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Voluntary Associations and the Russian Autocracy:

The Case of Private Charity

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Among the most striking manifestations of the rapid social changes taking place now in the Soviet Union under Gorbachev is the reemergence, after decades of apparent extinction, of genuine voluntary associations, including organized charity. There has never been a better time to explore the history of these phenomena, which are often overlooked in studies of pre-revolutionary Russia. An examination of the tsarist government's policy towards voluntarism, focusing not on politically challenging movements but on charity, can shed much light on the history of the relationship between the state and voluntary public initiative. While the autocracy's suspicion of voluntarism waxed and waned from the eighteenth through the early twentieth centuries, an underlying and highly significant trend can be discerned. Like the sorcerer's apprentice, the autocracy ended up losing effective control over the voluntarism it had initially, beginning with Catherine II, encouraged Russian society to embrace.

Charity is a particularly good mirror of this trend. First of all, the state seldom showed any concern over whether poor relief in the Empire, public or private, adequately or effectively met existing needs. Its policy on charity, therefore, depended primarily on its attitude at any given time towards voluntarism, rather than its attitudes towards poverty and welfare. Second, private organized charity grew at a very rapid pace from the mid-nineteenth century, forcing the government to patch together some kind of response. This paper examines the conditions imposed by the government on private charitable organizations, and the measures it took to ensure that charities did not stray beyond the boundaries of philanthropy. It seeks to explain why the autocracy, ordinarily so suspicious of autonomous social activity, showed relatively greater tolerance, and at times positive encouragement, of charity. Finally, the history of charity regulation reveals how voluntarism came to overwhelm the policy-making and policing capacities of the autocracy.

Government Regulation of Charity Before the Reform Era

In the pre-emancipation era government policy toward voluntary associations alternated widely between benevolent toleration and categorical repression. The foundations of this vacillating policy were laid during the reign of Catherine II, when secular voluntary associations devoted to charity and similar causes first appeared in Russia.¹ Russian law first acknowledged the possibility of voluntary associations in the 1782 Police Statute (*Ustav Blagochiniia*). This statute granted official protection to legally established associations, while promising prosecution of anyone establishing any society without the knowledge or approval of the police.² No general law on the formation of voluntary associations was issued, nor would one be for more than one hundred years. Catherine's legislation thus inaugurated the tsarist policy of handling voluntary associations on a case-by-case basis.

For most of her reign the Empress tolerated, even encouraged, such initiative.³ This attitude accorded with Catherine's view of herself as Empress-Mother, which amalgamated the traditional imperial philanthropy of previous Russian rulers with the eighteenth-century concept of an enlightened monarch. Her encouragement of voluntarism for the public good was also consistent with her efforts to create a self-governing civil society, as demonstrated by her charters to the nobility and towns. As Isabel de Madariaga has pointed out, Catherine firmly believed that "the government was more enlightened than society."⁴

The Empress was also the leading philanthropist of her day. She set an example for her subjects by establishing a variety of progressive endeavors, from the Free Economic Society to the Moscow and St. Petersburg Foundling Homes. The privileges granted to these societies and institutions signaled Imperial favor towards such endeavors for the public good. The philanthropic institutions welcomed public involvement through donations and, at least for members of the court circle, service on

their boards of directors. Substantial contributors received honorific titles, civil service ranks, and medals; but even more modest donors received the assurance that prayers for their souls would be said perpetually in the institutions' chapels.⁵ The 1775 Statute establishing the social welfare boards (*prikazy obshchestvennogo prizreniia*) specified that they could not obstruct private individuals, societies, villages or towns seeking to establish a charitable institution, provided it conformed to the Statute's rules for that kind of institution.⁶ Although society's response could hardly be considered overwhelming, Catherine's encouragement nonetheless inspired several privately-founded, secular charitable institutions, like a Iaroslavl' orphanage established in 1786.⁷

Not all of the private organized charity in the late eighteenth century resulted from the Empress's direct sponsorship. The flourishing Masonic movement of this period, particularly the activity of N. I. Novikov and his circle in Moscow, can be said to have introduced the idea of secular voluntary associations for philanthropic purposes into Russia. Most of the Masonic charities existed without official permission or charters, but enjoyed government tolerance until the last years of Catherine's rule. Then several developments turned Catherine against the voluntary initiative she had earlier sought to inspire: the outbreak of the French Revolution, the appearance of Alexander Radishchev's condemnation of serfdom and autocracy, *Journey from St. Petersburg to Moscow*, in 1790, Novikov's links to her enemies the Prussians, and her suspicions that he and his friends supported her detested son and heir, the Grand Duke Paul.⁸ In the period of government reaction that followed, Novikov was arrested and his circle of like-minded Masons was disbanded. According to one source, the Free Economic Society was the only voluntary association to survive the repression.⁹

The sprigs of public initiative Catherine had sought to plant survived this radical but, as it turned out, short-lived pruning. Russian educated society was expanding and becoming more Europeanized and sophisticated, providing more fertile conditions for the spontaneous growth of

voluntary associations. Alexander's accession to the throne in 1801 ushered in a return to a policy of encouraging public initiative. Groups of all kinds, from literary circles and charitable societies to the political groups which spawned the Decembrist movement, flourished as never before. The Masonic movement was vigorously revived. Many of these groups, especially the Masonic lodges, existed without official sanction or legal charters. According to one interpretation of government policy at that time, since these associations pursued useful goals, official permission was required only when an association requested special privileges or state subsidies.¹⁰ Alexander's establishment in 1802 of a "Beneficent Society," reorganized as the Imperial Philanthropic Society in 1816, indicated that charitable associations enjoyed Imperial favor. Like Catherine's favorite charities, the Imperial Philanthropic Society and many of the other charitable associations it inspired enjoyed significant privileges and patronage from the ruling family.

What the Tsar giveth, however, the Tsar can take away. During the last years of his reign Alexander became increasingly suspicious of his subjects. Alarmed by the radical political ideas circulating in some groups, in 1822 he issued a decree outlawing Masonic lodges and all other "secret," that is to say unsanctioned, societies.¹¹ Most existing charities were allowed to continue to operate, though with some restrictions. The flourishing growth of organized charity that had characterized the preceding decade came to a virtual halt, however. Even the once-favored Imperial Philanthropic Society became a target of the new repression. Although the Society's activities were innocuous enough, its chairman, Prince A. N. Golitsyn, and some of its other leaders were too closely associated with the Russian Bible Society, western Evangelical religion, Masonry, mysticism and other once modish, now suspect, trends in early nineteenth-century high society. Golitsyn, who had alienated the Orthodox hierarchy and General A. A. Arakcheev, Alexander's closest counselor in the 1820s, was replaced as chairman by one of his principal enemies, the Metropolitan of Novgorod and St. Petersburg. Almost all of the Society's

board members were also replaced, and its *Journal* suspended publication at the end of 1824.¹²

It comes as no surprise that under Nicholas I, the “gendarme of Europe,” the tsarist government clamped down still further on voluntary associations. Less expected, however, is the fate of charitable associations during this period. Alexander’s 1822 decree, confirmed by Nicholas in 1826, ended government toleration of “free,” unsanctioned private associations; now all groups wishing to establish an association had to submit a draft charter to the Committee of Ministers and petition for Imperial approval. Voluntary associations continued to be established, but at a glacial pace. According to one historian, only twenty-five charitable, learned and agricultural societies were confirmed during the entire reign. The *Complete Digest of Laws* for this period mentions only twenty new charitable associations, including six mutual aid societies.¹³

The autocracy’s attitude towards those charitable societies it permitted, however, was generally quite favorable into the 1840s. Official government supervision over charitable societies was fairly limited. The law required them to submit brief annual reports to the Ministry of the Interior. Governors were supposed to ensure that they operated within the bounds of their charters and kept their financial affairs in order.¹⁴ A conflict that arose in 1839 over the distinction between organized charities, as private and voluntary, and state institutions like the social welfare boards, reflects a general hands-off policy. Siding with the Minister of the Interior against the State Controller’s office, the Committee of Ministers exempted private charitable societies and institutions from following the state’s new bookkeeping and auditing rules in their annual reports. Such excessive regulation, the Committee of Ministers feared, might hamper private initiative and “cool the zeal [*okhladit’ userdie*] of private individuals for charity.”¹⁵

Existing evidence suggests that even at this time government supervision could be lax. According to two Ministry of the Interior circulars from 1841, some provincial authorities, without informing the Ministry,

were permitting local groups to organize charitable endeavors such as “tables for the poor,” which provided relief in times of food shortages and high prices. While “rendering all justice to the motives by which the participants in these philanthropic organizations are guided,” the Ministry reminded the governors that they did not have this authority. Moreover, permitting such activities as “tables for the poor” required circumspection, lest they encourage idleness among the poor.¹⁶ Such evidence suggests that, as under Alexander I, an unknown number of private charities existed either with the permission of local authorities alone or without any official sanction at all¹⁷.

Government laxity did not add up to anything resembling freedom of association in Nicolaevan Russia, however. The procedure of petitioning for Imperial permission through first the governor, then the Minister of the Interior, and finally the Committee of Ministers was subject to all the frustrating bureaucratic delays and red tape for which the autocracy in the time of Gogol is so famous. Impeccable social standing and strong connections to influential officials were probably almost essential for obtaining the necessary and advantageous Imperial approval. Many if not most charitable associations in this period enjoyed quasi-official status, reflected in Imperial patronage and subsidies and the dominant presence of the governor, bishop or other local officials.

Nevertheless, the state’s strikingly benevolent attitude towards private charitable initiatives through most of the reign contradicts the usual picture of the highly suspicious, hostile attitude of the drill-master Emperor towards Russian society. What earned charity such a favored position? Like his predecessors (except for Peter the Great), Nicholas probably regarded charity as a useful endeavor deeply grounded in Russian Orthodoxy and historical tradition. The paternalistic social relationships that charity embodied accorded well with the official ideology of Orthodoxy, Autocracy and Nationality. More personal influences were probably also important, namely the extensive charitable work of Nicholas’s mother, the Dowager Empress Maria Feodorovna. Upon her death in 1828, Nicholas

created a special Fourth Section of his own Chancery to administer the charitable and educational institutions she had sponsored. A symbol of both his filial piety and his regard for philanthropy, the Fourth Section grew significantly under Nicholas as other charitable, educational and medical institutions, founded by members of the Imperial family and private individuals, were placed under its jurisdiction. Subsidies from the state treasury and the privileges of state service for employees of the Fourth Section's institutions once again reflected the particular favor charity had long enjoyed in the eyes of Russia's rulers.

The autocracy's benign approach to organized charity came to an end with the outbreak of revolution in Europe in early 1848, however. Declaring that "everyone has the opportunity to give aid to the poor by individual doles or [by contributing to] the social welfare boards," Nicholas ordered a ban on all new charitable associations in March. The ban was not officially lifted until 1859.¹⁸ Yet, the government appears to have applied this restriction only selectively, since a handful of new societies were allowed to open in the early 1850s.¹⁹ In 1853, for example, the government approved the charter for an *obshchina sester miloserdiia* — a community of unmarried and widowed women dedicated to ministering to the poor and sick — in the Liteinyi district of Petersburg.²⁰

The fate of another charity of this era, however, demonstrates that activities tolerated by the autocracy before 1848 became unacceptable after then. Founded in 1846 by Prince V. F. Odoevsky and other Petersburg aristocrats, the Society for Visiting the Poor expanded rapidly in membership and funds. In addition to running several institutions and dispensing money, food and clothing, members visited the homes of poor people to collect information on their needs and worthiness, which it provided to private philanthropists. The success and publicity it enjoyed, and its link with the poor of the capital represented by its files on several thousand needy cases, soon attracted government suspicion. One member recalled the rumors that began to spread about the Society:

conversations began about the fact that under the cover of charity, political designs and plots were concealed in many societies before; that it was difficult to believe that so many people, for the most part busy in service or having other obligations, used their free time to seek out and visit the poor in various slums, in remote quarters of the capital, or sat until late at night in a stuffy office to distribute and dispense other people's money and to seek additional funds, solely out of some kind of philanthropic aim, without any ulterior motive; that, in the absence of any capital reserve, the significant funds which the Society had at its disposal also represented something mysterious.²¹

After 1848, a series of restrictions slowly strangled the Society. First Nicholas deprived it of its autonomy by placing it under the jurisdiction of the Imperial Philanthropic Society. This new relationship, apart from the friction it caused between the directors of both societies, signaled the Petersburg Society's fall from Imperial favor; contributions and membership began to decline. Another blow came in 1852, when a law forbidding military officers and military medical personnel from being members deprived the Society of almost half its membership overnight (from its inception, the Society had allowed only men to join). It was closed for good in 1855.²²

As the tale of the Society for Visiting the Poor illustrates, before the Emancipation the autocracy usually treated the question of voluntary associations on an *ad hoc* basis, in reaction to events or trends originating from below. Far from consistent, this policy vacillated between benevolent tolerance and categorical repression. Individual charitable associations remained vulnerable to government suspicion and arbitrary action, often provoked by outside events. Fortunately for the pre-reform autocracy, society never presented it with a challenge it could not defeat, at least in the short run, for voluntarism in Russia was still in its embryonic stage at mid-century. This situation changed dramatically after the Crimean War. The autocracy faced a growing number of voluntary associations with few useful notions on either how to control or harness them to serve its own purposes.

Loosening the Bonds: the 1860s

The upsurge of voluntary initiative from educated society became apparent as early as the Crimean War.²³ With the end of the War and the more liberal atmosphere introduced by the new Emperor Alexander II, public pressure to organize for various socially useful purposes intensified. According to a Ministry of the Interior report in the early 1860s, the growing trend to form charitable and mutual aid societies was part of a "general propensity [*naklonnost'*] toward the development of associational public activity in all forms and for all kinds of purposes."²⁴ Between 1856 and 1865 at least 85 new charitable societies were established, compared to 33 during the previous decade; more than 750 were founded during the entire reign of Alexander II.²⁵ Some governmental response was clearly needed, if only to maintain control over Russian society's new spirit of "*samodeiatel'nost'*."

The more relaxed policy towards associations under the new Tsar did not arise out of a careful examination of such important questions as the role of voluntarism in an autocratic state, or the relationship between private charity and public assistance. Rather, it again evolved out of a series of *ad hoc* decisions on particular cases. By the end of the 1850s the Ministry of the Interior had received a large number of petitions to establish charitable societies. The elderly Minister of the Interior, Count S. S. Lanskoï, an active participant in organized philanthropy during the reign of Alexander I, persuaded Alexander II in 1859 to grant permission to all the petitions received thus far by the government. This action effectively rescinded the 1848 ban.²⁶

Further relaxation of government policy came during consideration in late 1861 and early 1862 of a petition from Orenburg. In recommending approval for a new charitable society in this town to the Committee of Ministers, Minister of the Interior Valuev expanded on the subject of charitable associations in general. Valuev argued that by being able to investigate the needs of poor families and provide more flexible and in-

formed assistance, private charitable societies acted as a necessary supplement to the social welfare boards, whose activity was limited to impersonal institutions. Moreover, charitable societies relieved the government of a significant part of its responsibility for public relief, while they usually did not seek any financial help from the government. Therefore, Valuev's report claimed, the Ministry should try to cooperate with the founders of such societies as far as possible. The present procedure for confirmation, however, that required Imperial permission for each society after consideration in the Committee of Ministers,

burdens the Government with the examination of superfluous matters while it delays the opening of such organizations, which ... should be encouraged in every possible way by the Government, since their aim is the most beneficent and they make it easier for the government to fulfill its public relief obligations.²⁷

Valuev recommended that the Minister of the Interior be given the authority, after consultation with other pertinent agencies, to grant permission to new charitable associations.²⁸ With the consent of the Committee and Alexander II, the new policy became law at the beginning of 1862.²⁹ Henceforth the Ministry of the Interior approved the charters of most charitable and mutual aid societies, while groups seeking special privileges, the patronage of a member of the Imperial family, or other government favors still had to obtain Imperial permission through the Committee of Ministers.³⁰

The 1862 law had an immediate positive impact on the development of charitable associations in Russia.³¹ Not only did it speed up the bureaucratic process of confirmation (in the first month after it was issued at least nine new charitable societies officially opened),³² but by signalling the government's approval for this kind of voluntarism, the new law also gave additional impetus to public interest in charitable associations. Between 1861 and 1863 alone, the Ministry of the Interior received petitions for official confirmation from forty-three charitable and mutual aid societies.³³ The autocracy followed up on the 1862 law with another issued in 1869, which transferred authority to approve charitable institutions

— orphanages, almshouses, etc. — founded by local governments or private individuals and groups from the Tsar and Committee of Ministers to the Minister of the Interior. In his 1868 report to the Committee of Ministers recommending this new policy, Minister Timashev noted that, like charitable societies, the number of public and private charitable institutions had been growing rapidly in recent years; like his predecessor, he felt the government should encourage this in every possible way.³⁴ In issuing these new laws in 1862 and 1869, the government was reacting favorably to the upsurge in voluntarism stimulated by various social and cultural currents associated with the era of the Great Reforms.³⁵

The autocracy's more lenient attitude towards voluntary associations did not signify that it would dispense permission with an open hand. According to a Ministry of the Interior report for the early 1860s, it continued to follow a cautious policy. All cases where a proposed society "could have any kind of political or social significance" were passed on to the Committee of Ministers or rejected outright. For example, the Ministry denied permission for charitable societies in Vilnius, Zhitomir and Kamenets;³⁶ it was probably particularly sensitive about voluntary associations in these Western border areas after the Polish rebellion in 1863. In fact, the 1862 policy on charitable associations explicitly excluded Russian Poland; there mutual aid and charitable societies continued to need Imperial permission through the Committee of Ministers.³⁷ Finally, mounting numbers of student circles, underground societies and revolutionary movements of the 1860s and 1870s provoked the government to tighten its policies on secret and illegal associations.³⁸

The procedure for confirming privately founded charitable institutions and societies remained unchanged until the end of the century. While the autocracy tolerated voluntary charitable initiative, it did little more to encourage it. Obtaining official permission still entailed taking one's chances in the slow, cautious chancelleries in distant Petersburg. The government's actions on privately organized charity formed part of its general policy towards the role of "society" in the reform period. The

government tolerated, even stimulated voluntary initiative when it shifted the financial burden for some relatively low priority problem, like aiding the Empire's needy and impoverished, from the shoulders of the state treasury to the public. Minister of the Interior Valuev had used the same approach toward the question of improving the material condition of Russia's wretched parish priests: ruling out any state aid to the clergy, his reform commission shifted the burden back to the parish.³⁹ Such a policy suffered from what Gregory Freeze has called an "enervating contradiction in Great Reform politics: the desire to stimulate autonomous social development versus the fear that this initiative might go too far or swerve in an unanticipated, undesirable direction."⁴⁰ While praising charitable activity for its moral virtue and social usefulness, the government tried to ensure that it stayed within safe and innocuous boundaries. Granting complete freedom of action to Russian society remained out of the question.

The Introduction of Model Charters

The same spirit inspired the government's next relaxation of the procedure for confirming private charities. Seeking at the same time to encourage and control voluntary initiative, the autocracy issued model charters for a number of different kinds of associations and institutions serving the public good in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, including model charters for several kinds of charitable societies and institutions.⁴¹ In most cases draft charters for new societies or institutions that conformed to a model charter needed only the local governor's approval, instead of the Ministry's.⁴²

In adopting model charters for charities in the 1890s, the government, as before in the 1860s, was mainly reacting to external developments.

Spurred by such factors as the 1891 famine and the rapid rise in the urban population, Russian society's interest in poverty and poor relief swelled dramatically. The late 1880s and 1890s saw the emergence of a group of energetic charity reformers inside and outside government, new journals on charity, and welfare reform movements.⁴³ Voluntarism, too, reached new heights in the 1890s, flooding Ministry offices with petitions and draft charters for charitable as well as other societies. More than 500 new charitable societies were founded between 1891 and 1895, double the number that opened in the previous half decade; and between 1896 and 1900, the number of newly chartered charitable associations doubled again, to more than 1,100.⁴⁴

This new interest carried into the government, which in late 1892 established the first commission ever to examine and attempt to reform the chaotic Russian poor law. The Grot Commission, as it was called, which endorsed the idea of model charters, aroused the Ministry of the Interior's interest in private charitable activity to a level never matched before or after this time. On the one hand, the government wished to facilitate what it regarded, at least in most cases, as a commendable social initiative. On the other hand, the task of processing the mass of diverse, often poorly drafted charters was straining the bureaucracy to the limit. Devolution of authority to governors and standardization of the rules for individual charters accommodated both the pressure from below and the need for government supervision.

The question of model charters first arose in the Ministry of Education. One of the most popular types of charitable association in the Empire was the society to aid needy students, usually established at a particular educational institution. Recognizing the poverty that afflicted many students, the Ministry encouraged the involvement of the local public in assisting them.⁴⁵ Drafting the first model charter for this kind of association required the joint efforts of this Ministry and the Ministry of the Interior, particularly its Department of Police and censorship office, and consultations with the Synod as well. Issued in late 1894 and printed in the

government's official newspaper as well as circulated to governors, it standardized the rights and restrictions under which these societies could operate, without granting authority for confirmation to the governors.⁴⁶

In 1897 the initiative for issuing model charters shifted to the Ministry of the Interior, thanks in large part to the presence of Evgenii Maksimov, an expert on poor relief, as head of a newly created section on charity and public relief in the Economic Department. A Department report to the Minister signed by him and fellow Grot Commission member Ivan Kabat argued the need for a standardized charter for general-purpose (*obshcheblagotvoritel'nye*) charitable societies. In recent years, they reported, the numbers of this kind of society had rapidly grown, until they were the most common type of society and, during the previous year, constituted almost half of the one hundred charters confirmed by the Ministry. Unfortunately, the great majority of the draft charters for these societies submitted to the Ministry were "extremely unsatisfactory." They reflected their founders' complete ignorance of government regulations, how to organize an association, and how to give effective charitable assistance.⁴⁷ Elsewhere Maksimov also cited the "shortage of personnel" in the central bureaucracy and the tedious communications among departments provoked by the diverse and poorly conceived charters, which hampered and delayed the opening of charitable societies.⁴⁸ The Economic Department offered similar arguments later in the year for a revised version of the model charter for societies to aid needy students, which constituted a third of the charitable associations then under the Ministry of the Interior's jurisdiction.⁴⁹ In the view of the government, then, model charters promised to benefit both the bureaucracy and the public.

Model charters for general-purpose societies (*obshchestva posobiia bednym*) and societies to aid needy students received the approval of the Minister of the Interior and, in the latter case, the Ministry of Education and the Synod as well, in June and November, 1897, respectively.⁵⁰ In both cases authority for approving proposed societies that adopted one or

the other charter was transferred to the governors, who were required to inform the Ministry of new societies and send it their charters. Groups wishing to found a society that did not conform to the model charter still had to seek the permission of the Minister of the Interior.

Some years later, a prominent charity activist complained that the model charters were not published separately in a form widely accessible to the public.⁵¹ Indeed, only routine efforts appear to have been made to disseminate them. Copies were sent to governors and governors-general, of course. The official newspaper *Pravitel'stvennyi vestnik* published them, and copies of the charter for general-purpose societies also appeared, with the Ministry's circular to governors explaining the new procedure, in the two charity journals published at this time. Several years after the charters were issued, the author of a guide to establishing voluntary societies cited the public's ignorance of government rules as his major motive for publishing his book.⁵²

Somehow, though, people did learn of the charters, even in remote corners of the Empire, and they seized the opportunity the new procedure presented. Charitable societies were established in unprecedented numbers. According to governors' reports that flooded the Ministry of the Interior, almost one hundred general-purpose societies and almost fifty societies aiding students opened in 1898 alone, in places as distant and dissimilar as Brest-Litovsk and the island of Sakhalin.⁵³ The founders of a Society for Aid to the Poor in Saratov, for example, greeted the new procedure as ensuring both rapid government confirmation and more effective charitable giving.⁵⁴ Similar numbers of societies using the model charters were opened in 1899. The number of new societies reported by governors to the Ministry had diminished by 1903 and 1904 – perhaps a reflection of declining interest in the model charters, but possibly an indication of the lax attitude of many governors towards their responsibilities.⁵⁵ Nevertheless, approximately 1,700 new charitable associations opened between 1896 and the early 1900s, almost half of the more than 4,000 charitable societies that existed by the early twentieth century.⁵⁶

Evidently the government viewed model charters as a big success, for it produced a steady stream of them between 1897 and as late as 1916.⁵⁷ Charters were issued for several types of specialized charitable organizations and a broad variety of mutual aid societies and cooperatives. Even groups wishing to found temperance societies or a singing or bicycle club could find a helpful government model charter.

The model charters for charities (and most other kinds of associations as well) tried to meet two contradictory ends. Seeking to encourage voluntary initiative, the charters tried to provide societies with the autonomy considered so vital to organized charity. At the same time, they included rules to ensure that societies operated in conformity with the government's own interests. Organized charity (or temperance or bicycling) was fine, provided it did not stray into either criminal or politically suspect activities.

The provisions in the 1897 model charters were based on general rules for associations approved by the Minister of the Interior in April of 1897 for the purpose of guiding his subordinates in their examinations of charters submitted for Ministerial confirmation, and eliminating confusion among agencies over what these charters should contain. The 1897 rules reveal what aspects of private association caused the government the most concern.⁵⁸ One of the most sensitive issues was membership. According to the 1897 rules and the model charters, the following groups could not join associations: soldiers on active duty and cadets, people deprived of their rights or exiled by judicial or administrative decision (some exceptions were allowed in the case of exiles, who constituted a large part of the population of some Siberian towns), and minors and schoolchildren. Some disagreement arose about the latter, and an exception was made for charities; while closing membership to students in military or religious schools, the charters permitted other children and youths to join if that served the purpose of the society. They had to obtain the consent of their parents and school, however, and could not to serve on the board of directors or vote at meetings of the general assembly of members.⁵⁹

A second potential problem concerned fraud or mismanagement in finances and fundraising. The model charters permitted charities to use a wide range of sources for funds, including dues, income from property, donations and bequests, state or local subsidies if allocated, and charity benefits of all kinds. As dictated by the 1897 rules for associations, however, all public fund-raising events, from subscription drives and lotteries to literary or theatrical soirees, had to receive permission from the local police and follow the Department of Police's rules for such events.⁶⁰ The charters also outlined how societies should handle their funds, even to dictating minimum amounts for dues and how their capital must be invested.

Finally, the rules and charters were alert to any potential use of a voluntary association for illegal purposes. Societies were required to inform the local police of the "day, hour, place and subject" of every meeting of the general assembly of members, which of course could discuss only subjects directly related to the society's activity. Placed under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of the Interior, charitable societies, like most others, were required to submit annual reports to it.⁶¹ Whenever a governor suspected subversive activity or a threat to "public safety or morality," the Ministry could close any meeting of a society and suspend its operations.⁶² The question of who had the authority to close a society — the Governor, the Minister of the Interior, or the Committee of Ministers — aroused some confusion, however. The provision in the 1897 rules and the model charters is ambiguous, but seems to imply that this was the right of the Minister of the Interior. In a report written in March 1905, the Ministry's Main Administration on Matters of Local Economy insisted that by law only the Committee of Ministers could order a private society closed; but the report also acknowledged that in practice governors had been closing societies upon their own authority.⁶³

In other respects the model charters offered charitable societies considerable latitude and autonomy. With the exception of the proscribed groups mentioned above, membership could be open or restricted to

people of either sex and any rank, occupation or religion. The model charter for general-purpose societies also allowed them to limit their aid to poor people of one sex or religion, or to a certain needy group. (Societies to aid needy students in most cases gave assistance to students at a particular institution.) The Empire's non-Russian minorities, particularly the Jewish population, did not hesitate to take advantage of these provisions. Almost one half of the societies opening in 1898, for example, were Jewish charities. Catholics, Lutherans and Muslims, too, used the model charters to establish charities for fellow believers.⁶⁴

In the case of general-purpose societies, the model charter's sections defining a society's purpose and charitable work offered founders considerable latitude to design methods of aid as they wished. As long as they obtained government permission, societies could open a variety of charitable institutions. At the same time, the model charter included an optional section on how to "individualize" assistance by organizing district guardianships (*popечitel'stva*) to investigate needy cases, thus attempting to persuade charities to adopt modern, rational techniques.

Evidently the Ministry did not place much faith Russians' knowledge and experience of voluntary associations, however, for the model charters spelled out in detail how a society should be governed. Ultimate authority was vested in the general assembly of members. Meeting at least once a year, the general assembly approved the society's annual reports and budget, elected the board of directors, and decided other matters of major importance like the acquisition of property. (Societies based on the model charters could own property and exercise the rights of juridical personality.) The board of directors, not the membership at large, elected the society's chairman, vice-chairman, secretary and treasurer, and ran its day-to-day operations. The charters also spelled out the responsibilities of the officers, set the size of quorums, and explained the procedure for closing the society.

In the opinion of both pre-revolutionary and Soviet scholars, the model charters contributed little to expanding Russian society's right of

association. One Soviet writer has characterized them as a “reliable instrument” which enabled the autocracy to hold public initiative under “unremitting control.”⁶⁵ While the founders of a society that adopted a model charter now needed to travel only as far as the provincial governor’s office, they were not guaranteed automatic confirmation. Local and central authorities still had complete discretion to refuse permission, without having to explain their reasons to the founders.⁶⁶ Moreover, despite the confusion over which branch of the government had the authority to close a society once and for all, the governor’s right to close down meetings and force a society to suspend its operations reinforced the power of the local administration over private initiative.

Balanced against this negative assessment, however, is the autocracy’s general approval of “socially useful” associations like charities, reflected most strongly in the pro-charity bias of bureaucrats Maksimov and Kabat, the authors of the model charters. Furthermore, Russians were inexperienced (through no fault of their own, one might add) in the skills of organizing and running an association, and arguably needed some guidance. Some groups were probably frustrated by the constraints the model charters imposed. In general, however, the popular model charters contributed greatly to the surge of voluntarism that characterized late Imperial Russian society.

Regulating and Monitoring Private Charity

Charitable organizations before 1905 were subject not only to the provisions of their charters, but also to laws and regulations governing private charity. Some laws clearly aimed at encouraging charitable giving. Others, seeking to supervise the finances and activities of organized charity, were often honored in the breach. However vexatious some

government regulations must have been, they do not seem to have erected serious obstacles to the beneficent impulses of most Russian subjects.

According to civil law, Russians were free to donate or bequeath property for charitable purposes, and to designate the specific uses of their donations. Some government agencies and institutions, like the social welfare boards, had to receive government permission to accept a contribution, but zemstvos and town governments did not. The Ministries were supposed to keep records of donations, and to bring particularly significant ones to the attention of the Tsar, who might grant special recognition to the donor.⁶⁷ An archaic law, still on the books in the late nineteenth century, imposed one curious restriction. Before a donation could be accepted, the donor's character had to be investigated, "since depraved [*porochnye*] people can make a gift with the aim of receiving an award from the government, and thus cover their previous deeds in order to be compared with outstanding people in society." Donations from people with a shady past, therefore, could not be accepted.⁶⁸ It seems unlikely that this law was consistently enforced, however, and in 1905 the Senate decided that it did not apply to people who made donations to zemstvos.⁶⁹

The law also guaranteed to donors that their gifts would be implemented according to their intentions. The original designation of a donation could be changed only with the permission of the donor or, if he were dead, the Tsar.⁷⁰ The government considered this guarantee necessary for maintaining the flow of donations, which was critical since donations constituted the single largest source of funds for poor relief in the Empire. Problems naturally arose, as when bequests became outdated, or relatives contested a will, or a bequest named no specific beneficiary; then, the courts or civil authorities sometimes took over. One writer, observing a decline in charitable bequests in 1910, blamed it on inadequate protection of donors' interests.⁷¹ Nevertheless, the government appears to have taken its duty to donors seriously. In 1902, for example, the Economic Department turned down a petition from the town council of

Poshekhon'ia to use more than 25,000 rubles, originally donated to pay state taxes for poor town residents, to establish a school. "Steadfast observance of the will of donors," it wrote, "is especially necessary since a lack of confidence by donors in the fulfillment of their will can result in decreasing contributions for charitable needs."⁷²

Charitable organizations also enjoyed certain tax privileges. Property donated or bequeathed to charitable, religious and other socially useful organizations, or to the state or local government for charitable or educational purposes, was free from gift and inheritance taxes.⁷³ Charities were also exempt from the stamp tax (*gerbovyi sbor*), and those supported by the central or local government had franking privileges.⁷⁴ The social welfare boards, local governments, children's asylums and a number of privileged charities, like the Imperial Philanthropic Society and the Red Cross, did not have to pay purchase taxes (*krepostnye poshliny*) on property purchased for their charitable institutions.⁷⁵ Private charitable societies and institutions enjoyed the rights, granted in their individual charters, of property ownership and juridical personality.⁷⁶

By law all charities were supposed to submit annual reports to the Ministry of the Interior.⁷⁷ The Ministry encountered repeated difficulties in trying to enforce this law, however. Circulars to governors in 1867, 1873 and 1877 reminded them of their duty to enforce this obligation, which, the Ministry found, many societies continued to ignore.⁷⁸ The Ministry's concern over violations of this law intensified in the 1890s. In early 1892, in the midst of the famine, the Ministry ordered governors to collect the reports of all charities in their provinces and send them to the Ministry.⁷⁹ Compliance with this order seems once again to have been lax; one of the greatest obstacles the Grot Commission on Poor Law Reform encountered was the lack of information on the state of charity in the Empire. Nor did additional reminders in 1897 yield significant results.⁸⁰

In 1898 the Economic Department issued special printed forms for the reports, and ruled that the completed forms must be submitted, in Russian

only, no later than six months following the report year.⁸¹ The Ministry soon discovered, however, that even when charities used the new forms, they allowed themselves considerable latitude in how and what to report.⁸² A 1902 circular complained that societies and institutions were sending in their reports only after long delays, which prevented the Ministry from keeping accurate and complete information on private charity. This time the Ministry asked governors to warn charities that by neglecting to submit timely reports they were violating the law, and could be closed.⁸³ As more and more private societies and institutions opened every year, the situation clearly threatened to get out of hand, with the Ministry unable to keep any accurate records. According to one source, an investigation at the Ministry in 1904 discovered that only half of all charitable societies had turned in reports.⁸⁴

There seems to have been no one reason why so many private charities failed to submit their annual reports, even under threat of being closed. When the governor of Eniseisk and the commandant of St. Petersburg questioned societies and institutions that owed reports, they unearthed a variety of excuses. Some associations replied that the law did not pertain to them, because their charters did not mention it, or they served other purposes than charity, or their funds came entirely from one philanthropist. Others explained that their report was still at the printer's, or had not yet been presented to the general assembly of members, or the officers were away on summer vacations. Whatever the excuse or pretext, these charities do not seem to have taken the law very seriously, and in some cases jealously guarded their autonomy from close government scrutiny.⁸⁵

Other government regulations on charities related to specific aspects of their operation. Generally charitable associations did not enjoy the freedom to open an institution or other kind of enterprise whenever or however they wished; they had to obtain official permission for each new enterprise and obey existing government regulations, for example on public reading rooms. One particularly anachronistic law required a

newly founded private charitable institution to adhere to the rules for that kind of institution in the Statute on Public Assistance. Most of these rules on almshouses, orphanages, etc. dated from the creation of the social welfare boards in 1775; the Statute contained no rules on more modern types of institutions.⁸⁶ Another law, dating from 1817 and also never repealed, stated that a charitable institution could not open until it possessed all the funds necessary to support it, without relying on "lotteries and other accidental and uncertain revenues."⁸⁷

Both laws were usually honored in the breach. According to Maksimov, most charitable institutions only came into being by counting on lotteries and other "accidental and uncertain" sources of funds, without necessarily having amassed enough capital to ensure their permanent existence. Originally, it seems, these laws had been intended as much to guide a population inexperienced in voluntary action as to constrain it. Regardless of whether they were consistently enforced, however, the continued existence of such obsolete regulations, in Maksimov's opinion, hindered private initiative, especially the development of innovative types of institutions adapted to diverse local needs.⁸⁸

Public assemblies of various kinds, organized by charities to raise funds, caused the government particular headaches. Russian law required individuals and societies to obtain permission from the local police for every concert, theatrical, ball or other public event. This restriction evidently did not prevent people from using charitable events as covers for political meetings, however. The frequency of this practice is unknown, but on occasion it aroused considerable alarm. In 1882, when the autocracy was still haunted by the assassination of Alexander II and the seemingly ubiquitous power of the People's Will terrorist organization (then in fact greatly weakened), the Department of Police issued a stern circular to the provincial governors. Charity fund-raising events, it warned, were being used "very often" to disguise attempts to collect funds for "criminal", revolutionary purposes. Governors were ordered to follow new rules for the operation of public performances for charity, which

included making a special appointee of the governor responsible for disbursing all the net proceeds to the intended beneficiaries. In addition, students were forbidden to organize public events. The government thus hoped to prevent the use of charity benefits to raise money for revolutionaries, political prisoners or exiles.⁸⁹

Subsequent police circulars tell a familiar story of government ineffectualness and frustration. The local authorities, charged the Department of Police in 1887, had not taken the earlier warnings and prohibitions seriously, and were granting permission for public events too readily. Money was still falling into the hands of “revolutionary agitators” because university students were being allowed to organize associations (*zemliachestva* — societies of people from the same area) and benefits, ostensibly for charity but in fact to raise money for political prisoners and exiles. Often, to get permission for the fund-raising events, they obtained the cooperation of a prominent, politically reliable citizen to provide the necessary cover to deceive the police.⁹⁰ A third circular in 1889 warned of charity benefits being used to raise funds for Jews and other political unreliaables to finance their studies abroad, where they became infected with revolutionary ideas.⁹¹ In 1901 and again in 1904 the police renewed their criticisms of governors for “frequently” ignoring the 1882 rules and maintaining lax supervision over private societies. Circulars warned of the necessity of strict vigilance over charity benefits and all other activities of private societies.⁹²

The tsarist police also feared that public charity benefits, if not strictly regulated, could provide a platform for oppositionist propaganda as well as a cover for raising funds for revolutionaries. In 1895 the Department of Police wrote to the Economic Department urging that all charters include tighter rules on the presentation of plays, concerts, and literary readings by charities. Such events should be allowed only with the permission of the local police, and a seat must be reserved for its representative. Only plays, verses, stories or music passed by the censor should be permitted, and in the case of literary readings additional permission must be

requested each time from the trustee of the school district. While acquiescing to the Department's fears, the Economic Department's reply did not demonstrate deep concern.⁹³

The Department of Police and the Economic Department also parted ways over the problem of monitoring other common — and legal — activities conducted by charitable associations. Correspondence between the two departments within the Ministry of the Interior reveals sharp disagreement about the latitude that should be granted to organized charity. In 1899 the Department of Police, which still reviewed charters submitted for confirmation, sent the Minister a memo repeating its frequent objections to allowing charities to open libraries, reading rooms, literacy courses and other educational activities, or to establish workshops and other enterprises to provide employment and occupational training. Such activities, the Department warned, were particularly dangerous in the non-Russian areas of the Empire, where charities often used educational activities to promote ethnic separatism. These charities were also difficult to control since the Ministries of the Interior and Education shared authority over them. Thus they were usually left to themselves, "which is extremely undesirable."⁹⁴

At first, the Department of Police's complaints were rejected. The Economic Department replied for the Minister in a response strongly influenced by Maksimov, who was still in charge of the office for charity and public assistance. The Economic Department's reply stated that the Ministry usually had no objections to charities conducting educational and vocational work. The existing requirements, reiterated in the 1897 model charters, that societies must obtain permission before holding a public event or opening an institution, and adhere to existing regulations, were sufficient.⁹⁵ (In 1898, however, probably in response to the Department of Police's repeated complaints, the Economic Department prohibited societies assisting needy students from establishing libraries and reading rooms.⁹⁶) The Minister of the Interior added that dual ministerial control did not pose any problem since local control was concentrated in the

hands of the governor.⁹⁷ In a note of his own, Maksimov went further to complain that the Department of Police held up the flow of paperwork in his section by making such objections to draft charters. The Economic Department, he claimed, should have sole authority to make changes in draft charters; the Department of Police should review only the lists of founders.⁹⁸

In the end, victory went to the Department of Police. Shortly before this correspondence began, the reactionary Sipiagin replaced the relatively liberal Goremykin as Minister. After apparently wavering between the two departments for several months, Sipiagin finally agreed with the Department of Police that charitable associations should not engage in educational work.⁹⁹ At about the same time the Economic Department lost its staunch defender of voluntarism, Maksimov, who transferred to another state agency, the Guardianship of Work Relief.

This incident, together with the accompanying change in Ministry personnel, suggests that from 1900 the government tightened the bonds around private organized charity. Yet any significant impact is hard to discern. In siding with the Department of Police, Sipiagin granted its request that henceforth charities would have to request official permission before holding public readings and lectures or opening schools, libraries, and similar enterprises. This was nothing new, however. The model charters already contained these provisions; they had never given charities the freedom to open institutions on their own. Societies assisting needy students had been barred from establishing libraries as early as 1898. More to the point, the Department of Police's apparent victory did not prevent charities from opening every year between 1900 and 1905 in great numbers and diversity.

The financial affairs of organized charity also caused the government concern, but for different reasons. Then as now, organized charity provided fertile ground for financial mismanagement, fraud and embezzlement. Cases of both petty and spectacular malfeasance regularly occurred and often provided sensational newspaper copy. The public evi-

dently enjoyed stories that unmasked the deceit and greed lurking under the self-righteous, virtuous countenance of charity. In addition to its determination to uncover and prevent this kind of crime, the Ministry of the Interior shared the worry of charity leaders outside the government that financial abuses harmed not only the good causes themselves, but public trust in charity in general.

Although charities were required to obtain official permission for fundraising drives and lotteries, and follow detailed regulations on how they were to be conducted, these events repeatedly caused trouble. Agents employed by charities to collect subscriptions, for example, sometimes pocketed fifty to ninety percent as their fee. Lottery tickets to benefit institutions were peddled for prices higher than what was printed on them. Other, sometimes quite imaginative fundraising practices, such as selling calendars, insignia pins, portraits of the Imperial family, or booklets with coupons for discounts at certain stores, caused the government equal concern.¹⁰⁰ The biggest culprits were often prominent charities that enjoyed state connections or the patronage of a member of the Imperial family; they possessed the resources to conduct nation-wide drives and the prestige to obtain the cooperation of the local authorities and the respect of local residents.

One frequent offender was the Petersburg Society for the Care of Poor and Sick Children, which enjoyed the patronage of a Grand Duchess.¹⁰¹ According to a report by the provincial governor, one of its members arrived in Kiev in October of 1901 to collect contributions. He was observed staying in one of the best hotels in the city, “riding around in smart cabs, and spending time in the evenings in night clubs [*uveselitel’nykh zavedeniakh*].” The same man, this time working for another prominent charity that had attracted suspicion before, showed up several months later in Orenburg. Thanks in part to his “extreme familiarity [*razviaznost’*]” he collected more than 3,000 rubles in two days, then proceeded to lose 900 of it at cards.¹⁰² These and other cases from a collection of governors’ reports from 1901 and 1902 on suspicious fundraising practices paint a

picture of the Russian provinces aswarm with self-proclaimed agents of aggressive charities, bilking a gullible population.¹⁰³ The Ministry went so far as to publish a lengthy warning to the public in the government newspaper, *Pravitel'stvennyi Vestnik*.¹⁰⁴ Yet the problems clearly persisted, for the Ministry issued still more circulars and rules on public fundraising in the decade before World War I.¹⁰⁵

National Minorities and Charitable Associations

Although government policy on the founding of charitable and other societies generally became looser in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the autocracy's response to charities organized by national minorities became increasingly repressive, as its campaign of Russification intensified.¹⁰⁶ The autocracy had three major objections with respect to minority charitable activity. The first problem was, in the government's somewhat twisted interpretation, one of equity as well as control. The spontaneous movement to organize charities and other voluntary associations was so much greater among some ethnic groups than among Orthodox Russians that it quickly slipped away from government control, with the result that minorities enjoyed greater privileges and autonomy in their public life than Russians. More important, the government believed that such activity undermined national assimilation and Russification; voluntary associations tended to perpetuate national identity. Finally, the autocracy feared, and sometimes with good reason, that national minorities used charitable societies as fronts for separatist, anti-government organizing. A look at the national groups that gave the autocracy the most trouble — the Jews, the Poles and the Armenians — illustrates these concerns.

Jewish communities in the Empire had a long tradition of caring for their needy without interference from the Russian state. An 1835 statute

turned this tradition into a formal obligation, though the government seldom enforced it. The same statute gave Jewish communities permission to open their own charitable institutions, but extended no government control over them. Successive attempts to place Jewish charitable activity under some kind of control, either by the social welfare boards or councils of religious and communal leaders established at synagogues, had little impact. After studying Jewish charities in the Empire, the Ministry of the Interior concluded in 1863 that the extraordinary diversity of their functions made it impossible to subject them to general rules. In effect, nineteenth-century Jewish congregations enjoyed an opportunity, granted to them by Russian law, to establish charities outside the regular government procedures for voluntary associations, and without officially approved charters — in effect, to establish illegal associations.¹⁰⁷

This abnormal situation, the subject of debate in a government commission on Jews in 1883-1888, presented the autocracy with a dilemma. On the one hand, some argued, Jewish charities served a positive purpose by freeing the government from the effort and expense of caring for needy Jews (although its willingness and ability to do so had there been no organized Jewish philanthropy are highly questionable). On the other hand, the existence of so many unofficial — indeed, illegal — charities placed Jews in a privileged position, enjoying wider rights than other national groups. The great “secrecy” in which they operated also alarmed the government. This made it impossible to collect accurate information on them, control them, or prevent financial abuses and violations of the law. Finally, their existence hindered assimilation, and perpetuated the “tribal isolation [*plemennaiia zamkhnutost*]” and bond among Jews, harmful to state and public interests.”¹⁰⁸

Nevertheless, until the end of the century the autocracy left Jewish charity largely alone. The shreds of local autonomy granted to Jewish communities were put to good use. The Pale of Settlement and Poland were covered with small societies, brotherhoods and institutions. Since so many of them, perhaps the majority, existed unofficially, it is virtually

impossible to make more than an approximate estimate of their number.¹⁰⁹ The Jewish Colonization Society (*EKO*) counted almost two thousand charities in 1898.¹¹⁰

The publication of the model charters in 1897 forced the issue of widespread unofficial voluntary activity by Jews. The response to the model charters in the Pale was enormous, for they allowed Jewish groups to establish legal associations, and granted considerable freedom to designate membership requirements, beneficiaries and activities, while seeming to promise virtually automatic confirmation. Almost half (43 out of 90) of the charitable societies which opened in 1898 on the basis of the model charter for general-purpose societies restricted their aid to Jews.¹¹¹ These societies sometimes interpreted charity broadly, to encompass education, medical care, mutual aid and self-help.¹¹² Evidently the model charters, especially the one for general-purpose charitable societies, were being used to gain legitimacy for endeavors that might not otherwise have received government permission. "Because the eleemosynary societies were more easily licensed by the state," writes one historian of the Pale, "all other communal activities adopted this classification. The entire system of autonomous institutions was actually built under the aegis of charity."¹¹³

From the late 1890s the autocracy made a number of efforts to control and curtail exclusively Jewish charity.¹¹⁴ Initially, the Ministry of the Interior let Jewish charities based on the model charters open without hindrance. Then a "confidential" circular to governors in September, 1898 signaled the first doubts by the government. The circular acknowledged that the model charter for general charitable societies allowed them to restrict their aid to people of a particular nationality or religion. Therefore the many societies established to assist only Jews were perfectly legal. Such societies went against "state interests," however, by promoting the "isolation" and "estrangement" (*otdalenie*) of the Jewish population. Their legality notwithstanding, the Ministry had decided to forbid the establishment of exclusively Jewish charitable societies based on the model

charter outside of the Pale. Jews outside the Pale could still open charitable societies based on the model charter, provided they did not restrict their membership or beneficiaries to Jews alone.¹¹⁵

The experience of a group of Jews in the town of Velikie Luki, in the non-Pale province of Pskov, illustrates the impact of the change in policy. The group sought to establish a charitable society, based on the model charter for general-purpose charitable societies, to assist people regardless of their religion. Even though this initiative did not violate the September, 1898 circular, the governor rejected the petition. When the Ministry supported the governor's decision, the group filed a complaint with the Senate. After two years, the Senate finally responded by affirming the Ministry's action.¹¹⁶ Most other governors appear to have shared the Pskov governor's vigilance, for according a study of Jewish charity at the turn of the century, only three charitable societies based on the model charter opened outside the Pale.¹¹⁷

From 1900 the Ministry, under new and more conservative leadership, further tightened restrictions on Jewish charities based on the model charter. An intraministerial letter from the Economic Department in 1900 expressed opposition to societies which allowed only Jews to be members, and especially to those proposing to give out loans (a function not included in the model charter, but popular with Jewish charities).¹¹⁸ Thus at this time it became common practice for the Ministry to forbid the formation of Jewish charitable societies even within the Pale.¹¹⁹ The archives contain a number of petitions to the Senate from Jewish groups in the Pale protesting the governors' rejection of their petitions to found charitable associations based on the model charter with the purpose of assisting only Jews. In all the cases the Ministry and the Senate upheld the governors.¹²⁰

Provincial governors seem to have differed, however, in how they followed the signals from St. Petersburg. In some areas of the Pale, the restrictive policy was rigorously enforced. General M. I. Dragomirov, Governor-General of Kiev, Podolia and Volynia from 1898 to 1905, exer-

cised particular zeal in circumscribing the rights of the local Jewish population; consequently, no charitable societies based on the model charter for general-purpose charities opened in these three provinces. Official policy in the southern region of the Pale, however, where thirty-nine charities based on the model charter were permitted to open, appears to have been more relaxed.¹²¹

Fears of anti-tsarist nationalist movements prompted the autocracy to be particularly sensitive to charities established by other important minorities. The autocracy suspected that national groups were using charitable societies, which were relatively easy to form especially after the introduction of model charters, as fronts for separatist activities, especially education in national language and history. The government's fears were often well-grounded, especially with respect to the Poles and the Armenians, the two ethnic groups whose charities caused the tsarist police the biggest headaches.

After two major Polish rebellions during the nineteenth century, it is hardly surprising that the autocracy approached most public initiatives in Poland with suspicion. Repression of Polish voluntary organizations, including charities, increased during the second half of the century, reaching a peak at the turn of the century. After 1870 all charities were subordinated to a newly established Municipal Council of Public Charity in Warsaw, and similar councils in each Polish province. Chaired by the Warsaw Governor-General or provincial governor and dominated by Russian officials, the councils maintained tight control over the management of the hospitals and charities under their jurisdiction. Approval of the Ministry of the Interior was required before any charity could accept a donation or bequest.¹²² Yet even this system was not foolproof, as a case involving one of the region's most prominent charities revealed. The Warsaw Charitable Society, a venerable organization dating from 1814, ran twenty-six reading rooms in 1891. There, "[u]nder the guise of propagating reading skills they engaged in clandestine teaching of national history

and the Polish language.” The reading rooms were closed by the authorities in 1892.¹²³

Already suspicious of even charitable initiatives by the incorrigible Poles, the autocracy increased its vigilance after the introduction of the two model charters for charitable societies in 1897. The move to impose restrictions on the implementation of the model charters in Poland originated with the Warsaw Governor-General in the Spring of 1898. Citing the case of the Warsaw Charitable Society’s reading rooms, the Governor-General proposed to the Minister of the Interior that Polish charitable societies adopting the model charters be deprived the opportunity, allowed by the charters, to distribute books and open reading rooms. Chairmen and other officers of these charities, he added, should be confirmed by the local governor. Any instructions issued by the general assemblies of societies to members should also be confirmed by the governor, “since by means of such instructions basic provisions of the charter could be changed without attracting notice.” Charities established in the city of Warsaw should be confirmed by the Governor-General, not the governor. Finally, the Governor-General insisted that virtually all the business and correspondence of societies be conducted in Russian. Minister of the Interior Goremykin acceded to all of these proposals.¹²⁴

The third major ethnic group whose charitable activity attracted special government attention was the Armenians. As far back as 1883, suspicions that members of the Armenian Charitable Society participated in the Armenian nationalist movement had led to an Imperial order prohibiting new Armenian charities and subjecting existing ones to police surveillance. Armenian societies were required to submit not only yearly but also monthly reports to governors. Finally, the order decreed that any society that deviated from strictly charitable activity would be closed.¹²⁵

In the late 1890s, with an upsurge in Armenian nationalist activity and the arrival of the Armenophobe Prince Golitsyn as Governor-General of the Caucasus, Armenian organizations, including charities, once again came under fire. Golitsyn accused four well-established, wealthy

charities, including the long-suspect Armenian Charitable Society, of supporting schools, libraries and other educational activities instead of helping the poor, in order to spread ethnic awareness and build Armenian solidarity. "Government interests," Golitsyn pointed out, "...cannot be served by the distribution of Armenian publications, which serve to impede the convergence [*sblizenie*] of the local population and Russian nationality."¹²⁶ A number of the officers of these societies were known to be anti-government Armenian nationalists, suspected of ties with the revolutionary movement. Golitsyn asked for permission to close the four charities and to prohibit the establishment of any new societies in the Caucasus devoted to a single national group or religion.¹²⁷

The director of the Ministry's Department of Police turned down this request, however. All of the activities to which Golitsyn objected — assisting only Armenians, conducting educational work, opening local branches — were entirely legal, he declared, since they were permitted by the officially sanctioned charters for these societies. True, there existed strong reasons to suspect that these societies were involved with the Armenian revolutionary movement, but even the head of the gendarmes in Tiflis admitted that he had no concrete proof. In the absence of clear evidence of illegal activity, the director concluded, the societies could not be closed.¹²⁸ Goremykin, in his reply to Golitsyn, seconded this view and added that if the government closed all four societies at once, it might spark unrest and demonstrations.¹²⁹ Yet the Minister did support the Governor-General's suggestion on how to implement the model charter for general-purpose charitable societies in the Caucasus. All groups wishing to adopt the charter as the basis for an association devoted to a single religious or ethnic population had to get the approval of the Governor-General as well as the provincial governors.¹³⁰

As the preceding cases demonstrate, the government often acted to repress charitable activity when its suspicions were aroused or its policy of Russification jeopardized. From the 1890s a number of no doubt irksome restrictions on charitable activity by ethnic minorities accumulated, espe-

cially with respect to the model charters. Yet even here it is difficult to discern a consistent, coherent policy against charitable organizing by minorities. Sometimes the Ministry of the Interior acted on the warnings issued by its Department of Police or local agents, but at other times it adhered to its notions of legality. Neither the Warsaw Charitable Society nor the Armenian Charitable Society, for example, was closed, although both appear to have been using charity to disguise separatist activities. Why not make all non-Russian societies conduct their business in Russian, instead of only Polish charities? Why not simply ban the use of the model charters in the troublesome borderlands, or restrict them to ethnic Russians only? The absence of Ministerial leadership helps to explain the inconsistent policy. There is no evidence, for example, of any discussion during the drafting of the model charters on how they might be used or misused by ethnic minorities. Once again, government policy was formed on a case by case basis: the Ministry usually acted only when vigilant provincial authorities asked it to do so. The case of charitable activity by national minorities in the Empire once again casts doubt on the autocracy's ability to control and channel the outpouring of voluntarism in the late Imperial period.

The 1905 Revolution and Voluntary Associations

At first glance 1905 appears to mark a sharp break in the autocracy's policy towards voluntary associations. The demands of the liberal and radical opposition movements forced the government onto a course of greater and greater concessions, until in the Imperial Manifesto of October 17, 1905, it granted Russians the rights of freedom of assembly and association.¹³¹ On close examination, however, the measures it took to implement these rights have a hollow ring. Like so many of the concessions forced upon the government during the year, the new rules issued

for voluntary associations borrowed heavily from established government practice under the guise of a break with the past. For charitable societies in particular, 1905 was a year of only minor significance.

The autocracy's first steps to broaden the right of association belong to the series of half-measures it took during the initial period of the Revolution to win over, unsuccessfully as it turned out, at least the liberal opposition. Typically, they took the form of a Ministerial circular rather than a law. On April 26, 1905 Minister of the Interior Bulygin informed governors of new rules for confirming social clubs and those "socially useful" societies it considered innocuous — artistic, sport, temperance, library, animal protection and charitable associations. In effect, the circular only generalized the policy embodied in the model charters. Governors and city commandants received the authority to approve draft charters for new associations of these kinds, as long as the charters adhered to rules laid down in the circular. Only these rules were obligatory; the charters could contain anything else that was not against the law or established administrative rules. The 1905 rules themselves simply reiterated the Ministry's requirements, first clarified in the April 1897 rules and repeated in all subsequent model charters, on membership, fundraising, governance, and the closing of societies. Societies founded exclusively or largely by Jews could not be approved by the new procedure. In fact, governors could still refuse to approve a society even if it adhered to the rules, with the final decision in the hands of the Ministry. The Ministry, upon the governor's recommendation, had the authority to close a society for anti-government activity at any time.¹³²

This kind of phony liberalization made little impression against the waves of anti-government protests and demonstrations that continued during the summer and fall of 1905. Finally, the October Manifesto promised Russians basic civil rights. One of the measures the government subsequently took to fulfill these promises was the publication of "Temporary Rules" on March 4, 1906, for assemblies, societies, trade unions

and employers' associations. The Rules were the first general law on associations in Russian history.

The March 1906 Rules for societies were an awkward combination of the rules issued the preceding April, based primarily on long-established government practice, and French and German law on associations. Although Article 2 stated that societies could be organized without seeking the government's permission, the rules that followed severely circumscribed this right.¹³³ The Rules established two types of associations. The first, established simply by registering intent with the authorities, needed neither a charter nor official permission; but it did not possess the rights of property ownership or juridical personality. The second type enjoyed these rights, but had to have a charter confirmed by the local authorities. In the eyes of contemporary critics, the difference was more apparent than real; "with a charter or without a charter," wrote one legal scholar right after the Rules were issued, "not one society can come into existence without the permission of the administration at the risk of extremely serious punishments for its participants."¹³⁴

The new procedure for registering or obtaining permission for an association also retained important features of past practice. Under a new name the provincial governor and Ministry of the Interior continued to exercise undiluted authority. The 1906 Rules created new provincial bureaus on societies (*prisutstviia po delam ob obshchestvakh*), made up of representatives from the local nobility, courts, zemstvo and municipal government.¹³⁵ As chairman, however, the governor controlled the bureau. If he disagreed with a majority decision, he could reverse it pending the outcome of his appeal to the Minister of the Interior. His chancery submitted its own reports on applications and draft charters to the bureau on societies; and as one critic remarked, the other members of the bureau, busy with their own official responsibilities, could be expected to defer to the governor's office, with its greater information and experience.¹³⁶ In making their decision about a proposed association, the governor and his office were more likely to follow the Ministry's long-

standing policies, reflected in the model charters and rules of April 1897 and April 1905, than any new-fangled notions of constitutional rights and guarantees.

The 1906 Rules also reinforced the governors' authority to suspend societies upon suspicion of anti-government activity, a violation of public order or morality, or any deviations from the approved charter. The bureau on societies also had the right to close a society completely. Meetings of the bureaus were not public, although people involved in the matter under consideration were supposed to be informed of the hearing and could attend and present oral arguments. To be sure, the 1906 Rules allowed a society's founders or representatives to appeal a decision of the bureau on societies to the Senate; but this appeal had to be submitted to the bureau and conveyed to the Senate by the governor, with his explanation of the case. Upon close examination, all roads in the 1906 Rules seem to lead to the governor's office.¹³⁷

It is difficult to discern a consistent pattern in the way both the local authorities and the public responded to the 1906 Rules. Fragmentary reports suggest that the bureaus on societies often acted arbitrarily. According to one account, the Moscow city bureau rejected in a single meeting a number of proposed societies with no relation to politics, including a music and singing society.¹³⁸ The Grodno provincial bureau reported to the Ministry of the Interior that it had rejected all five of the charters presented to it in the first six months after the Rules were issued.¹³⁹ The Senate received a number of complaints about the bureaus — for rejecting charters on various pretexts, failing to inform founders or officers of societies about hearings concerning their societies, and interfering in societies' internal affairs.¹⁴⁰

Little information is available on how the Temporary Rules on Societies of 1906 affected the Empire's national minorities. It seems highly unlikely, however, that the opportunities for national minorities to open legal charitable and other associations widened to any significant degree. After the rebellions in the borderlands during 1905-1906, the autocracy

was probably even more suspicious of public initiatives in these areas. In addition, by shifting the authority for approving associations to the governors and their subordinates, the Rules enhanced the power of conservative officials like Kiev Governor-General Dragomirov and Governor-General of the Caucasus Golitsyn, while they diminished the buffering role that central Ministry officials like Maksimov had sometimes been able to play.

Yet governors' reports to the Ministry reveal that in many provinces at least some societies based on the 1906 Rules opened during the remaining months of the year. Their diversity is striking: charities, mutual aid societies, drama and literary clubs, cooperatives, unions of artisans, skilled workers and professionals, and many others, occasionally in great numbers. In Ekaterinoslav province, forty-four trade unions opened between March and October.¹⁴¹ According to Ministry records, at least two hundred charities were opened by Russians and minority groups during 1910-1912 on the basis of the 1906 Rules.¹⁴² The leading pre-revolutionary scholar of voluntary associations, making a "preliminary count" of societies that opened between 1906 and 1909 on the basis of the 1906 Rules, came up with a staggering 4,801 societies.¹⁴³

It also appears that the 1906 Temporary Rules allowed considerably more latitude than the government had intended or desired. In early 1908 an interministerial committee began work on a new, permanent law on associations. The draft law, completed in 1910, reflected considerable dissatisfaction with the 1906 Rules. It increased the powers of the governors and police over voluntary associations of all kinds, but particularly political and religious associations and trade unions. The 1910 draft rules for societies and unions also reflected continued concern over associations formed by national minorities. They required all societies to use only the Russian language in all of their affairs, and prohibited societies in all non-Russian areas — Poland, the western provinces, the Baltic provinces, the Caucasus and Central Asia — from owning real property without special permission. At the same time, the legislation proposed measures to correct some of the arbitrariness and inconsistency for which the bureaus

on societies were notorious. The legislative project finally reached the Council of Ministers in 1914, but was dropped when war broke out.¹⁴⁴

The 1906 Rules did not replace the other procedures for chartering a voluntary association in the post-1905 period. Many groups chose the new procedure. Others, however, still preferred the route of model charters, which the Ministry of the Interior continued to issue as late as 1915, when it confirmed one for sport and gymnastic societies. Although both routes met at the governor's office, adopting a model charter seems to have entailed less red tape and obstructionism from the local authorities. Unfortunately, no statistics exist on the numbers of societies opened on the basis of model charters in the post-1905 period to show whether this was in fact the preferred procedure.¹⁴⁵ Still another route existed through the state charitable agencies, the Department of the Institutions of Empress Maria and the Guardianship of Work Relief, which had the authority to confirm charters for societies and institutions coming under their jurisdiction. Finally, if the founders of a charitable society or institution requested special privileges or pursued aims that did not fit with either the 1906 Rules or a model charter, they could still send their charters to a Ministry or even, through the Council of Ministers, to the Tsar.¹⁴⁶

Despite their limitations, the Rules unquestionably expanded Russians' opportunities for voluntary association. All kinds of societies were recognized as legal, including trade unions and political parties, except those pursuing aims contrary to "public morality" or "threatening public peace and safety," and political societies directed from abroad.¹⁴⁷ Groups wishing to establish a previously proscribed type of association might have benefited from the Rules. Charities gained little, however. On the one hand, charitable associations had long enjoyed a relatively privileged position in government policy, which had enabled them to proliferate in great diversity. On the other hand, in the post-1905 period the government did not change the various existing laws and regulations governing private charity described above. The 1906 Rules continued to require that when societies organized fundraising events and similar ac-

tivities particularly important to charitable associations, they had to conform to existing laws and administrative rules.

In a legal sense, then, the 1905 Revolution and the 1906 Rules did not have a dramatic impact on the development of voluntarism, particularly in the field of charity. Nevertheless the post-1905 period was extremely important for Russian voluntarism. As the numbers of local voluntary associations continued to grow rapidly, new forms of voluntarism at the national level presented new challenges to the government's abilities to maintain control. Greater autonomy from government tutelage and greater sophistication in methods and goals characterized many of the voluntary initiatives after the Revolution.

One of the most striking and important features of the period between 1905 and 1917 was the organization of numerous national unions and congresses of professionals and activists of many kinds. In the field of charity a national body, the All-Russian Union of Institutions, Societies and Activists in Public and Private Welfare, was finally organized in 1908. Founded by several of the country's leading charity reformers, the Union, with its mission to reform both private charity and public assistance, implicitly reflected society's lack of confidence in the government's ability to restructure Russia's outmoded and ineffective poor relief system in Russia.¹⁴⁸

The Union organized the country's first national congress on charity in 1910. Almost four hundred people met in Petersburg for several days. Speakers attacked Russia's archaic poor law, inadequate public relief and chaotic private charities; they deplored the persistence of begging and almsgiving, and the lack of information on need and poverty in the Empire. Participants approved resolutions calling for a broad range of reforms in public assistance, especially the introduction of local guardianships to investigate need and to distribute aid. The congress repeated previous calls for the unification of private charities. It recommended that charities establish local branches of the Union to coordinate their work

and investigate and register needy cases, and local “control commissions” to introduce order and accountability into charity finances.¹⁴⁹

In the years following the congress, the Union expanded its activities. In 1912 it launched its own journal, first a modest newsletter, then a substantial monthly called *Assistance and Charity in Russia*, published from 1913 to September, 1917. A statistical department collected data on existing charities, while an “international department” prepared presentations for Russian participants in international charity congresses.¹⁵⁰ Special commissions submitted draft legislation on local charity control commissions and revisions in the rules on municipal relief agencies to the Ministry of the Interior.¹⁵¹

The numerous other national congresses and unions of social reformers after 1905 also reflect the increased strength and independence of Russian voluntarism. Volunteers in causes ranging from temperance, literacy and adult education to women’s rights and anti-prostitution joined doctors, scientists, artists and other professionals in an unprecedented upsurge of nation-wide organization and activism.¹⁵²

The appearance of mass fundraising drives after 1905 presented the autocracy with another challenge. Effective control over the fundraising activities of voluntary associations had long eluded the autocracy. In the years just before the outbreak of World War I a new technique (still in wide use in the United States today) became very popular: “Flower Days,” or the “sale” of artificial flowers for charity.¹⁵³ The causes were often national in scope – famine relief and the eradication of tuberculosis, for example. In this case the autocracy was less concerned about possible fraud; rather, it suspected that flower days were being used to spread anti-government propaganda.

George Kennan collected accounts of numerous incidents of government and Church harassment of Flower Day volunteers in 1911-1912. On “White Flower Day” in 1912, for example, organized to collect funds to fight tuberculosis, volunteers encountered official obstacles in several cities. Moscow authorities prohibited the local anti-tuberculosis society’s

public lectures on the disease because, it said, there were not enough police to attend all the lectures. In Kiev the distribution of 100,000 printed appeals for funds was forbidden for fear that revolutionary proclamations would be distributed with them. The Bishop of Riazan' denounced White Flower Day as a "Masonic plot" and, at the same time, a frivolous occasion enabling lady volunteers to show off new gowns and hats; the event was forbidden. In Nizhnii Novgorod, finally, lecturers on the disease had to sign a statement that they did not belong to any anti-government organization.¹⁵⁴

Voluntary fundraising efforts during the 1911-1912 famine encountered similar difficulties. The government demanded that all organizations collecting contributions first receive official permission, and all contributions be sent directly to the Ministry of the Interior, the Red Cross or local zemstvo boards. Private organizations were forbidden any role in spending the money they had collected. In Viatka the governor issued additional demands that forced organizers to cancel the fundraising campaign. He particularly objected to the use of the slogan "help the starving," which he considered seditious since, in his opinion, there was no famine in Viatka.¹⁵⁵ In a letter to Kennan, the former populist and leader of the cooperative movement, N. V. Chaikovskii, attributed the government harassment to its fears that, thanks to the publicity aroused by the fundraising campaigns, more progressive deputies would be elected in the elections to the Fourth Duma scheduled for the summer of 1912.¹⁵⁶ In September of that year, the Minister of the Interior confirmed new rules on flower days and similar public fundraising events. Police control over them was intensified, including a provision that every volunteer must receive police approval.¹⁵⁷

As the story of mass fundraising drives shows, the central government reacted with erratic but occasionally vicious hostility to the new, national-level voluntary movements of the post-1905 period. It approved the charters of many new national societies and unions, but rejected others, like the All-Russian Society of People's Universities.¹⁵⁸ Yet the post-

revolutionary period reveals as never before that the initiative for attacking social problems and forging policies of social reform had shifted decisively to the voluntary sector.

Conclusion

“There is probably no country in the world,” wrote George Kennan in 1889, “where the police power occupies a wider field, plays a more important part, or touches the private personal life of the citizen at more points than it does in Russia.”¹⁵⁹ For one hundred years this image of an omnipresent, omnipotent autocracy has endured. To be sure, the Russian autocracy aspired to exert more influence over the lives of its subjects than most contemporary governments. Yet as the history of organized charity clearly shows, there were areas of public initiative that the autocracy left largely alone; even more important, its aspirations to control faced a growing challenge in the upsurge of voluntarism in the post-Emancipation period.

Since the era of the Great Reforms, the autocracy reacted to the growing spirit of public initiative in the population by slowly enacting measures that technically facilitated the formation of officially sanctioned associations. While loosening the procedures, the autocracy held onto its right of “preliminary censorship” over voluntary initiative, rejecting any that it did not like.¹⁶⁰ Throughout the late Imperial period the Ministry of the Interior and its local agents, the governors, exercised final authority over the formation, operation and closing of societies.

This restrictive policy was riddled with inconsistencies, however. The difficulties placed in the way of establishing a legal association obviously did not deter revolutionaries from forming underground societies. Even charities sometimes ignored their obligation to obtain official confirmation of their charters, or neglected to obtain official permission to change

their charters.¹⁶¹ Some individuals or groups whose good works lacked official sanction were tolerated; others fell victim to government persecution.¹⁶² In general, however, the autocracy encouraged those associations which harnessed private effort and funds to state interests.

Charitable associations were particularly favored, the beneficiary of the autocracy's view of charity as a benign, even laudable endeavor that relieved the treasury and bureaucracy of responsibility for the Empire's multitude of poor and needy. Despite troublesome Masons and societies like the Petersburg Society for Visiting the Poor, it was easy to monitor private charities as long as there were few of them and civil society remained in its infancy. From the mid-nineteenth century, however, as charities and other voluntary associations proliferated rapidly, the government reacted in a contradictory way. It attempted to facilitate some endeavors, like most charities, but repressed others (Sunday schools, for example). While making it easier to establish a society, it tried to tighten control over the finances and public activities of voluntary associations. The Department of Police, seeking stricter rules, came into conflict with other bureaucrats, like Evgenii Maksimov, seeking to encourage *samodeiatel'nost'*. Activities routinely condoned for Russian charities acquired sinister overtones when conducted by Jews, Poles or Armenians.

In most cases, it could be argued, the autocracy had little to fear from charitable organizations. The vast majority of them did not use benefits for orphans or soup kitchens to mask subterranean revolutionary activities. This is not the main point, however. Increasingly the autocracy could not keep pace with the growing number and variety of initiatives and associations. However loyal and innocuous, charities undermined the government's claims of omniscience, and revealed the limits to its ability to control.

Notes

1. Nikolai Anufriev, "Pravitel'stvennaia reglamentatsiia obrazovaniia chastnykh obshchestv v Rossii," *Voprosy administrativnogo prava*, book 1 (Moscow, 1916), 15-18.
2. *Polnoe sobranie zakonov Rossiiskoi Imperii* (hereafter *PSZ*), series I, vol. 21, No. 15379, April 8, 1782, arts. 64 and 250.
3. Catherine's complex attitude toward private initiative cannot be discussed in depth here, and warrants further research. Marc Raeff's statement that the Empress opposed any independent charitable activity clearly goes too far, and is contradicted both by him elsewhere and by Isabel de Madariaga; Raeff, *Understanding Imperial Russia: State and Society in the Old Regime* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984), 109-110, but see also Raeff, *The Well-Ordered Police State: Social and Institutional Change through Law in the Germanies and Russia, 1600-1800* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983), 229; de Madariaga, *Russia in the Age of Catherine the Great* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981), chapters 31 and 33, passim; see also E. D. Maksimov, "Iz istorii gosudarstvennogo prizreniia v Rossii," *Trudovaia pomoshch'* (February, 1901), 166-167, and M. K. Sokolovskii, "Ekaterina Velikaia kak blagotvoritel'nitsa," *Vestnik blagotvoritel'nosti* (January, 1902), 27-51 and (February, 1902), 13-38.
4. de Madariaga, *Russia in the Age of Catherine the Great*, 501.
5. [O. F. Imeretinska], *Blagotvoritel'naia Rossiia. Istorii gosudarstvennoi, obshchestvennoi i chastnoi blagotvoritel'nosti v Rossii*, vol. 1, pt. 1: *Blagotvoritel'nost' gosudarstvennaia* (St. Petersburg, 1901) 139-151; David L. Ransel, *Mothers of Misery: Child Abandonment in Russia* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), 42-43.
6. *PSZ* (I), vol. 20, No. 14392, chap. 25, art. 392.
7. Imeretinska, *Blagotvoritel'naia Rossiia*, 170-171. The Iaroslavl' orphanage, called the "*Dom prizreniia blizhnego*," was established by the Masonic lodge there, founded in 1779 by the local governor-general A. P. Melgunov; G. V. Vernadskii, *Russkoe masonstvo v tsarstvovanie Ekateriny II* (Petrograd, 1917), 203. On public initiatives in education, see de Madariaga, *Russia in the Age of Catherine the Great*, 500.
8. V. Bogoliubov, *N. I. Novikov i ego vremia* (Moscow, 1916), 344-346 and chapter 21, passim; de Madariaga, *Russia in the Age of Catherine the Great*, 527-531.

9. Anufriev, "Pravitel'stvennaia reglamentatsiia," 18.
10. Ibid., 19-20.
11. Ibid., 20-21; *PSZ (I)*, vol. 38, No. 29151, August 1, 1822, reiterated by Nicholas I in 1826: *PSZ (II)*, vol. 1, No. 277, April 21, 1826.
12. Judith Cohen Zacek, "The Imperial Philanthropic Society in the Reign of Alexander I," *Canadian Slavic Studies*, 9 (Winter 1975), 434-435; Peter K. Christoff, *The Third Heart: Some Intellectual-Ideological Currents and Cross-Currents in Russia, 1800-1830* (The Hague: Mouton, 1970), 67-79. The *Journal* resumed publication from July, 1825 to the end of 1826, when Nicholas I closed it once and for all.
13. Anufriev, "Pravitel'stvennaia reglamentatsiia," 24; volume II of the *Polnoe sobranie zakonov*. See also G. I. Frolov, "Chastnye blagotvoritel'nye zavedeniia i obschestva v Imperii," *Zhurnal Ministerstva vnutrennikh del*, 1845, chast' 12 (October), 3-42, which lists twenty-two private charitable societies and 52 privately founded institutions in existence in the early 1840s. The majority of them were located in the western or Baltic regions of the Empire.
14. *Svod zakonov*, vol. 13, *Ustav o obshchestvennom prizrenii*, 1857 ed., arts. 1520-1522.
15. *PSZ (II)*, vol. 14, No. 12264, April 25, 1839. Organized charities also enjoyed franking privileges and the right to hold lotteries, concerts and other fundraising benefits; N. Voskoboinikov, "Materialy po istorii prizreniia bednykh i neimushchikh v Rossii," *Tiuremnyi vestnik*, 1894, No. 4, 178-179.
16. Circulars of the Economic Department, 4 March 1841, and the Department of Police, 27 May 1841, in *Sbornik tsirkuliarov i instruktsii Ministerstva vnutrennikh del, s uchrezhdeniia Ministerstva po 1 oktiabria 1853 g.*, vol. 1 (St. Petersburg, 1854), 36-37.
17. Two broad groups of unofficial but tolerated charities stand out. The first group includes the grass-roots women's religious communities; they often existed and performed charitable work for years before receiving official status as a women's monastery. See Brenda Meehan-Waters, "Popular Piety, Local Initiative and the Founding of Women's Religious Communities," *St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly*, 1986 (vol. 30, No. 2), 117-142, and "Opportunity, Curtailment and Transformation: The Case of Women's Religious Communities in Russia," paper delivered at the Susan B. Anthony Center Colloquium,

March 4, 1987. Many Jewish charitable societies and institutions in the towns and villages of the Pale also flourished without an official charter; for further discussion, see below.

18. Minister of the Interior Valuev mentions this ban in an 1862 memorandum on the history of charitable associations in Russia. Tsentral'nyi gosudarstvennyi istoricheskii arkhiv (hereafter TsGIA), f. 1263 (fond Komitetov ministrov), alf. 51, 1862, d. 2953, "Prilozhenie k zhurnalam k. m. [Komiteta ministrov] za ianvar' m-ts," l. 25ob. According to this memorandum, Nicholas's order was not made public at the time; the reason is not known.

19. According to the first empire-wide survey of charitable societies, conducted by the Department of the Institutions of Empress Maria in 1901, seventeen societies still in existence then had been chartered between 1846 and 1850, and sixteen between 1851 and 1855. Sobstvennaia ego Imperatorskogo Velichestva Kantseliariia po uchrezhdeniiam Imperatritsy Marii, *Blagotvoritel'nost' v Rossii*, 2 vols. (St. Petersburg, [1907]), as analyzed in Adele Lindenmeyr, "Public Poor Relief and Private Charity in Late Imperial Russia" (Ph.D. dissertation, Princeton University, 1980), 144-145.

20. *PSZ* (II), vol. 28, No. 27245, May 15, 1853.

21. V. Botsianovskii, *Kniaz' V. F. Odoevskii i obshchestvo poseshcheniia bednykh v S-Peterburge* (St. Petersburg, 1899), 26. Another history of the society is P. B. [P. Bartenev], ed., *Obshchestvo poseshcheniia bednykh (Iz zapisok V. A. Insarskogo)* (Moscow, 1869).

22. On the Society's slow demise, Botsianovskii, *Kniaz' V. F. Odoevskii*, 27-28 and Bartenev, *Obshchestvo poseshcheniia bednykh*, 31-32.

23. Most notably the formation of "sisters of charity" to serve as nurses in military hospitals; John Shelton Curtiss, "Russian Sisters of Mercy in the Crimea, 1854-1855," *Slavic Review*, vol. 25, No. 1 (March 1966), 84-100.

24. *Izvyechenie iz otcheta Ministra Vnutrennikh Del za 1861, 1862, i 1863 gg.* (St. Petersburg, 1865), 134-135.

25. These were societies still in existence when the Department of the Institutions of Empress Maria conducted its survey in the early twentieth century; no doubt more societies were established, but did not survive that long. Data from *Blagotvoritel'nost' v Rossii*, analyzed in Lindenmeyr, "Public Poor Relief and Private Charity," 148.

26. TsGIA, f. 1263, alf. 51, d. 2953, ll. 25ob-26.
27. Ibid., ll. 26ob-28.
28. Ibid., ll. 28-28ob.
29. *PSZ* (II), vol. 37, No. 37852 (12 January 1862). A similar devolution of authority was introduced for other types of societies at this time; in 1863 the authority to permit learned societies was transferred to the Ministry of Education, and in 1866 the Ministry of State Domains received the same authority for agricultural societies; Anufriev, "Pravitel'stvennaia reglamentatsiia," 26.
30. *Svod zakonov*, vol. 13, 1892 edition, art. 441.
31. The new law, and the government's positive assessment of organized charity, were explained in the report, "Ustroistvo obshchestvennogo prizreniia v Rossii," that the Ministry of the Interior's Economic Department prepared for the Commission working on the reform of local government. This report, announcing the new policy, received fairly wide publicity: it was published in the newspapers *Severnaia pochta*, special supplement to 1862, Nos. 181 and 191, and *Nashe vremia*, 1862, Nos. 181, 183, 197, 201, and 203. Copies of it were also sent to governors with the recommendation that its contents be made widely known among people interested in poor relief in the province; *Sbornik tsirkuliarov i instruktsii Ministerstva Vnutrennikh Del za 1862, 1863 i 1864 gody*, D. Chudovskii, comp. (St. Petersburg, 1873), 105-106.
32. E. Maksimov, "Obshchestvennaia pomoshch' nuzhdaiushchimsia v istoricheskom razvitii ee v Rossii," in *Blagotvoritel'nost' v Rossii*, vol. 1, 75.
33. *Izvlechenie iz otcheta Ministra Vnutrennikh Del za 1861, 1862, i 1863 gg.*, 135.
34. TsGIA, f. 1263, op. 1 (45), 1868, No. 3361, "Zhurnal [Komiteta Ministrov] za dekabr' m-ts," No. 803 (24 dek. 1868), ll. 701ob -703. If the proposed charters for new institutions sought special privileges requiring Imperial permission, however, they had to be submitted to the Committee of Ministers; *Svod zakonov*, vol. 13, 1892 ed., art. 443. In another move to enhance its control over voluntary associations, the Ministry assumed authority for permitting new communities of sisters of mercy in the same year; Meehan-Waters, "Charity and the Development of Women's Religious Communities in Russia," paper presented at the Mid-Atlantic Slavic Association Conference, March 7, 1987, 7.

35. For more on voluntarism and charity during the 1860s see Adele Lindenmeyr, "The Ethos of Charity in Imperial Russia," *Journal of Social History* (Summer, 1990), and "The Rise of Voluntary Associations During the Great Reforms: The Case of Charity," *The Great Reforms in Russian History*, Ben Eklof, John Bushnell and Larisa G. Zakharova, eds. (forthcoming).
36. *Izvlechenie iz otcheta Ministra Vnutrennikh Del za 1861, 1862, i 1863 gg.*, 135.
37. *Svod zakonov*, vol. 13, 1892 ed., art. 441, primechanie. Draft charters submitted for Ministerial confirmation were routinely sent to the Ministry's Department of Police for its opinion.
38. A law issued in 1867 forbidding all illegal associations defined them as: any secret society, regardless of its purpose; any association pursuing a politically or socially "harmful" purpose, regardless of the name it used; and any officially sanctioned society that strayed from its original, legal aim or used its legitimate purpose to mask harmful aims; *PSZ* (II), vol. 42, No. 44402, March 27, 1867. Another law on illegal associations issued in 1874 increased the punishments for participation; *PSZ* (II), vol. 49, No. 53606, April 4, 1874.
39. Gregory L. Freeze, *The Parish Clergy in Nineteenth-Century Russia: Crisis, Reform, Counter-Reform* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), 251.
40. *Ibid.*, 254.
41. Anufriev, "Pravitel'stvennaia reglamentatsiia," 27. Several collections of these charters were eventually published to assist the interested public: K. G. fon-Plato, *Polozheniia o chastnykh obshchestvakh, uchrezhdaemykh s razresheniia Ministerstv, Gubernatorov, i Gradonachal'nikov* (Riga, 1903) and idem, *Prilozhenie k "Polozheniiam o chastnykh obshchestvakh K. G. fon-Plato"* (Riga, 1904); K. Il'inskii, *Chastnye obshchestva. Sbornik zakonov, rasporyazhenii pravitel'stva i reshenii Pravitel'stvuiushchego Senata s prilozheniem normal'nykh i obraztsovykh ustavov i spravochnykh svedenii o sobraniiakh, s'ezdakh, lektsiiakh, kursakh, lotereiakh, vystavkakh, bibliotekakh i t. d.* (Riga, [1912]); and three by the educational activist V. I. Charnoluskii: *Spravochnik po ustroistvu sobranii, lektsii, chtenii, obshchestv, soiuzov, kursov i klassov dlia vzroslykh, bibliotek, muzeev i knizhnykh skladov (s primernymi formami proshenii i zaiavlenii i primernymi ustavami)* (St. Petersburg, 1908), *Chastnaia initsiativa v dele narodnogo obrazovaniia* (St. Petersburg, 1910), and *Spravochnaia knizhka ob obshchestvakh i soiuzakh* (St. Petersburg, 1912).

42. Model charters were issued only for a few kinds of charitable institutions; most kinds of institutions needed the approval of the Minister of the Interior; *Svod zakonov*, vol. 13, 1892 ed., art. 443.
43. Works that examine the new level of interest in welfare issues and reform include Lindenmeyr, "A Russian Experiment in Voluntarism: The Municipal Guardianships of the Poor, 1894-1914," *Jahrbucher fur Geschichte Osteuropas*, vol. 30 (1982), 429-451, "Charity and the Problem of Unemployment: Industrial Homes in Late Imperial Russia," *The Russian Review*, vol. 45 (1986), 1-22, and "The Ethos of Charity"; and Joseph Bradley, *Muzhik and Muscovite: Urbanization in Late Imperial Russia* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), part 3, and "The Moscow Workhouse and Urban Welfare Reform in Russia," *The Russian Review*, vol. 41 (1982), 427-444.
44. Data from the Department of the Institutions of Empress Maria survey, analyzed in Lindenmeyr, "Public Poor Relief and Private Charity," 150.
45. See for example an 1879 circular from the Ministry, quoted in "Pomoshch' uchashchimsia detiam," *Detskaia pomoshch'*, 1885, No. 17 (15 September), 844.
46. TsGIA, f. 1287 (Khoziaistvennyi departament MVD), op. 19, 3 marta 1894-6 iunია 1897, d. 1399, "O normal'nom ustave Obshchestv vspomoshchestvovaniia nuzhdaiushchimsia uchashchimsia." It was published in the January 5/17, 1895 issue of *Pravitel'stvennaia vestnik*. According to a newspaper report, the Ministry of Education had considered a model charter for these societies as early as 1879; "Blagotvoritel'nye obshchestva dlia uchashchikhsia," *Tserkovno-obshchestvennyi vestnik*, 1879, No. 130 (31 October), 7.
47. TsGIA, f. 1288 (Glavnoe Upravlenie po delam mestnogo khoziaistva MVD), op. 15 (vnut. op. 2 - 1901), 10 iunია 1897 - 3 maia 1905, d. 367, "Ob utverzhdenii primernogo ustava obshchestv posobiia bednym," ll. 1-1ob.
48. In his introduction to the Ministry's 1898 draft poor law reform, TsGIA, f. 1291 (Zemskii otdel MVD), op. 42, d. 30, 200.
49. Memo by Kabat and Maksimov to the Minister of the Interior, November 27, 1897; TsGIA, f. 1287, op. 19, 31 iulija 1897-13 iunია 1905, d. 2041, "Ob utverzhdenii primernogo ustava dlia obshchestv vspomoshchestvovaniia nuzhdaiushchimsia uchashchimsia," l. 29ob.
50. The "primernyi" charter for general-purpose societies contained some sections, including one on organizing district guardianships to investigate applicants for aid, that were

optional; all the provisions of the “*normal’nyi*” charter for societies aiding needy students were obligatory, however. This is the explanation of the different terminology in the Economic Department’s circulars to governors accompanying the charters; TsGIA, f. 1287, op. 46, 1897, d. 3158, “Tsirkuliary za 1897 god,” ll. 46 and 122ob.

51. S. K. Gogel’, “Podgotovlenie k blagotvoritel’noi deiatel’nosti,” *Trudovaia pomoshch’*, May 1913, 530.

52. fon-Plato, *Polozheniia o chastnykh obshchestvakh*, (1903), introduction.

53. TsGIA, f. 1287, op. 19, 26 ianv. 1898-31 ianv. 1900, d. 2106, “O dannykh Gubernskimi nachal’stvami razresheniakh na otkrytie obshchestv posobiia bednym v 1898 godu,” and d. 2154 (31 marta 1898 g. - 7 marta 1901 g.), “O dannykh Gubernatorami razresheniakh na otkrytie obshchestv vspomoshchestvovaniia nuzhdaiushchimsia uchashchimsia.”

54. [I. N. Matveev], *Sanitarnye ocherki gorodskogo sanitarnogo vracha g. Saratova I. N. Matveeva. Obshchestvennoe prizrenie v Saratove* (Saratov, 1898), 135.

55. TsGIA, f. 1287, op. 19, dd. 2253 and 2258 on societies opened in 1899, dd. 2502 and 2504 for 1903, and dd. 2593 and 2580 for 1904.

56. Data from the Department of the Institutions of Empress Maria survey analyzed in Lindenmeyr, “Public Poor Relief and Private Charity,” 150. Of the 4119 societies surveyed, 3700 provided information on when they opened. Most of the societies submitted data for 1901; but as questionnaires continued to dribble in after 1901, the survey included some societies founded in 1901 or the next few years.

57. Anufriev, “Pravitel’svennaia reglamentatsiia,” 29, footnote 44.

58. TsGIA, f. 1288 (Glavnoe Upravlenie po delam mestnogo khoziaistva MVD), op. 15 (vnut. op. 8), 1904, d. 20, “Ob iskliuchenii iz utverzhennykh Ministervom 29-go apreliia 1897 pravil dlia uchrezhdeniia chastnykh obshchestv postanovleniia, kasaiushchegosia osobogo ukazaniia na prava Gubernatorov i Gradonachal’nikov po otnosheniiu k etim obshchestvam,” l. 3. The origin of 1897 rules can be traced to an 1895 letter from the Department of Police to the Economic Department outlining its requirements concerning membership, public events organized by societies, fundraising, institutions opened by societies, general membership meetings, insignia and the procedure for closing societies; TsGIA, f. 1287, 23 aug. 1895 - 24/31 Jan. 1897, d. 1642, “O vkluchenii v ustavy

blagotvoritel'nykh obshchestv nekotorykh dopolnitel'nykh pravil i zamechaniï Departamenta Politsii."

59. TsGIA, f. 1288, op. 15 (vnut. op. 8), 1904, d. 20, , ll. 3, 5-5ob.

60. Ibid., l. 3-3ob.

61. Ibid., l.3ob-4ob.

62. Ibid., ll. 1-2.

63. TsGIA, f. 1288, op. 15 (vnut. op. 2), d. 367, ll. 85-87.

64. Information from the governors' reports in the files cited in footnotes 53 and 55. The government soon had qualms over the enormous Jewish response to the model charters, as discussed below.

65. A. I. Shchiglik, "Dobrovol'nye obshchestva v perekhodnyi period ot kapitalizma k sotsializmu," in *Voprosy teorii i istorii obshchestvennykh organizatsii*, Ts. A. Iampol'skaia and A. I. Shchiglik, eds. (Moscow, 1971), 183; Anufriev, writing in 1916, also criticizes the model charters.

66. Anufriev, "Pravitel'stvennaia reglamentatsiia," 28. In his discussion of consumer cooperatives and mutual aid societies for workers, Robert Johnson emphasizes the great obstacles founders had to overcome and the dominant role taken by governors, factory owners and managers in what were supposed to be the workers' own organizations; *Peasant and Proletarian: The Working Class of Moscow in the Late Nineteenth Century* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1979), 88-89.

67. I. M. Tiutriumov, comp., *Zakony grazhdanskie*, 3d ed. (St. Petersburg, 1911), 611-612 (arts. 980-983 of vol. 10 of the *Svod zakonov*).

68. Maksimov argued for the abolition of this restriction, since it harmed the interests of charitable organizations as well as preventing would-be donors of dubious character from rehabilitating themselves through charity. E. Maksimov, "Ocherki chastnoi blagotvoritel'nosti v Rossii. II. Deistvuiushchee zakonodatel'stvo o chastnoi blagotvoritel'nosti," *Trudovaia pomoshch'*, 1897, No. 2 (December), 148-149.

69. V. L. Isachenko, comp., *Svod kassatsionnykh polozhenii po voprosam russkogo grazhdanskogo material'nogo prava za 1866-1910 gody* (St. Petersburg, 1911), 657.
70. *Ibid.*, 656-657; Tiutriumov, *Zakony grazhdanskie*, 614 (art. 986).
71. D. N. Martynovskii, "Ob obespechenii za blagotvoritel'nymi obshchestvami i uchrezhdeniiami zaveshchaemykh im sredstv," *Trudovaia pomoshch'*, 1910, No. 6 (June), 25-36. For more discussion of some of the problems connected with charitable bequests, see Ia. M. Zatvornitskii, "Zaveshchaniia s blagotvoritel'nymi naznacheniiami," *Zhurnal Ministerstva Iustitsii*, 1909, book 3, 117-153.
72. TsGIA, f. 1287, op. 19, 7 ianvaria 1902-1 apreliia 1903, d. 2440, "O blagotvoritel'nykh pozhertvovaniiax v 1902 g.," l. 40.
73. *Svod zakonov*, vol. 5, *Svod ustavov o poshlinakh* (1913), art. 202; Isachenko, *Svod kassatsionnykh polozhenii*, 691.
74. *Svod zakonov*, vol. 5, art. 78, and vol. 12, *Ustav pochtovo-telegrafnyi* (1912), art. 63.
75. *Svod zakonov*, vol. 5, art. 245.
76. *Svod zakonov*, vol. 10, *Svod zakonov grazhdanskikh* (1900), art. 698; Tiutriumov, *Zakony grazhdanskie*, 548-549.
77. *Svod zakonov*, vol. 13, arts. 444 and 445. This obligation was repeated in the charters of most charitable societies and institutions.
78. D. Chudovskii, ed., *Sbornik tsirkuliarov i instruksii Ministerstva Vnutrennikh Del za 1867 i 1868 gody* (St. Petersburg, 1874), 283; V. P. Urusov, ed., *Sbornik tsirkuliarov i rasporyazhenii MVD otnosiashchikhsia do gg. Gubernatorov, Vitse-gubernatorov, Sovetnikov Gubernskikh Pravlenii, Kantseliarii gg. Gubernatorov, Gubernskikh Tipografii, Stroitel'nykh i Vrachebnykh Otdelenii, a takzhe do Gorodskikh i Zemskikh Uchrezhdenii. S 1858 po 1896 god.* (Moscow, 1896), 197-198.
79. Circular of the Economic Department, 30 January 1892, No. 950, in TsGIA, f. 1287, op. 46, 1892, d. 2972, "Tsirkuliary za 1892 god," l. 6. The circular notes that although the Ministry had reminded governors "repeatedly" of the requirement, far from all charities submitted the necessary reports.

80. In the circulars of 16 June and 13 December, 1897 accompanying the model charters, and a circular of 31 December, 1897, No. 54; TsGIA, f. 1287, op. 45, 1897, d. 3158, "Tsirkuliary za 1897 god," l. 127.
81. Circular of 24 November, 1898, No. 10038 and forms in TsGIA, f. 1287, op. 46, 1898, d. 3198, "Tsirkuliary za 1898 god," ll. 99-101.
82. Circular from the Economic Department, 9 March 1899, No. 10, in TsGIA, f. 1284 (fond Departamenta obshchikh del, MVD), op. 238, 1899, d. 80, "Tsirkuliary Ministerstva Vnutrennikh Del 1899 g., kniga 1-ia," l. 93. The 1898 and 1899 circulars and forms were printed in Il'inskii, *Chastnye obshchestva*, 353-365.
83. Circular from the Economic Department, 8 October 1902, No. 42, in TsGIA, f. 1284, op. 238, 1902, d. 89, "Tsirkuliary Ministerstva Vnutrennikh Del za vtoruiu polovinu 1902 g.," l. 231.
84. A. Kolobov, "Sovremennaia blagotvoritel'nost' i nedoverie k nei," *Prizrenie i blagotvoritel'nost' v Rossii*, 1913, No. 3 (March), 9. After the 1906 Temporary Rules on societies, which gave the authority to register or confirm new societies to the governor's office, were issued, the Ministry found that it was not receiving copies of the charters of many new charitable societies, making the task of keeping accurate information on private charitable activity even more difficult; circular from the Department of Police, 23 November 1910, No. 23627, in Il'inskii, *Chastnye obshchestva*, 366.
85. TsGIA, f. 1287, op. 19, 31 dekabria 1894 - 5 oktobria 1898, d. 2095, "Po tsirkuliaru Gubernatoram o dostavlenii otchetov blagotvoritel'nykh obshchestv i uchrezhdenii," ll. 8-23.
86. *Svod zakonov*, vol. 13, art. 174 (1892 ed.).
87. *Ibid*, art. 442.
88. Maksimov, "Ocherki chastnoi blagotvoritel'nosti v Rossii. II," 149-151.
89. Circular of 26 July 1882 in Urusov, *Sbornik tsirkuliarov*, 184-185; this circular is also discussed by George Kennan in his article "The Russian Police," *The Century Illustrated Monthly Magazine*, vol. 37, No. 6 (April 1889), 891, footnote 3.
90. Circular of 15 March 1887 in Urusov, *Sbornik tsirkuliarov*, 190-191.

91. Circular of 12 May 1889 in *ibid.*, 191.
92. Circulars from the Department of Police of 20 June and 30 July 1901, in Tsentral'nyi Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Oktriabr'skoi Revoliutsii [TsGAOR], fond: Osobyi otdel Departamenta Politsii, d. 555/1901, ll. 44 and 59. The 1904 circular is reported in *Pravo*, 1904, No. 5 (1 February), 343.
93. TsGIA, f. 1287, op. 19, d. 1642. The practice of using charity concerts as platforms for anti-government plays, speeches, etc. as well as for underground fundraising is described in A. V. Ushakov, *Revoliutsionnoe dvizhenie demokraticheskoi intelligentsii v Rossii, 1895-1904* (Moscow: Mysl', 1976), 65-66, 94.
94. Note by the Director of the Department of Police Zvolianskii, 25 October 1899, in TsGIA, f. 1288, op. 15 (vnut. op. 2), 1901 (25 oktiabria 1899 - 17 fevralia 1900), d. 114, "Ob ustavakh blagotvoritel'nykh obshchestv," ll. 2-3, and summary of the Department's objections on l. 5.
95. Letter from the Economic Department to the Department of Police dated 17 December, 1899, in *ibid.*, ll. 5-6.
96. Circular from the Economic Department to governors, in TsGIA, f. 1287, op. 19, d. 2041, l. 74.
97. TsGIA, f. 1288, d. 114, handwritten note on l. 3.
98. *Ibid.*, note by Maksimov dated 25 November 1899, l. 4, and letter from the Economic Department to the Department of Police dated 17 December, 1899, ll. 5-6.
99. *Ibid.*, letter from the Department of Police to the Economic Department, 17 February 1900, ll. 7-7ob.
100. Such practices are described and deplored in TsGIA, f. 1287, op. 19, 8 Apr. 1902, d. 2459, "Po tsirkuliaru Dep-ta Obshchikh Del o nedopushchenii blagotvoritel'nymi obshchestvami dlia uvelicheniia svoikh sredstv predpriiatii, nedozvolennykh im ustavami i, v osobennosti, za deiatel'nost'iu upolnomochennykh po sboru pozhertvovanii." The journal *Detskaia pomoshch'* periodically published articles on shady charities and fundraising practices.

101. In 1888 a vice-chairman of the Society was convicted of bribery and swindling; “Sredi gazet i zhurnalov,” *Detskaia pomoshch’* (15 November 1888), 667.
102. TsGIA, f. 1288, op. 15 (vnut. op. 2), 1901 (1 okt. 1901 - 3 apr. 1904), d. 613, “O dopolnenii pravil o noshenii zhetonov Popechitel’sтва Imperatorskogo Chelovekoliubivogo Obshchestva dlia sbora pozhertvovanii na vospitanie i ustroistvo bednykh detei v masterstvo i o priniatii mer k bditel’nomu nadzoru za deiatel’nost’iu upolnomochennykh po sboru pozhertvovanii,” ll. 22-24, 26-27.
103. *Ibid.*, passim.
104. TsGIA, f. 1287, op. 19, d. 2459, ll. 3-4. The notice also forbid charities from entrusting fundraising to unknown persons and from sending their agents all over the country. Only members of the society with exceptional social standing and an impeccable reputation could be agents. Charities were reminded of their duty to obtain permission before publishing their calendars, almanacs and other fundraising items. The notice concluded with the declaration that the Ministry regarded charities “with the keenest sympathy” and was eager to cooperate with them; but the wide license taken in fund-raising not only violated the law, but undermined public trust in private charity.
105. Il’inskii, *Chastnye obshchestva*, 582-583, 594-598, 614-615.
106. For background see Raymond Pearson, “Privileges, Rights and Russification,” *Civil Rights in Imperial Russia*, Olga Crisp and Linda Edmondson, eds. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), 85-102.
107. Iu. G., “Blagotvoritel’nye uchrezhdeniia v Rossii,” *Evreiskaia entsiklopediia*, L. Katsenel’son and D. G. Ginzburg, eds., vol. 4 (St. Petersburg, n.d.), 634; V. V. Vashekovich, *O evreiskikh blagotvoritel’nykh uchrezhdeniiakh v imperii* (St. Petersburg, 1891), 1, 7-8; *Polozhenie o Evreiiakh*, PSZ (II), vol. 10, No. 8054, April 13, 1835, art. 76, and vol. 25, No. 24299 (3 July 1850); *Svod zakonov*, vol. 9, *Svod zakonov o sostoianiiakh*, book 1, razdel 5, chap. 2, esp. art. 816, prilozhenie, on the 1844 rules governing the communal poor tax (*korobochnyi sbor*).
108. Vashkevich, *O evreiskikh blagotvoritel’nykh uchrezhdeniiakh*, 30.
109. S. Ianovskii, “Evreiskaia blagotvoritel’nost’,” *Trudovaia pomoshch’* (December 1902), 584, 588.

110. "Blagotvoritel'nye uchrezhdeniia," *Evreiskaia entsiklopediia*, 638. According to another source, roughly 11,000 charitable groups provided a variety of services in the more than 1,800 communities of the Pale; Isaac Levitats, *The Jewish Community in Russia, 1844-1917* (Jerusalem: Posner and Sons, 1981), 163.
111. TsGIA, f. 1287, op. 19, d. 2106.
112. Ianovskii, "Evreiskaia blagotvoritel'nost'," 601, 603, 607.
113. Levitats, *The Jewish Community*, 163. See also Salo W. Baron, *The Russian Jew under Tsars and Soviets* (New York: Macmillan, 1964), 119-124, 127-129.
114. An early initiative came from the Kiev region, where the governor-general, governor and social welfare board drafted several model charters for the most common types of Jewish charitable societies and institutions. After more than a decade of work, however, the Kiev charters were shelved. In a reply to the Kiev Governor-General in 1902, four years after receiving the model charters for Jewish charters, the Ministry of the Interior withheld its approval of this initiative because, it said, the entire question of Jewish charity was then under review. TsGIA, f. 1288, op. 15 (vnut. op. 2), 1901 (11 iunია 1898- 21 maia 1902), d. 77, "O normal'nom ustave Blagotvoritel'nykh evreiskikh obshchestv, po Kievskomu Gen-Gubernatorstvu."
115. Economic Department circular signed by Department head Ivan Kabat, 19 September 1898, No. 8252, in TsGIA, f. 1288, op. 15 (vnut. op. 2, 1901), d. 367, ll. 61-61 ob.
116. TsGIA, f. 1288, op. 15 (vnut. op. 2), 1901 (17 Aug. 1899-16 Oct. 1901), d. 203, "Ob otklonenii khodataistva ob uchrezhdenii v gorode Velikikh Lukakh evreiskogo obshchestva posobiia bednym."
117. Ianovskii, "Evreiskaia blagotvoritel'nost'," 603.
118. Letter from the Economic Department to the Department of General Affairs, 15 October 1900, TsGIA, f. 1288, op. 15, d. 77, l. 44.
119. A 1905 letter from the Kiev, Podolia and Volynia Governor-General to the Minister of the Interior refers to the Ministry's policy of rejecting petitions to establish exclusively Jewish charitable societies, "deeming it undesirable to contribute in this way to the isolation of the Jews." TsGIA, f. 1288, op. 15 (vnut. op. 9), 1905, d. 4, "Ob uchrezhdenii

Gubernskimi Nachalstvami na osnovanii primernogo ustava Obshchestv posobiia bednym evreiam,” l. 54.

120. TsGIA, f. 1288, op. 15 (vnut. op. 2), *dela* 283, 249, 248, and 500 for cases in Bessarabia, Podolia, Volynia and Mogilev.

121. Ianovskii, “Evreiskaia blagotvoritel’nost’,” 603-604. According to Ianovskii, the provinces of Poltava, Chernigov, Vilna, Vitebsk and Russian Poland had an insignificant number of Jewish charitable societies based on the model charter, for the same reason.

122. Janina Zurawicka, “Charity in Warsaw in the Second Half of the XIXth Century,” *Journal of European Economic History*, vol. 14, No. 2 (Fall, 1985), 324-325. On the councils or *sovety obshchestvennogo prizreniia* in the Polish provinces, see *Blagotvoritel’nost’ v Rossii*, vol. 1, 164, 166-168.

123. Zurawicka, “Charity in Warsaw,” 326-327.

124. Letter from the Warsaw Governor-General to the Minister of the Interior on the model charter for assisting needy students, 19 March 1898, TsGIA, f. 1287, op. 19, 31 iunია 1897-13 iunია 1905, d. 2041, “ob utverzhenii primernogo ustava dlia obshchestv vpomoshchestvovaniia nuzhdaiushchimsia uchashchimsia,” ll. 64-65, and the Minister’s reply, 28 May 1898, ll. 53-54; letter from the Governor-General to the Minister on the model charter for general-purpose charitable societies, TsGIA, f. 1288, op. 15, d. 367, ll. 51-52 and the same reply from the Minister, ll. 66-67.

125. TsGAOR, f. Departamenta Politsii - 3, 1897, No. 1002, l. 125ob, l. 131ob. In the early 1890s the Minister of the Interior Durnovo supported the recommendation of the Governor-General of the Caucasus to deny permission to found an Armenian Women’s Charitable Society in Baku, on the grounds that it was directed primarily at furthering education, not charity; TsGIA, f. 1287, op. 19, 5 Nov. 1890-30 March 1894, d. 994, “Ob otklonenii khodataistva ob uchrezhdenii v g. Baku armianskogo zhenskogo blagotvoritel’nogo obshchestva.”

126. TsGAOR, f. Departamenta Politsii-3, 1897, No. 1002, l. 127.

127. Summary of Golitsyn’s memorandum to the Department of Police, dated 4 August 1897, in *ibid.*, ll. 125-127.

128. *Ibid.*, ll. 130-132.

129. Minister Goremykin's reply to Golitsyn, 12 February 1898, in *ibid.*, ll. 137-143.
130. TsGIA, f. 1288, op. 15, d. 367, ll. 31-34, 41.
131. On demands for civil rights in 1905, see Linda Edmondson, "Was There a Movement for Civil Rights in Russia in 1905?" *Civil Rights in Imperial Russia*, 263-285.
132. The circular and rules were published in the journal *Pravo*, 1905, No. 23 (12 June), 1885-1889. For a critique, see Anufriev, "Pravitel'stvennaia reglamentatsiia," 30-32. The last rule, giving the Ministry the authority to close societies, seems to indicate that the Minister had rejected the argument of the Main Administration on the Local Economy, made in a report dated March 1905, that only the Committee of Ministers had the legal authority to close associations. TsGIA, f. 1288, op. 15 (vnut. op. 2 - 1901), d. 367, ll. 85-87; see above, 17-18.
133. Anufriev, "Pravitel'stvennaia reglamentatsiia," 33-34. Il'inskii, *Chastnye obshchestva*, 4-80 and L. Rogovin, *Zakony ob obshchestvakh, soiuzakh i sobraniiakh* (St. Petersburg, 1912), 3-30, published the 1906 Rules with pertinent Senate and Ministry decisions and explanations.
134. A. Kaminka, "Pravila 4-go marta ob obshchestvakh, soiuzakh i sobraniiakh," *Pravo*, 1906, No. 10 (12 March), 868. French and German law also distinguished between unchartered societies which did not need government permission but could not own property or exercise the right of juridical personality, and chartered ones which possessed these rights but also required government "registration." As in the March 1906 Rules, local administrative authorities (like the prefect in France) could refuse to "register", that is, confirm, an association. See Kaminka, "Pravila 4-go marta," 867-868; and V. Gessen, "Obshchestva i soiuzy," *Novyi Entsiklopedicheskii Slovar'*, vol. 29 (Petrograd, 1916), 162-163.
135. City bureaus were also established in Petersburg, Moscow, Odessa, Kronshtadt, Nikolaev, Kerch', Sevastopol, and Rostov-na-Donu.
136. Anufriev, "Pravitel'stvennaia reglamentatsiia," 35.
137. In addition to the 1906 Rules, see Anufriev, "Pravitel'stvennaia reglamentatsiia," 34-35, and Kaminka, "Pravila," *Pravo*, 1906, No. 13 (1 April), 1188-1189.

138. "Khronika," *Pravo*, 1907, No. 29 (22 July), 2011.
139. TsGIA, f. 1288, op. 15 1906 g., ed. khr. 13, 16 marta 1906 - 22 fevralia 1907 g., "Ob otkrytii Obshchestv na osnovanii zakona 4-go marta 1906 g. o vremennykh pravilakh ob obshchestvakh i soiuzakh," l. 92.
140. "Khronika," *Pravo*, 1907, No. 44 (4 November), 2862; 1907, No. 47 (25 November), 3045; 1909, No. 10 (8 March), 650; 1910, No. 25 (22 June), 1599; "Registratsiia obshchestv i soiuzov," *Vestnik politzii*, 1914, No. 22 (30 May), 400.
141. TsGIA, f. 1288, op. 15 1906 g., ed. khr. 13.
142. TsGIA, f. 1288, op. 15 (vnut. op. 16), 1912, d. 3, "Ob otkrytii obshchestv (blagotvoritel'nykh) na osnovanii zakona o vremennykh pravilakh ob obshchestvakh i soiuzakh."
143. Anufriev, "Pravitel'stvennaia reglamentatsiia," 37, footnote 52. Unfortunately, he does not say how he arrived at this number.
144. TsGIA, f. 1288, op. 15 (vnut. op. 6), 1903, d. 23, "O predstavlenii Komitetu Popechitel'stva o Domakh Trudoliubiia i Rabotnykh Domakh, vpred do peresmotra Polozheniia sego Popechitel'stva, pravo utverzhdat' ustavy blagotvoritel'nykh organizatsii trudovoi pomoshchi," l. 48; f. 1288, op. 15 (vnut. op. 14), 1910, d. 171, "Po vyrabotannomu obrazovannoi [sic] pri MVD mezhdovedomstvennym soveshchaniem proekta [sic] novogo zakona ob obshchestvakh i soiuzakh"; "Khronika," *Pravo*, 1914, No. 1 (5 January), 55-57; on the significance of the draft legislation for trade unions, Victoria E. Bonnell, *Roots of Rebellion: Workers' Politics and Organizations in St. Petersburg and Moscow, 1900-1914* (Berkeley, Ca.: University of California Press, 1983), 376-378.
145. *Ibid.*, 36-37. One Soviet scholar states that the majority of societies created after 1906 used the model charters; but he provides no evidence to support this conclusion. A. D. Stepanovskii, *Istoriia obshchestvennykh organizatsii dorevoliutsionnoi Rossii: Uchebnoe posobie* (Moscow, 1978), 55. The coexistence of model charters and the 1906 Rules caused local authorities some confusion, to judge by the Ministerial circular of 21 July, 1906 that tried to answer governors' questions about how to apply the new Rules; the circular is printed in *Pravo*, 1906, No. 32 (13 August), 2586-2589.

146. Laws issued in 1904, 1906 and 1911 gradually devolved the authority to confirm charters for privately-founded charitable institutions from the Minister of the Interior to the governors; *Svod zakonov*, vol. 13, *Ustav o obshchestvennom prizrenii*, 1915 ed., art. 321.

147. The Rules did not cover religious societies and associations of students, for which there were special rules. They also placed some restrictions on the rights of students, members of the armed forces, civil servants, and employees of railways and telephone companies to establish societies or participate in them.

148. They included the specialist in Russian criminal law, S. K. Gogel', author of *The Unification and Cooperation of Private and Public Charity* (1908); Senator G. A. Tobizen, former governor of Khar'kov and a leading philanthropist; Moscow University professor of history and Octobrist member of the State Council V. I. Ger'e, a leader in reforming Moscow municipal welfare in the 1890s; and E. D. Maksimov, the Ministry of the Interior specialist on poor relief in the 1890s, now head of the Russian Bank of Trade and Industry. Petition of founders to the Ministry of the Interior, in TsGIA, f. 1288, op. 15 (vnut. op. 12), 24 marta 1908 - 28 iulia 1908, d. 84, "Ob utverzhenii ustava Vserossiiskogo Soiuza uchrezhdenii, obshchestv i deiatelyi po obshchestvennomu i chastnomu prizreniiu," l. 1.

149. Vserossiiskii Soiuz uchrezhdenii, obshchestv i deiatelyi po obshchestvennomu i chastnomu prizreniiu, *Trudy pervogo s"ezda russkikh deiatelyi po obshchestvennomu i chastnomu prizreniiu 8-13 marta 1910 g.* (St. Petersburg, 1910).

150. Ibid., 19-20; Vserossiiskii soiuz uchrezhdenii, obshchestv i deiatelyi po obshchestvennomu i chastnomu prizreniiu, *Otchet o deiatel'nosti Soiuz za vremia s 11 maia 1911 g. po 1 noiabria 1912 g.* (St. Petersburg, 1913), 10-12.

151. Vserossiiskii soiuz uchrezhdenii, obshchestv i deiatelyi po obshchestvennomu i chastnomu prizreniiu, *Otchet o deiatel'nosti Soiuz za god s marta mesiatza 1910 g. po mai 1911 g.* (St. Petersburg, 1911), 10, 16-26. The draft projects failed to win government approval, however.

152. V. R. Leikina-Svirskaiia, *Russkaia intelligentsiia v 1900-1917 godakh* (Moscow, 1981), especially chapter 2; *Rossiiskie partii, soiuzy i ligi. Sbornik programm, ustavov i spravocnykh svedenii*, V. Ivanovich, comp. (St. Petersburg, 1906). On individual groups of social reformers and their congresses, see, for example, J. F. Hutchinson, "Science, Politics and the Alcohol Problem in Post-1905 Russia," *Slavonic and East European Review*, vol. 58, No. 2 (1980), 232-254; Richard Stites, *The Women's Liberation Movement in Russia: Feminism*,

Nihilism and Bolshevism, 1860-1930 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978), chapter 7, on feminist organizations and congresses between 1905 and 1914.

153. S. K. Gogel', "Dni tsvetkov – kak novyi sposob sobiraniia sredstv na blagotvoritel'nye tseli," in *Otchet o deiatel'nosti soiuzza za vremia s 11 maia 1911 g. po 1 noiabria 1912 g.*, 16-20.

154. The George Kennan Papers, Container 105, Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Washington, D.C.

155. Newspaper articles, notes and letters on private relief efforts during the 1911-1912 famine are in the George Kennan Papers, Container 103, Library of Congress, Manuscript Division.

156. N. W. Tchaykovsky [sic], "Famine in Russia," Letter to George Kennan, 16/29 February, 1912, in the George Kennan Papers, Container 103.

157. "Khronika," *Obshchestvennaia i Chastnaia Blagotvoritel'nost' v Rossii* (September 1912), 2-3.

158. Leikina-Svirskaia, *Russkaia intelligentsiia*, 78.

159. Kennan, "The Russian Police," 890.

160. Anufriev, "Pravitel'stvennaia reglamentatsiia," 43.

161. Charitable societies sometimes began operating months or even years before their charters were confirmed. The Vologda Women's Charitable Society, for example, existed for thirteen years without a charter; *Vologodskoe Zhenskoe Blagotvoritel'noe Obshchestvo, sostoiashchee pod Vys. pokrovitel'stvom ee Imp. Vel. Gosudaryni Imperatritsy Marii Feodorovny, 1864-1914: Istoricheskii ocherk* (Vologda, 1914), 3.

162. Maksimov mentions one case of an officer who was punished for running a shelter for homeless children without permission; E. Maksimov, "Ocherki chastnoi blagotvoritel'nosti v Rossii. II," 150. In another case, V. A. Rakhov of Arkhangelsk opened a Salvation-Army style soup kitchen in 1893. The civil authorities were unconcerned, but the Bishop ordered him incarcerated in a monastery on charges of preaching Stundism in the prayer and hymn-singing services he led; John Shelton Curtiss, *Church and State in Russia: The Last*

Years of the Empire, 1900-1917 (NY: Columbia University Press, 1940; reprinted ed. NY: Octagon Books, 1972), 158.