the land-owner, would drive their cattle on to his pastures. Cossacks would be sent and so the matter would end.[16]

He also presented the anecdote that a young land-owner, 'who was a known agitator, had recently been beaten by the Cossacks and arrested, and was then in prison'.[17] Bosanquet's lack of moral judgment as to the actions of the Cossacks in this report indicates a level of approval shown by the local landowners, especially in the case where one of their own had been beaten by the Cossacks. This could be a reflection of

[14] TNA, FO 881/8755, no 22, Bosanquet to Smith, 16 March 1906, 47.
[15] TNA, FO 881/8755, no 22, Smith to Grey, 16 March 1906, 44.
[16] TNA, FO 881/8560, no 48, Bosanquet to Smith, 25 September 1905, 63.
[17] TNA, FO 881/8560, no 48, Bosanquet to Smith, 25 September 1905, 63.

the fact that Poltava had experienced a bad peasant insurrection 3 years prior, so the presence of troops was seen as more acceptable to the landowners in this particular province. This could go towards explaining the disparity between the perceptions of the activities of the troops possessed by the landowners in Poltava and those in Kherson and Kiev. The Kharkov landowners held a similar attitude and Bosanquet was limited to detailing limited examples of where troops had been sent against the peasantry, with no moral judgment attached to their use. For example, on an estate in Sumy district of Kharkov, 'Dragoons were dispatched to the estate and dispersed the rioters, and the disturbances ceased.'[18] Although the lack of further details could be a result of the lack of information Bosanquet was able to gain in this province, it is likely that this reflected less of a rejection of repression on humanitarian grounds due to the prior disturbances in Kharkov.

The significance of these examples from Poltava and Kharkov, where the memory of the 1902 peasant uprising would have been the most recent, is that due process had been followed. Bosanquet's articulation of the general suppression of disorders is thus cast in terms of the Cossacks restoring the landowners' legal property to them, minus the presence of the peasants' cattle. The landowner-come-agitator, although beaten by the Cossacks, had been arrested and imprisoned, as per the due process of law; the Cossacks were also presumably acting within the law to disperse the rioters in the district. Similar attitudes are observable in the provinces of Chernigov and Saratov and show that the lack of criticism of repressive measures was not just a product of the 1902 uprisings. Bosanquet made no mention of the repression that would have occurred there, other than that the disorders, 'were suppressed with the aid of Cossacks and dragoons',[19] although this may be due to the lack of detail that he had for this province.

However, in March 1906, the feeling is very different. Bosanquet described how the peasants in Poltava had been beaten by the Cossacks in various localities, and used the example of an officer named F. V. Filonov's actions in the village of Sorochintsy as a standard for the conduct of the authorities in the province.

> Filonov then assembled the villagers and ordered them on their knees in the snow. He kept the majority of them in this attitude for four and a-half hours, and meanwhile a number of peasants were mercilessly beaten by the Cossacks' nagiaikas, after being struck, in some cases, by Filonov. The Jews were then separated from the Orthodox

[18] TNA, FO 881/8755, no 22, Bosanquet to Smith, 16 March 1906, 65.
[19] TNA, FO 881/8560, no 48, Bosanquet to Smith, 25 September 1905, 66.

> peasants, were ordered to kneel apart from the rest, and were indiscriminately beaten by the Cossacks.[20]

Similarly, in Ekaterinoslav, Bosanquet reported that there had been instances where peasants had been shot without trial, and that the Cossacks 'seem to have flogged the peasants mercilessly, and some of the later were reported to have died from the effects.'[21] The suppression of disorders was seen as equally brutal in Saratov. Cossacks were sent, and 'flogged the peasants mercilessly. I was told of a case where Cossacks... beat the peasants on the soles of their feet so severely that some died and others were taken to hospital.'[22] In the Saratov case, the development of a more scrutiny being applied to repression may have developed from November 1905. The correspondent for *The Times* reported that 'According to news in Saratoff, scores of peasants are brought in as prisoners daily. All bear marks of shocking ill treatment.'[23]

In these three provinces, criticism of repression became much more pronounced in March 1906. The authorities and troops were seen to be less humane, and importantly acted with less regards to law and in a more arbitrary manner. It is therefore clear that in March 1906 government repression was explained in terms of such arbitrary brutality by members of the zemstvos, when they would have had less opportunity to witness it first-hand due to the exodus of landowners to the towns.

In the Kherson and Kiev districts, criticisms of repression were sustained between September 1905 and March 1906, however a similar pattern to the districts of Poltava, Kharkov, and Saratov emerges. In September 1905, troops in Kherson 'were sent to many estates, and the mounted troops on several occasions treated the peasants with great severity'. Bosanquet also presented many other anecdotes of peasants being forced to kneel for hours, and troops shooting peasants.[24] Similarly in Kiev province, Bosanquet stated that for 1905, 'I cannot judge of the general behavior of the troops, but in a number of cases they certainly beat the peasants most mercilessly, and their conduct does not seem to have been always irreproachable.'[25] Perceptions that repression utilized excessive brutality arguably become much more common in 1906, in line with the escalation of the use of troops by the government.

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[20] TNA. FO 881/8755, no 22, Bosanquet to Smith, 16 March 1906, 55.
[21] TNA, FO 881/8755, no 22, Bosanquet to Smith, 16 March 1906, 56.
[22] TNA, FO 881/8755, no 22, Bosanquet to Smith, 16 March 1906, 64.
[23] 'The State of Russia. Serious Agrarian Disturbances.', *The Times*, November 23 1905, 5.
[24] TNA, FO 881/8560, no 48, Bosanquet to Smith, 25 September 1905, 57-8.
[25] TNA, FO 881 /8560, no 48, Bosanquet to Smith, 25 September 1905, 62.

What is observable in both provinces is that although the repression was seen as severe, it was generally cast in terms of restoring the legal order of the countryside. For example, on a Kherson estate the peasants had forced the landowner to sign an agreement that lowered rents and allowed them to be paid in kind, the dismissal of migrant laborers, and reduced rates for tack. Upon the arrival of troops, 'The peasants were compelled to restore the agreement which they had extracted by force, and the acute stage of the movement was over.'[26] In the Demidovka district of Kherson, although the peasants were kept on their knees by the troops, 'They were ordered to give up the ringleaders of the movement and twenty-eight arrests were made.'[27] In these examples the troops were therefore clearly acting to make arrests, and restore stolen property, or evict peasant livestock from private land. A similar pattern is observable in Kiev. For example, the district of Cherkassy witnessed a large amount of arson, which the troops suppressed upon their arrival.[28] The use of troops to restore order was also evident in Vasilkov district. The peasants on two large estates forced laborers from other districts to cease work, and 'In both cases dragoons were summoned for the maintenance of order. In the former case seven arrests were made and probably a far larger number in the latter.'[29] Therefore, in these provinces, it is clear that while repression was seen as being needlessly severe, it generally operated within the law through the arrest of malefactors and the restoration of property.

Repression was much more vociferously opposed in Kiev and Kherson than in March 1906. In Kiev, the news that the Cossacks were coming was enough for the villagers to resort to brutal methods to ensure their own protection. 'According to the story which I heard, when it was known that the Cossacks would be sent, the villagers beat the ringleaders to death and handed other disturbers of the peace over to the authorities.'[30] In Kherson, troops seem to have shot the peasant in an arbitrary manner.

> The arrival of troops limited the area of disturbance. In many places they have beaten the peasants most severely, and I was informed that on that occasion eleven peasants were shot. At an estate near the village of Avilove, where an encounter took place between soldiers and peasants, five of the latter were said to have been killed. Other similar cases may have occurred.[31]

[26] TNA, FO 881/8560, no 48, Bosanquet to Smith, 25 September 1905, 57.
[27] TNA, FO 881/8560, no 48, Bosanquet to Smith, 25 September 1905, 58.
[28] TNA, FO 881/8560, no 48, Bosanquet to Smith, 25 September 1905, 60.
[29] TNA, FO 881/8560, no 48, Bosanquet to Smith, 25 September 1905, 62.
[30] TNA, FO 881/8755, no 22, Bosanquet to Smith, 16 March 1906, 53.
[31] TNA, FO 881/8755, no 22, Bosanquet to Smith, 16 March 1906, 53.

The widespread shooting of peasants in the Kherson district, and the connivance of the Cossacks in brutal peasant vigilantism brings out the assertion made by Smith above that in 1906 government repression was characterized as being much more indiscriminate and arbitrary, which as the preceding chapter has shown was seen by the zemstvo rank and file as not being conducive to the formation of a constitutional regime.

Comparisons of these two reports show that the landowners and zemstvo activists who would have formed the vast majority of Bosanquet's sources became more critical of the repression carried out by the authorities in 1906, although there were some criticisms based upon the methods used by the troops in September 1905. The major difference is a shift towards defining government repression in terms of unbridled ferocity that was carried out in an indiscriminate manner, with little legal precedent other than the use of the 1881 emergency regulations. These observations can be further developed through the analysis of wider political discourse of the 1906 period.

Zemstvo criticisms of repression that are apparent in Bosanquet's reports are also detectable in the wider political discourse of the period, which suggests that these opinions were much more widely held than just the six southern provinces that are comparable from 1905 to 1906. The use of Cossacks in the widespread government repression led to the perception in the towns and cities that the countryside was in a state of anarchy, fueled by the repressive actions of the government, where the rule of law was not recognized. In March 1906, the British charge d'affaires, Cecil Spring Rice, articulated the perception of the impotency of the rule of law in the countryside.

> The government itself seems to be convinced of the necessity of a policy of repression. I am informed that in the provinces the different provincial governors rule their provinces at their discretion. The law is in abeyance, and there is no security for person or freedom.[32]

This perception was obviously so pronounced that the Moscow provincial zemstvo in its March sitting according to Spring Rice, 'demanded the repeal of 'exceptional measures' and the restoration of the 'legal order of things', and their resolution voices, it seems, the sentiment of the country.'[33] This sentiment was recorded by British political

[32] TNA, FO 881/8755, no 17, Spring Rice to Grey, 14 March 1906, 40.
[33] TNA, FO 881/8755, no 17, Spring Rice to Grey, 14 March 1906, 40.

intelligence gathering at a time when political protest against repression by the zemstvos was at low ebb.

A report on the political situation of the country compiled in July 1906 by the British ambassador to Russia, Arthur Nicolson, shows that similar fears were present in regards to the countryside, and that there was a prevailing impression that the government was reverting to old methods of repression outside of legal restrictions to subjugate the countryside.

> At the same time measures are being taken for checking the agitation throughout the country and for the re-establishment of order. It is to be hoped that in the exercise of these measures due moderation will be shown, and that a curb will be placed on the zeal of the local authorities. There are symptoms that some of the evils of the old reactionary system will not have extirpated, and I am afraid that there may be a disposition to recoil too far back.'[34]

According to Nicolson's sources, the local authorities still exhibited certain zeal when it came to repressing disorders in the countryside. This zeal was not viewed positively by the wider population outside of government, because it becomes apparent in this passage that these methods were associated with the old political order. However, it is worth noting that Nicolson in January 1907 was of the opinion that repression of disorders in the countryside had been carried out in a relatively defensible manner. Although he pointed out that innocent people may have been executed by the courts martial he stated that, 'I do not think that, on the whole, their administration of the powers confided to them has been too arbitrarily exercised.'[35]

The demonization of the Cossacks by the liberals supports the contention that government repression created an abeyance of law and order in the countryside. Spring Rice in March 1906 explained their wide use by the government in terms of their loyalty to the throne and their predatory instincts.

> …their known devotion to the throne and the entire want of sympathy with the peasants and the town population, and the certainty that they would obey without hesitation any order giving scope to their predatory instincts .They have been extolled by the reactionary parties as the bulwarks of the autocracy and the saviors of Russia, and vilified by the liberals as the instruments of tyranny and monsters of ferocity.[36]

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[34] TNA, FO 881/8795, no 68, Nicolson to Grey, 21 July 1906, 72.
[35] TNA, FO 881/9034, no 4, Nicolson to Grey, 1 January 1907, 8.
[36] TNA, FO 881/8755, no. 6, Spring Rice to Lansdowne, 1 March 1906, 11.

Such vilification is likely to have been more to do with the manner in which the Cossacks were employed by the government, rather than observation. As already noted, there was a considerable exodus of landowners from the countryside to the towns during the agrarian disturbances for their own safety. Also, it is worth noting that the Cossacks did not always perform their duties willingly. In 1905 instances of Cossacks refusing to carry out repression have been documented, as well as their lack of pride in carrying out repressive duties, and by 1906 there were mutinies in many Cossack regiments.[37] This also applied to the regular army; conflict between the Ministry of War and the Ministry of the Interior has been studied by both Fuller and Bushnell, and has shown that many of the soldiers involved in repression in European Russia had in fact been involved in mutinies following the October Manifesto.[38]

Bosanquet's reports in September 1905 and March 1906 has significant implications for the traditional model of the zemstvo rank and file's shift to the right during the winter of 1905-6, conditioned in part by the rise in peasant unrest. As well as increasing in volume recorded, the criticisms of repression in the southern provinces changed qualitatively between September 1905 and March 1906. Landowner opinion in the provinces of Saratov, Poltava, Kherson, and to a lesser extent Chernigov and Saratov had changed by March 1906 to portray repression as increasingly arbitrary, and going beyond the bounds of what would have been lawfully acceptable, whereas in 1905 repression was seen to have been acting to redress grievances and punish malefactors. While the brutality of the repression was criticized in September 1905 in Kherson and Kiev, criticisms in 1906 reflected the same trends as the previous provinces. Comparison of these findings to the wider political discourse in the period shows the repression was seen to create a state of lawlessness in the countryside.

Although Nicolson's comment in January 1907 could indicate a certain brutalization of informed public opinion towards the repression carried out in the countryside, it could be argued that it was partly influenced by a recognition of the utility of repression in the protection of the stability and assets in the countryside, such as estates, agricultural machinery, and positions of local power and prestige. Although the increase in repression carried out by the authorities in provincial Russia occasioned an increase in

[37] Shane O'Rourke, *Warriors and Peasants: the Don Cossacks in Late Imperial Russia*, (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2000), 44-45
[38] Fuller, *Civil-Military Conflict,* 149-150; John Bushnell, *Mutiny Amid Repression: Russian Soldiers in the Revolution of 1905-1906* (Ann Arbor: U.M.I, 1994), 120-38.

zemstvo protest on points of law, which was mirrored by wider public opinion in 1906, it was also matched by a certain acceptance of the utility of repression in pacifying the countryside.

Recognition of the Utility of Repression

The second significant feature of comparisons of the two reports on the condition of the countryside compiled by Bosanquet is the almost universal acceptance of the utility of using repression to suppress disturbances. This is reflective of the zemstvo rank and files' positions as country proprietors, which was the result of the process by which the landed gentry became more involved in agricultural affairs towards the beginning of the twentieth century.[39] It is conceivable that this agrarian orientation would have created an acceptance of the utility of repression in the role of protecting property and the stability of provincial Russia. How the utility of repression was articulated in both Bosanquet's reports and wider political discourse attributable to the zemstvo rank and file will bring out their conceptualization of a well ordered constitutional society. Therefore, two areas will be addressed; how the troops were seen to be successful at restoring law and order, and how this state of normalcy was defined.

A detailed analysis of the findings that Bosanquet presented for each province finds a general acceptance of the effectiveness of the troops sent to quell disorders. Bosanquet visited eight provinces during 1905 and eleven provinces in 1906, six of which had been visited in 1905. Out of the 19 individual provincial reports thus generated, none criticize the troops of being ineffective and eleven contain acknowledgments of the effectiveness of the troops. Only one provincial report from Kherson in September 1905 alludes to future long-term issues caused by the use of troops to pacify the countryside.[40]

Of the southern provinces generally, Bosanquet commented that repression in both 1905 and in March 1906 had been very effective in both ending and deterring peasant violence. In September 1905, Bosanquet stated that across the southern provinces generally the disorders were subdued rapidly by the appearance of Cossacks and

[39] Manning, *The Crisis of the Old Order*, 39.
[40] TNA, FO 881/8560, no. 48, Bosanquet to Smith, 25 September 1905, 57-58.

dragoons.[41] Similarly, in March 1906 peasants had acted with impunity before the arrival of troops, 'But the arrival of troops, the arrest of large numbers of peasants, and the merciless chastisement inflicted upon the peasants by the Cossacks and dragoons entirely altered their opinion'.[42] Therefore, the prevailing finding's for his reports suggests that repression was generally viewed as effective in the short term.

The troops were praised due to the effect that they had in averting more serious disorders. Reports about this effect of the troops are simplistic, and state very simply that the agrarian movements were halted by the arrival of troops, such as in Kharkov and Poltava, where the police 'acted with effect'.[43] Similar effects of the arrival of troops were recorded in 1906, for example in Kherson, 'The arrival of troops limited the area of disturbance',[44] and that in Poltava the arrival of the Cossacks was enough for the peasants to remember the punishment they received at the hands of the Cossacks three years prior.[45] Out of the eight reports on individual provinces where the effectiveness of repression was not acknowledged, in the provinces of Kharkov, Orel, and Voronezh the peasant disorders had subsided by the time that troops arrived in 1906.[46] Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that repression in these provinces and southern Russia generally was seen by the community of informed opinion to have effectively achieved its aims.

In wider circles of informed public opinion, especially in the towns, similar perceptions are detectable towards the effectiveness of the authorities in repressing the agitation of the far left among the workers. Government arrests and summary execution after trial by court-martial, were presented as effectively quelling armed insurrection. In the aftermath of the most intense insurrections by workers Spring Rice reported that, 'There is yet no sign that the extremists have made any real progress with the army, and the recent arrests seem to have paralyzed the activity of the terrorists.'[47] In particular, the Cossacks, who were vilified for their activities in the countryside, are praised for their effectiveness at putting down demonstrations. In response to calls by the revolutionary party for the inhabitants of St Petersburg to rise up, 'As soon as any meeting was detected in the streets, the Cossacks assembled at the signal of a police whistle and dispersed the crowd. This was affected throughout the day without difficulty or loss of

[41] TNA, FO 881/8560, no 48, Bosanquet to Smith, 25 September 1905, 49.
[42] TNA. FO 881/8755, no 22, Bosanquet to Smith, 16 March 1906, 47.
[43] TNA, FO 881/8560, no 48, Bosanquet to Smith, 25 September 1905, 64.
[44] TNA. FO 881/8755, no 22, Bosanquet to Smith, 16 March 1906, 53.
[45] TNA. FO 881/8755, no 22, Bosanquet to Smith, 16 March 1906, 54.
[46] TNA. FO 881/8755, no 22, Bosanquet to Smith, 16 March 1906, 57-61.
[47] TNA, FO 881/8475, no. 98, Spring Rice to Lansdowne, 25 April 1905, 88.

life.'[48] Positive reports of the repression of strikers and insurrections in the towns are therefore similar to accounts of the effectiveness of repression in the towns.

The Moscow congress of noble marshals in in January 1906 published a resolution that broadly conformed to this undercurrent of opinion. In reference to government repression they stated that, 'These necessary measures must be continued until the turmoil has been suppressed and terminated in order to protect the peaceful population from revolutionary actions and uprisings.'[49] This indicates a further level of universality to the approval expressed by the zemstvo rank and file, as well as the importance of retaining the local and national status quo.

This return to a state of normalcy in the countryside is likely to have been highly sought after by the zemstvo rank and file, whose assets predominantly were located in the countryside. This was acknowledged by the Russian Prime Minister in 1906, Peter Stolypin, in an interview with Nicolson in September.

> He added that the recent zemstvo elections were satisfactory in the sense that the more conservative elements had been returned in the majority of cases, and there were certainly indications that many were anxious to see a return to a more normal condition of affairs.[50]

Although as a senior statesman, and therefore likely to attempt to portray wide domestic support of his policy to foreign dignitaries, Stolypin was also a large landowner and so would have had a good understanding of the preoccupations of that class. This passage therefore suggests that the zemstvo rank and file in September 1906 would have welcomed repressive actions by the government as a means to an end of pacifying the countryside. Viscount Cranley, a military attaché, in a report on the agrarian troubles in July 1906 reported on the optimistic attitude in the provinces regarding the effect of the repression of the winter. 'The peasants have been severely flogged and cowed by the troops, and the cavalry distributed about the various provinces, or ready at hand in case of need, may be sufficient to prevent a general outbreak in the summer.[51] Repression is portrayed here as more of a necessity, in order to preserve the provincial status quo.

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[48] TNA, FO 881/8580, no 28, Spring Rice to Lansdowne, 16 May 1905, 28.
[49] 'Resolutions of the Moscow Congress of Noble Marshals of 11 January 1906', in Gregory Freeze (ed.), *From Supplication to Revolution: a Documentary History of Imperial Russia* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 200.
[50] TNA, FO 881/8821, no 29, Nicolson to Grey, 6 September 1906, 32.
[51] TNA, FO 881/8795, no 66, Cranley to Grey, 31 July 1906, 68.

The similarity between the descriptions of the utility of repression between town and countryside is significant. There is a detectable emphasis on the importance of the restoration of law and order in both the town and countryside, even at the cost of compromising on principles such as the due process of law. Spring Rice's emphasis on the safety of the Emperor is particularly illustrative of this perception.

> The measures of the police against the terrorists appear to have been fairly successful. The Emperor, it is true, continues to be a prisoner at Tsarkoe Seloe, nor will he hold the usual spring review at St. Petersburgh, but members of the Imperial Family are occasionally seen in public, and General Trepoff is still alive.[52]

Therefore, whilst the zemstvo rank and file can be shown to have become more critical of the repression meted out by the regime as the agrarian unrest developed throughout 1905-1907, it is evident that there was a simultaneous recognition of the usefulness of repression in protecting the social order and their assets in the countryside.

The desire for a state of normalcy in the countryside was enough for the practice of landowners hiring and arming guards for their estates to be a noticeable and significant development for the representatives of British interests in Russia. Spring Rice reported details of landowners paying for armed guards for their estates, who, 'through personal interest or by dint of judicious distribution of private funds, have succeeded in obtaining military assistance in quelling trouble among their serfs'.[53] Bosanquet reported a similar movement among the landowners of the southern provinces. 'Other landowners, however, refused to be intimidated, and organized an impromptu guard with such men and means of defense as were available; these proprietors not infrequently were unmolested.'[54] This practice is significant, because it further illustrates the importance that was attached to the maintenance of the landowner's privileged positions in the countryside. Even though the landed nobility had declined in terms of area of land owned from the emancipation to 1905, research has shown that the landed nobility retained a level of dominance in the countryside through access to easy credit and their control of the zemstvos.[55] It also illustrates a desire to return to a state of peaceful law and order in the countryside.

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[52] TNA, FO 881/8580, no 22, Spring Rice to Lansdowne, 10 May 1905, 24.
[53] TNA, FO 881/8710, no. 21, Spring Rice to Grey, December 30 1905, 28.
[54] TNA, FO 881/8560, no 48, Bosanquet to Smith, 25 September 1905, 48.
[55] Emmons, 'The Russian Landed Gentry and Politics', 375-76.

Although government repression was criticized on the basis of its operation outside of the law, it appears that repression was seen to be useful in retaining the existing hierarchy in the countryside. This applied strictly to the short term; in the long term the use of arbitrary repression was associated with alienating the general population from a potential constitutional regime and the perpetuation of violence in society. The fact that even though repression was criticized more vociferously in 1906 the landed nobility still recognized the utility and effectiveness of the troops could be seen as an offshoot of their positions in the countryside. While repression was important in retaining the country hierarchy, the acceptance of its utility also indicates a desire to return the Russian countryside to a state of normal law and order, which would have been particularly important to the zemstvo conception of a constitutional regime.

The Lack of Consensus on Repression

The recognition of the utility of repression in safeguarding property and law in the countryside, when viewed alongside how repression was criticized in 1906, creates an interesting conflict that can in part be used to explain the lack of protest against repression in official zemstvo records in 1906. The usefulness of repression in safeguarding law and the positions of the landed gentry in the countryside conflicted with the principled opposition to the way in which repression contravened the normal operation of law in a constitutional regime, which resulted in a lack of a concrete position against government repression in 1906 that is observable in alternative material on zemstvo political opinions to official zemstvo records. This is demonstrable through analysis of the zemstvo rank and file's support for the government during periods of unrest, which was typically offered on the condition that the government adhered to the rule of law.

Members of the zemstvos, while appreciating the need for repression to pacify the country, did not always support the government unconditionally. This lack of a consensus can be most clearly demonstrated in a summary of the political parties in Russia. The zemstvo delegates were described as 'anxious to find some means of saving their property and position from the impending danger'.[56] This represents some indication of support for repressive measures, especially in the countryside where

[56] TNA, FO 881/8669, no 159, Spring Rice to Lansdowne, 3 December 1905, 134.

landlord property had been threatened. This should be qualified by a subsequent report by Spring Rice in December, who reported that any support for the government, garnered by the utility of repression, did not come on an unconditional basis.

> All were sensible of the fact that the country was drifting into a state of anarchy, and that energetic action was imperative; but only a small minority favored the unconditional support of the government. These were mainly land-owners whose properties were affected by the agrarian disorders.[57]

The evidence from the November zemstvo congress, which was dominated by conflict between the Kadet party and the Octobrists, indicates that although there was an awareness of the need for repression, this did not translate into political support for the government.

In fact, further evidence of the opinions of the zemstvos towards the end of 1905 indicates that support for the government was at a particularly low point. The zemstvo delegates at the November congress, whilst supporting the government in its attempts to instill order on the countryside,

> were filled with apprehension at the idea that they would be on record as endorsing the acts of government. This would... encourage the government to believe that they could do what they liked in the security of finding themselves supported by the representatives of Russian Liberalism.[58]

The *Times* correspondent to Russia also reported that at the November zemstvo congress did not offer its support for the government, and was critical of the governments repressive policies. 'The attack being mainly directed against repression in Poland, the dispatch of aides-de-camp to cope with the agrarian troubles...'[59] Similarly, Spring Rice reported the delegates, whilst betraying distrust for the government, showed a 'reluctance to declare openly against it'.[60] These passages suggest that governmental repression was not completely accepted by the zemstvos, even where it was seen to be necessary. This lack of consensus at zemstvo congresses on the use of field courts-martial was similarly observable at the zemstvo congress in June 1907, which was dominated by the reactionary United Nobility. *The Times* reported that although there

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[57] TNA, FO 881/8669, no 137, Spring Rice to Lansdowne, 1 December 1905, 109.
[58] TNA, FO 881/8669, no 133, Spring Rice to Lansdowne, 29 November 1905, 104.
[59] 'The Condition of Russia. Prospects of Reform, the Zemstvo Congress at Moscow', *The Times,* November 21 1905, 5.
[60] TNA, FO 881/8669, no 159, Spring Rice to Lansdowne, 133.

were many speeches in favor of military courts-martial, 'many moderates opposed their re-imposition, or any appeal to the government to resort to repression'.[61]

This evidence regarding the lack of consensus in zemstvo records indicates that the recognition that repression was a necessity did not on its own engender support for the government. Issues of trust arose from the government's widespread use of repressive measures, which resulted in the belief that the government was insincere about the wider reform of the political system that the zemstvo rank and file was supportive of.

Conclusion

Overall, the zemstvo rank and files' attitudes towards repression demonstrates the importance that was attached to the maintenance of law and order and the exercise of legality by the government, rather than humanitarian concerns about the brutality of repression. In contradiction to Manning's thesis of the shift to the right, the zemstvo rank and file became more critical of government repression during 1906. A significant qualitative shift occurred from 1905 to 1906, whereby repression was condemned by the zemstvo rank and file on the basis of its arbitrary nature and the resulting cessation of the operation of normal law in the countryside. This becomes evident in the southern provinces where approval in 1905 turned to criticism in 1906, and in the provinces where criticisms were sustained from 1905 to 1906. It also finds resonance in the wider political discourse of the period, suggesting that the observable trends in the southern provinces detailed by Bosanquet had a wider applicability. This suggests that the importance of the operation of the due process of law and legal standards took its precedent from the government repression that was unleashed in the countryside.

These findings cannot entirely debunk the model proposed by Manning that peasant disturbances resulted in a reactionary movement amongst the zemstvo rank and file. Other research has shown that the peasant violence did have a certain impetus in the development of reactionary tendencies in both provincial and district zemstvos,[62] and it is clear that criticisms of repression was not usually based upon humanitarian concerns, such as the hardship caused by troops burning down a peasant village. This is further supported by the widespread recognition of the utility of repression in the southern

[61] 'The Zemstvo Congress and Reform', *The Times*, June 27 1907, 5.
[62] Rawson, 'Rightist Politics', 103; Manning, *The Crisis of the Old Order*, 179.

provinces, and how this was very similar to recognitions of the utility of repression in putting down urban strikes and the Moscow insurrection. The way that repression was seen as being useful for protecting the provincial status quo is therefore significant, and certainly could have sown the seeds of reactionary attitudes in the zemstvos. However, the recognition of the short term utility of repression played a wider role in zemstvo protest by creating a lack of consensus on the position to be taken against the government in official outlets of opinion, such as zemstvo minutes and resolutions. This suggests that liberal attitudes that placed importance on the rule of law in the countryside played a much wider role in the opinion of the zemstvo rank and file than has been previously thought.

As I have demonstrated above, the operation of law and due process were important factors in how the Zemstvo Constitutionalists and the rank and file conceptualized constitutional society. Research into the supposed shift to the right indicates that it was a trigger for a wider expression of constitutionalism. Because the impetus for reform came from the repression carried out by the state in the countryside that ignored the operation of common law, zemstvo protest can be viewed as an expression of the zemstvo rank and file attempting to define their relationship with the government in the provinces.

CONCLUSION

The members of the provincial and district zemstvos that were not represented among the members of the Zemstvo Constitutionalists represented a very broad group with many differing political opinions about the fate of Russia's political system. Be that as it may, the preceding investigation into the political opinions of these members of the zemstvo rank and file on the subjects of land, representation, civil rights and repression can be used to reach some conclusions about how this group envisaged a constitutional regime in Russia. These findings will then be considered in light of the thesis of the shift to the right, which has dominated the historiography of the involvement of the zemstvos in politics both during the revolution of 1905-7 and in Russian politics up to the outbreak of the First World War.

The crucial factor behind the political thinking of the members of the zemstvos was their positions in the countryside. As a result, the peasantry figured heavily in the political demands of the zemstvo rank and file. This was clearly demonstrated through the zemstvo rank and file's demands for agrarian reform. Land expropriation was opposed by the zemstvo rank and file due to how they perceived peasant agriculture to be in a state of crisis, due to the lack of respect that the peasant had towards individual initiative and self-reliance in the countryside. The reasons for this were placed on the defective structures of peasant life, such as the commune, and credit institutions. Reform to the countryside was cast in terms of strengthening the self-reliance of the peasantry in order to create an active and engaged citizenry, a goal that betrays similarities with Russian liberal discourses at the time.

The analysis of the zemstvo rank and file's attitudes towards the land question, and the emphasis that they placed upon the fostering of individuality among the peasantry is observable in the arguments that they advanced against the relative weight that the peasantry were given in the electoral system of the first two Dumas. The poorly developed concept of individuality among the peasantry is also evident in the zemstvo rank and file's conception of the peasantry's political sophistication and maturity. Due to the fact that the development of political expression had been hamstrung by restrictions put in place by the state throughout the latter half of the nineteenth century, the zemstvo rank and file believed that the peasantry did not possess the sufficient

political maturity in order to participate constructively in the Duma. The zemstvo rank and file cited the peasantry's perceived use of the Duma as a vehicle to obtain land due to the agricultural crisis as a key indicator of the peasantry's political immaturity. As a result, the zemstvo rank and file believed they became easily influenced by revolutionary parties that had little intention of constructively participating in the Duma, and revolutionary agitators who promised them land.

For the zemstvo rank and file, the Duma represented a different prospect to the Duma envisaged by the Kadet party. Instead of an institution that would make radical reforms, the zemstvo rank and file considered the Duma to represent an institution that would facilitate the process of gradual political modernization of Russia, as well as providing the stability that moderate reform was seen to engender. This is further supported by the concept of universal and direct suffrage, which would greatly favor the peasant population over the landed gentry, being seen as an eventual goal that the process of political modernization would enable. This conflicted directly with Kadet politics, which aimed to force the government's hand through gaining peasant support for their proposals to achieve sweeping reforms overnight.[1]

The modernization of the Russian peasantry was similarly important in concerns raised in the provinces regarding the government's use of arbitrary powers in order to quell unrest. The attitudes of the zemstvo rank and file in the southern provinces demonstrates that the utility of repression was appreciated in instilling order in the countryside. However, the overall picture of the zemstvo rank and file's criticisms of repression indicates that the government's use of arbitrary powers was not seen as conducive to the modernization of Russia's citizenry that agricultural reform and the restricted assembly were to bring about. It damaged the relationship between the government and the rest of the population and discouraged the development of the respect for reciprocal rights and obligations that citizens in a constitutional regime possessed relative to the state. This was brought about by the government ignoring due process and infringing upon the jurisdiction of the independent judiciary through their use of emergency laws that sanctioned the use of military courts martial to try civilians.

This can be further developed by a detailed analysis in the shifting of opinions on the use of repression among the zemstvos of the southern provinces of Russia. Although

[1] Ascher, *The Revolution of 1905* vol. 2, 369.

official zemstvo records suggested that the zemstvos stayed quiet on the issue of repression in 1906, analysis of the successive tours of the southern provinces by the British vice-consul to Odessa, V. H. Bosanquet, indicates that repression was criticized more vociferously in 1906 due to the problems it was likely to cause in the countryside, which had many similarities with the problems that the government's arbitrary violation of civil rights was seen to engender. While the action of troops acting within the law to restore legal order was generally viewed as constructive, troops sent to country districts were commonly criticized for overstepping their remits and acting with unnecessary brutality. The lack of criticism in 1906 in zemstvo records therefore emerged due to a lack of consensus on how repression was viewed by the zemstvos, due to the recognition of the utility of repression in restoring order to the countryside and protecting the privileged positions of the zemstvo rank and file. This lack of consensus is detectable in wider discourses about the applicability of repression to the Russian countryside.

The implications of these findings suggest that the rejection of the Kadet party by the zemstvos was less to do with a turn to reactionary politics than has previously been thought. It is clear that the zemstvos engaged in discourses throughout the revolution as to the shape of constitutionalism in Russia and its implementation. Kadet policies were not beyond the pale politically. This research has shown that the zemstvos supported concepts such as a strong, affluent peasantry, a broad basis of representation, and respect for civil rights. Instead of rejecting liberalism, this research indicates that the zemstvo rank and file possessed a more cautious attitude to the implementation of a constitutional regime due to what they felt to be the weakness of notions of citizenry in the countryside. The zemstvo rank and file differed from the Kadets in terms of the timescale in which they envisaged the reforms could be implemented, favoring gradual reform that would reinforce notions of citizenry in the peasantry, rather than the overnight reform advocated by the Kadets.

This research also suggests that peasant unrest and their engagement in the Duma reinforced the zemstvos' views on the subject of gradual liberal reform, rather than resulting in a rejection of liberalism. This is especially pertinent in the analysis of the zemstvo rank and file's reaction to the widespread arbitrary actions of the Russian government in the period. Even in the face of widespread peasant unrest, which posed imminent danger to their estates, the rank and file largely remained committed to the

concepts of due process and legality. Peasant intransigence in the first two Dumas reinforced the belief that the peasantry were not politically aware enough to participate constructively in the Duma, resulting in calls to restrict the assembly. However, in favoring the maintenance of the Duma rather than its destruction, the zemstvo rank and file was committed to a constitutionalist regime comprised of active citizens that was fundamentally different to pre 1905 standards.

The basis for much of these political demands among the zemstvos stemmed from a patronizing opinion of the peasant population. What therefore emerges is a distorted picture of the peasant population that did not necessarily conform to reality, such as the poor opinion of peasant agricultural techniques, and the detrimental impact of the commune. The peasantry's disinterest in the Duma was also somewhat unfairly highlighted. What this indicates is a sense of group superiority that was pervasive among the landed gentry who were represented in the zemstvos, and not the actual conditions of the Russian countryside.

How far these demands stemmed from self-interest or altruism is complex, and should be viewed in terms of the zemstvo rank and file's socioeconomic background. At the beginning of the twentieth century the zemstvo rank and file became increasingly marginalized, with considerable amounts of noble held land being sold to the peasants, and the increasing number of zemstvo employees threatening their privileged positions in the zemstvos.[2] As a result of the electoral law to the first Dumas the landed gentry in the zemstvos felt increasingly marginalized in a sea of peasant voters.[3] Zemstvo opposition to land expropriation may well have been due to economic self-interest, as well as their opposition to the broadening of the franchise. However, these demands were coupled with proposals to improve the economic wellbeing and political understanding of the peasantry, which indicates that the zemstvos were self-interested only insofar as they regarded themselves to be bastions of citizenship in the countryside, and were open to the idea of an economically strong peasantry aware of their rights and obligations under a constitutionalist regime.

[2] On the loss of land see Hamburg, 'The Russian Nobility on the Eve of the Revoluton', 327; Becker, *Nobility and Privilege*, 29; on the threat of the Third Element, see Manning, *The Crisis of the Old Order*, 193-4.
[3] Emmons, *The Formation of Political Parties*, 103.

The significance of the zemstvo rank and file's commitment to a cautious, modernizing liberalism lies in the potential for the government to cooperate with wider society that the development of liberal political thought among the zemstvos during the revolution of 1905-1907 engendered. Instead of following the lead of the parties of the right, who were suspicious of reforms that curtailed the prerogatives of the monarch, and aimed to constrain the Duma to a purely consultative assembly,[4] the zemstvo rank and file recognized the need for liberal reform. The rejection of major reforms by interests on the right such as the United Nobility has been cited as major reasons for the failure of reform in the period 1907-1914. Peter Stolypin, due to his agrarian policies while serving as the Russian Prime Minister from 1906 to 1911, alienated large groups of landowners, while Waldron has contended that the United Nobility and the Orthodox Church were to blame for the failure of the majority of Stolypin's reform program.[5]

This research can offer a more optimistic picture of the ability of the government to cooperate with groups that have usually been considered to have been opposed to any reformist tendencies in the Russian government. The position of the zemstvo rank and file is arguably comparable to the political position of Stolypin, who attempted to modernize the countryside through the abandonment of the commune, as well as making the Duma more restrictive in order to improve its productivity. The zemstvo rank and file after 1906, although they repudiated the Kadet leadership of their movement, represented a key prospect for the cooperation between civil society and government in Russia up to the First World War.

[4] Peter Waldron, 'Late Imperial Constitutionalism', in I Thatcher (ed.), *Late Imperial Russia; Problems and Prospects: Essays in Honour of R. B. Mckean* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005), 32.
[5] Sarah Badcock, 'Autocracy in Crisis: Nicholas the Last', in I Thatcher (ed.), *Late Imperial Russia; Problems and Prospects: Essays in Honour of R. B. Mckean* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005), 21; Waldron, 'Late Imperial Constitutionalism', 33.

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